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Introduction to Creative Arts and Communication
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Research Report On a Cultural Institution:
Ubisoft Montreal

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Section #1

Introduction

Growing up, in a branded world full of in your face ads on a daily basis forces us to develop special relationships with these companies like Apple, Starbucks, Nike etc. In this specific case, Ubisoft uses video games to develop these special bonds with the younger generation. Im sure that many teenage boys and girls can say the same. Before diving into all the boring statistical stuff let's talk about what makes Ubisoft so unique and different from others of its type such as Gameloft? There is only one simple answer to this question and that is because Ubisoft Montreal was the first major video game publisher to set up in Montreal. Why is this is so important? Frankly because the creation of Ubisoft had paved the way for both provincial and federal governments to start subsidizing video game companies, thus leading to the arrival of other video game companies such as; Warner bros and EA(creator of all sport games) who are now major companies. As far as the cultural environment surrounding the institution goes, it isn't too crowded with pedestrians around that part of town, mostly because it is located right next to a highway, a local bar and an Petro-Canada gas station. Had the company not put a Giant logo on the top corner of the building, it could have easily been mistaken as a college dorm of some sort. Assuming this is because the institution does not want too many visitors, as it is a low profile place for workers to get the job done efficiently.

Institution's history

Ubisoft entertainment is a French videogame and computer developer and publisher with it's headquarters in Montreuil-Sous, France. The company was founded in 1986 by Yves Guillemot, who co-founded Ubisoft with his siblings in Brittany France. He now serves as chairman and CEO. Despite the fact that the company was originally founded with the idea of publishing and distributing software, Mr. Guillemot ultimately made deals with several american PC publishers including; Electronic Arts, MicroProse and LucasArts to allow them to distribute their games in France. This was a huge success, and eventually lead to Ubisoft establishing its own development studio by the 1980's and furthermore expanding into America and the United kingdom by the 1990's. By 1996, Ubisoft became a public company and is now the world's third largest game publisher. Present in 28 countries with 26 studios and a distribution network expanding throughout more than 55 territories, Ubisoft today exhibits one of the richest and most diverse in the industry, selling top brands on all platforms (Far Cry, Assassin's Creed etc). Ubisoft has and continues to win over gamers with its front line, high-quality franchises.



Section #2

The institution's Mission

Ubisoft's mission can be understood "as a leading creator, publisher and distributor of interactive entertainment and services with a rich portfolio of world-renowned brands." "they deliver original and memorable gaming experiences across all popular platforms." "Ubisoft montreal participates actively in the creative and technological development of the Montreal Community." In addition to being the third independent publisher in the world, Ubisoft is without a doubt one of the world's most successful game development studios. The key to the company's success is all in the content. Ubisoft has recently been developing games specifically with kids needs in mind. Moreover, this allows the younger generation to have fun while also flourishing their creativity and feeding their imagination in a constructive way. Furthermore, Ubisoft has been working with child specialists to make sure that not only the content but also the accessibility of these games are meeting the young players expectations. The games' focus specifically on the kids main interests; sports, fashion, pets, wild animals and even take a concerning approach by incorporating environmental issues as well.



Section #3

The Institution's Management Structure

Before going in depth on each of the specific roles here at Ubisoft Montreal, it is important to mention that the company is an institution that functions by committee. Simply because Ubisoft does not have just one institution in the entire world, It has many. With that, any large scale decisions that have to be made will be called upon at a meeting most probably at the Ubisoft headquarters involving all the "Big bosses" of the company such as the CEO and chairman himself, Mr. Yves Guillemot.

Programming:

The role of the programming professionals is to create the technical back bone of the game and provide the development teams with technical solutions to portray their vision and intentions into the game. They

develop engines, tools, systems and features to ensure both the best player experience as well as technical experience.

Art:

The role of the art professionals is to create high quality visual content to inspire and realize the vision of the game. They aim to shape stunning imaginative and impactful visual identities and atmospheres that will enhance the player's involvement in the game.

