The Growth of Gaming

An Interview with Chance Glasco, Founder, The Game Consultants, and Co-Founder, Doghead Simulations

EDITORS' NOTE *Chance Glasco is a video games consultant with 20 years of industry experience. Prior to his start in the video games industry, Glasco graduated from Full Sail University in 2001, where he was later inducted into their Hall of Fame for his contributions to students and the game industry. Glasco's first project after graduation was working on the Steven Spielberg and Dreamworks franchise, Medal of Honor. After a successful first game, he and other developers left their jobs to from a new studio, Infinity Ward. The Oklahoma-based game studio would go on to create the Call of Duty franchise, which has become the best-selling video game franchise of the new millennium and sold over 300 million copies to date. He would go on to work on six Call of Duty titles, including the Modern Warfare series. Glasco was Co-Founder of Doghead Simulations (dogheadsimulations.com), known for their virtual reality conferencing application, rumii. His efforts to re-humanize social media and remote work through virtual reality have been used to provide therapy to victims of human trafficking, conduct virtual classrooms for students in quarantine, and connect Tanzanian tribes to high school students in the United States. Glasco has regularly been featured as a keynote or guest speaker in many international gaming and technology conventions around the world.*

Chance Glasco

What was your vision for creating Doghead Simulations and what were the keys to its success?

When we formed Doghead Simulations, I was living and working remotely in Rio de Janeiro. For our first product, we were originally prototyping a virtual reality bartending game, but with having an extremely poor and slow Internet connection, video conferencing wasn't an option for collaboration. As a result, we had the idea of meeting in virtual reality in order to collaborate while using significantly less Internet bandwidth.

After testing out our simple prototype, we realized that in addition to having a lag-free and smooth experience, virtual reality created a sense of social presence among those attending the meeting. We quickly pivoted to this new and exciting product as soon as we saw its day-to-day usefulness.

You recently founded The Game Consultants. Will you provide an overview of The Game Consultants' business?

After 20 years of experience working in the video game industry, I knew that I didn't want to stick with working on only one aspect of the industry. While I worked in the animation department on Call of Duty, I also had the opportunity to travel the world to help promote new releases, working closely with media, developers and publishers outside of the United States. My passion for other areas of development and production, as well as a vast network of industry professionals, lead me to want to create The Game Consultants.

The video game industry is going to grow to a $200 billion market by 2023 with more than three billion gamers in the world. E-sports athletes, streamers and game developers are finding themselves increasingly more in the spotlight and in the eyes of the mainstream. Interest from non-gaming companies and organizations continue to rise, but they're uncertain on how to leverage their resources to create a game that will reach their intended audience. The Game Consultants was created to help facilitate game development for non-gaming companies.

What led you to start Call of Duty and how do you define its mission?

In 2000, I landed my first professional job as a game developer, working on the Dreamworks and Steven Spielberg franchise, Medal of Honor. Despite a successful product launch with Medal of Honor, Allied Assault, we were unhappy with our current employer so 22 of us left and formed a studio called Infinity Ward. Here we were tasked by our new publisher, Activision, to build a first-person shooter franchise that would compete with Medal of Honor. After Call of Duty 1 and 2, I worked on the franchise through the Modern Warfare series and Ghosts. Twenty years later, the Call of Duty franchise has sold over 300 million copies and is valued at over $20 billion.

How do you describe your leadership style and what do you see as the keys to effective leadership?

In some ways my leadership style is unconventional. While I do try to consume media to educate myself in being a better leader, the last thing I want to do is come across as someone who has memorized all of the tips and tricks of leadership and social engineering. If you focus on making yourself a better person, one that people want to be around, the results you're looking for will come naturally. It doesn't matter how many *New York Times* best sellers you've picked up at the airport, focus on improving the source of your leadership abilities and not just finding a way to get the results you want.