Game design:

The role of the game design professionals is to imagine and develop compelling and engaging rules for the games. They sustain the creative vision by designing game systems and features that will enable players to live their own unique gaming experience.

Marketing:

The role of the marketing professionals is to engage and retain players all around the world to drive sustainable growth. The marketing teams create personalized and memorable experiences around their games and brands across all channels and communities of players.

Information systems :

The role of the information systems professionals is to provide the best tools and information systems for all Ubisoft employees as well as deliver and operate the ultimate infrastructure for our players.

level design:

The role of the level design professionals is to assemble the intentions and vision of the whole creative team into an exciting, challenging and consistent universe. They design game levels and worlds that can stimulate players expression and therefore enrich the player's gaming experiences and, even beyond his/her life.

Animation:

The role of the animation professionals is to bring our worlds and characters to life with high quality motion. They create believable and emotional moments through aesthetic animations in order to immerse the player in the overall gaming experience.

Project management:

The role of the project management professionals is to manage the whole production of a game. They handle the project's budget, build and develop the teams that will deliver it. They define its business vision and ensure it's positioning as a pioneer of new market's trends.

Finance:

The role of the finance professionals is to be a business partner to Ubisoft management and teams: provide with an accurate visibility on the company's past and future economic performance and sound recommendations on opportunities and risks to optimize the groups performance in alignment with its strategy.

Human Resources:

The role of the human resources professionals is to build highly motivated, skilled and successful teams aligned with , preserve and develop our unique company culture and implement the most cutting edge HR practices.

Communications and PR:

The role of the communications and PR professionals is to create and deliver cutting-edge and tailored content event and communication tools. Teams build, convey, and protect the image of Ubisoft corporate brand and its brand portfolio to engage internal and external communities, to manage Ubisoft reputation and thereby support its strategy.

Sales and Business development:

The role of the sales and business development professionals is to drive sustainable profitable growth. The sales teams leverage a sound understanding of both Ubisoft and its sales channel partners strategies and of best-in-class sales techniques to build win-win sales plans and maximize the lifecycle of Ubisoft portfolio, while preserving its brand's vision.

Quality control:

The role of the quality control professionals is to guarantee the players will enjoy and smooth and uninterrupted gaming experience. They partner with development and support teams to maximize the quality of the games.

Surprisingly enough, the role of the Game design professionals was the most intriguing. This was Mostly due to the fact that their role focused all on the content of the game and is almost as if they are the ones creating it. Working as a level design professional at Ubisoft Montreal definitely sounds like a job you should not pass up if offered the opportunity.

Section 4

The interview report

The following was not an interview conducted by me (Nathan Reid), It is an online management report conducted for Ubisoft with statements from Yves Guillemot.

Here are the following interview questions I had planned on asking:

- How did your education help prepare you for this job?
- What development tools have you used?
- Give an example of where you have applied your technical knowledge in a practical way.
- What development tools have you used?
- How important is it to work directly with your business users?

- What have you done to ensure consistency across the company, quality, and production environments?
- Describe your production arrangement process?

“On the long term, we expect to capitalize on two major trends. Firstly, we believe that the next generation of consoles is going to boost the market; these machines will integrate the social gaming revolution and item-based model, not to mention amazing graphics, highly sought-after by core gamers. Secondly, the continued strong growth of the free-to-play market will allow us to bring our brands to more platforms (PC, tablet and mobile) and to significantly increase the impact and geographical reach of our brands. All this combined should drive an increase in the Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) and profitability of all our games.

Ubisoft, as a unique creator of brands for both core and casual players, is ideally positioned to reap the benefits of these trends. I know we have the talent and energy to seize the many opportunities to grow and increase profitability that lie ahead of us, in 2013 and beyond. Our aim is to create increasingly strong entertainment experiences for gamers, wherever they are and on every platform.

In closing, I would like to extend my gratitude to Ubisoft’s talented teams whose creativity and motivation bring our company’s vision to life, as well as to our shareholders and consumers for their support. “

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING THE FINEST TALENT

“Attracting, developing and retaining the finest talent in the industry is one of the key factors determining Ubisoft’s success. Over the past five years, Ubisoft has created 600 jobs a year on average across its global subsidiaries. We are committed to providing the resources that our teams need in order to progress, learn and develop their skills and expertise. This will enable us to create the best games of the future, today.

Providing our teams with the necessary development will ensure that we preserve our recognized expertise in the gaming industry. Ubisoft has the second-largest internal creative force in the industry (more than 5,800 employees in game development), which constitutes a competitive advantage for the Company, enabling it to be responsive and innovative.

In order to retain this advantage, our HR development policy is focused on three pillars: Skill development, diverse career paths and compensation that aims to recognize skills, performance and commitment.”

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

“In a sector where continuous innovation, staying on top of technological advances and developing expertise are key, naturally, all forms of training are a top priority. In recent years, the sector has seen a significant evolution in online gaming. Ubisoft is training its teams to work on online games and several of our production studios have since specialized in online gaming so that the Company is always in a position to provide gamers with innovative new experiences across the range of online platforms. Furthermore, the development of several games for a new generation of consoles, starting with the Wii UTM from Nintendo, gives our team the opportunity to master the most advanced technologies on the video game market today.

Video gaming is a relatively new business compared to other entertainment industries, and adapted training courses are provided, for the most part, within the Group, complementing on-the-job training.

Training is organized primarily at local level. High-level international corporate university-type training courses are also offered in the Group’s core business areas, such as game design and gameplay programming.

As a true entertainment Company, Ubisoft is also developing the expertise of its teams in new areas including comic books, book publishing, toys and figurines of our characters, films and TV series.

Links between Ubisoft and related industries (music, film, television, publishing, etc.) are being developed and exchanges with experts in these industries are encouraged. The overriding objective is to consolidate its strong brands in order to establish them on several types of media.

Ubisoft has integrated France's DIF (Personal Training Right) into its professional training policy. In 2011/2012, the budget allocated to training (excluding salaries) amounted to €1,197 thousand. Ubisoft also took on interns and trainees during the 2010/2011 financial year. Internships often pave the way to an actual hire. In France, for example, 35% of the junior employees recruited this year had previously completed an internship at Ubisoft."

PROMOTING A FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

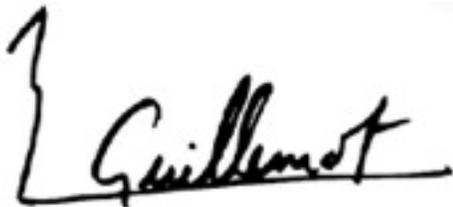
"Ubisoft is a company that makes the well-being of its teams one of the pillars of its global strategy. We know that the work environment plays a fundamental role in ensuring team morale. This is why Ubisoft has created a friendly and welcoming environment in all of its subsidiaries and studios.

In that sense, an internal survey is carried out every two years to consult all employees on major company issues (in terms of strategy, HR policy and work environment) and take soundings on team satisfaction. Actions and programs are implemented in response to the results of the survey, and employees are given regular progress reports. In the last survey, more than 95% of employees said that they were satisfied with the friendly work environment within the Group.

There are many local initiatives aimed at improving the daily working lives of our employees. The studio in Montreal, for example, set up a well-being clinic for all employees and their families, which is open five days a week. Ubisoft Montreal has also been certified a "Healthy Enterprise" by the Bureau de normalisation du Québec since 2010. This standard aims to ensure the continuous improvement of practices that focus on health and well-being at work at Ubisoft Montréal.

Ubisoft also vows to prioritize smaller structures wherever possible (85% of sites have fewer than 200 employees) where managers are available to their teams and HR managers are in close contact with daily operations. In the last internal survey, more than 92.2% of employees said that they were happy with the level of contact with their managers.

Despite its ever increasing size, Ubisoft has always sought to cultivate and preserve this friendly, open and outward-looking atmosphere."

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Guillemot". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'G'.

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