Being humble is often an underappreciated quality, especially among those in leadership and executive positions. Humility is being successful in your career while still being able to admit that the only time you've been on a private jet was that time you were in *LEADERS Magazine*.

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How do you define resilience and what are the key characteristics of a resilient organization?

Resilience is the ability to quickly recover from hardship and difficulties. While life doesn't typically become easier, we do become stronger and more resilient as we face obstacles. When the unexpected occurs, resilience allows us to adapt and survive.

2020 could easily be called "The Year of Resilience." If you weren't sure if your company or organization was resilient last year, you certainly know now. A resilient organization can come across the unexpected variables of roadblocks and conflicts and adapt quickly to overcome them. It allows organizations to quickly adapt and redeploy their tools, resources and strengths to take account of a different and possibly more strenuous situation.

What role does gaming play in building resilience?

Video games are all about enduring and overcoming obstacles through problem solving, strategy and timing. Studies have shown that playing games may strengthen a range of cognitive skills such as reasoning, memory, perception and spatial navigation. All of these skills can potentially come in handy when enduring real-life challenges. In multiplayer games, players need to collaborate efficiently if they want to be victorious.

Do you feel that resilience is something a person is born with or can it be taught?

I don't believe that resilience is something that people are born with, but rather something acquired through life experiences and education. Typically, those who have lived the most obstacle-free life will have the most difficult time overcoming obstacles once they arrive. On the contrary, those who have grown up in less than ideal environments will typically face circumstances that build more resilience. While you don't want to create unnecessary obstacles, leaders and risk-takers are much more likely to have opportunities to do so.

How do you see the gaming industry changing as you look to the future?

Video game popularity will continue to aggressively grow until every single living generation has grown up with video games from a young age. What was once often deemed as "for kids" by much of society in the 20th century, video games have now become part of popular culture. We'll have at least a $200 billion industry by 2023 and traditional console and PC games will continue to grow alongside newer technologies like virtual and augmented reality.

Games will grow increasingly social, especially with the rising popularity of virtual and augmented reality. The term "video game" will be an insufficient term to describe the complexity of what these experiences have evolved into. VR headsets will soon have retina resolution and rendering technologies like ray tracing that will continue to blur the line between reality and virtual reality. The sense of presence one gets in a virtual environment will be almost identical to the sense of presence one has in a real physical environment.

As VR experiences become increasingly realistic, we'll see, and arguably are currently seeing, the first signs of what a lot of us know as The Matrix. Massive multiplayer role-playing games will become social spaces that are often preferred over bars, restaurants or other traditional social spaces.

What do you see as the responsibility that leading companies have to give back to their communities and society?

If you've created a tool that's useful to society and nobody is using it, then is it really all that useful? With Doghead Simulations, I found that so many doors of opportunity would open when we used our virtual reality conferencing software to help others at no cost to them. When lockdown initially started, we decided to make our software free for several months in order to give people a better option than video conferencing while working at home during the pandemic.

In addition, we were able to work with the anti-human trafficking nonprofit, More Too Life, to study the benefits of VR therapy for victims of human trafficking. With this study, we discovered that victims of human trafficking open up more quickly with therapists with VR therapy than in a face-to-face setting. Sometimes it's good to remember that there are 7.5 billion people on the planet, and helping a handful of them for free is not going to eliminate the rest of your market.

What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers during this uncertain time?

If you're focused on working in the video game industry, you're in luck. As arduous as 2020 has been, the video game industry is one of the few industries that has actually seen considerable growth. With more people staying home during the pandemic, many are fulfilling their desires to socialize through multiplayer gaming. If this is the career path you're taking, make sure you stay plugged into game developer communities and constantly take advantage of all of the free tutorials and learning material available online.

In general, make sure you balance your social media efforts with real face-to-face interactions and networking. While having a social media presence is usually important these days, don't let it consume too much of your time. It's easy to get caught up in the image of being successful without getting the experience and opportunities you actually need. ●

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