

11 Insights from 11 Game Industry Leaders



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Meet Favro — Collaborative Planning Platform for Fast-Growing Game Companies

Favro was founded by game industry veterans and is now rapidly becoming the leading choice for live products where dev, QA, marketing, community, and studio management need to be in tight sync for continuous drops of features and content.

Say hello to Favro. The collaboration app that makes work flow. It combines killer features from the tools you already use, all in one workspace. Enabling seamless collaboration, communication and creation, providing one source of truth across the business.

Favro Is Trusted by the Greatest Companies in Games



G2.com verified review by
Maurice K.

It's extremely easy to customize and adapt the tool to your workflow. And it's great for both software and non-software development teams all in the same organization.



G2.com verified review by
Matteo P.

The features are easy to configure yet complex and powerful. You can view the same data in multiple ways, which helps the overall experience. Moreover, the UI is superb.



G2.com verified review by
Wellington C.

I use many different functions for each area of the company. With Favro, it was possible to establish visibility and tracking of the executive's actions linked to activities in different areas. Its flexibility allows us to refine our processes to increase our productivity.

Learn from Game Industry Leaders

Learn from Leaders is a podcast series that focuses on industry leaders who join us to share their best practices in the game industry. In these episodes, we dive deep and explore real-life use cases from some of the most collaborative and agile game companies using Favro to achieve the extraordinary.



Meet the Host — Patric Palm

Patric Palm is Favro's ceo and founder. A serial entrepreneur and tech investor in games, SaaS, AI, and deep tech, who is passionate about hyper-performing teams and business agility.

He cut his teeth in leadership and organization as a leadership instructor within the Swedish Airforce. Since then, he has been involved in and founded several companies and NGOs.

Patric is a frequent speaker at international conferences on topics such as innovation management, software and game development, agile organic organization, and entrepreneurship. Today, he helps teams and organizations achieve the next level of agility and organizational efficiency through Favro collaborative planning.



Zoë Curnoe

For the past 18 years, Zoë has held production positions at a range of companies that have spanned working with artists in the Canadian Rocky Mountains at the Banff Centre, from smaller independent companies to large powerhouses such as Riot Games and Electronic Arts.

In 2021 she left her role as Production Director of the Story Campaign for the massively popular Gears of War franchise at The Coalition to found Timbre Games where she has taken on the role of Studio Director.

SEASON 2 EPISODE 3

Breaking Down Team Silos for Productivity, Inclusion, and Winning the Best Talent

Having founded Timbre Games at a time when everyone was working from home, Zoë talks about launching a studio and building a company culture remotely. Timbre knew from the beginning, that they wanted to do this differently, and make sure they're not just the latest studio like all the rest. Zoë wanted to make sure that at every step they were hiring people that are going to be a culture add to what we've already created.

Zoë says that if you are inclusive you're going to get more innovation, you're going to create better games, better products, and better ideas will come from that sense of psychological safety for people

“When you're hiring someone into your company, make sure that they're themselves when they come to work every day, and they get to be who they truly are and they aren't covering or hiding that true self every day at work. And you're going to get more out of them.”

Key takeaway

One of the most important things is to pick the right tools to encourage your team to collaborate, instead of breaking people apart.

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TO THE FULL EPISODE



Don Daglow is a pioneering game designer, novelist, and 2008 Technical Emmy® Award recipient for his creation of the original version of Neverwinter Nights. He has led design, game narrative, production, and programming on a long list of titles, as well as serving as an advisor to online, mobile,

PC, and console game projects. Three-time Inc. 500™ CEO, a pioneering game designer, and 2008 Technical Emmy® Award recipient whose career spans the history of Silicon Valley. Teams have shipped over \$1 billion in in-game products under his leadership.

SEASON 2 EPISODE 1

Talent & Career Paths in the Game Industry

Don Daglow, being a true industry veteran, shares his views on how the games have changed since he started his first job here and how his management style has adapted to the maturing industry. When looking back on his career, Don agrees that he would still be in games, even if he could go back and choose something different.

Don says, that it is not only important to think about how your organization can hire talent, but also how can it retain them. He says that, whatever you act like as a leader, sets a pattern for the culture of the studio. And if that's a culture people want to work in, that will then help your talent recruitment and retainment. And as important as looking for skills, is looking for that cultural fit, whatever is the real culture, not the culture you wish you had.

“The first 3 people can set the personality to a company that will still be there after 30 000 people.”

Key takeaway

If you want to grow in your career, you want to have a skill that is hard for publishers, game developers, and studios to find.

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Sigurlína Ingvarsdóttir

One of the world's top Game Producers, Sigurlína Ingvarsdóttir has been at the forefront of AAA game development for 15 years, from Senior Producer at CCP, makers of EVE Online, to Senior Produc-

er of both Star Wars Battlefront and FIFA at Electronic Arts, to her role at Bonfire Studios. She works as an independent advisor to startup companies in different fields globally.

SEASON 1 EPISODE 3

Remote Work & Diversity

This podcast was recorded in July 2020

In this episode Patric and Sigurlína explore the benefits of a fully remote and distributed game studio. As we enter a new normal, both process and collaboration tools are more important than ever. With remote work done right, the advantages far outweigh the negatives. Sigurlína talks about her transition from the boring and beige world to gaming — the biggest and most successful entertainment industry today.

Our guest together with Patric Palm talk about diversity, and the importance of it in the team creating games, that are now being played by everyone, across all ages, all genders, and all ethnicities. They talk about how the gaming industry has changed from being predominantly all-male focused and is no longer mindlessly promoting stereotypes. Although diversity is a CEO-level question, it's important for the studio to have the benefits of diversity as it results in more conversations and different ideas.

“It’s important not to kill your ideas too soon, and also not to chase them for too long when they’re proven not to work.”

Key takeaway

Decision making has to be incredibly quick, scoping has to be incredibly precise, and the velocity always needs to be kept up.



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Kevin Johnson

Kevin is a Game Producer with over 14 years of management experience and 3 years of design experience working on high-profile AAA console and PC titles as well as premium mobile titles. He began his career in Production at Electronic Arts and has worked

at Realtime Worlds, Pendulum Studios and Telltale Games. Process improvement has always been a strong motivator for him as well as dedication to enabling teams to become greater than the sum of their parts.

SEASON 2 EPISODE 8

Productivity, Creativity, Inclusion — Friends or Foes?

In this episode, host Patric Palm and Kevin Johnson talk about inclusion in the games production industry: what is the current status, what are the common challenges, and how does it benefit creativity and productivity? Kevin shares why it is important to learn to understand people to make the team work, despite the varying personalities that you're going to have. He emphasizes the importance of soft skills and really getting to the core of what they need, and creating connections.

Kevin notes, that oftentimes, creativity can be suppressed by deadlines and organizational goals, which is why it is important that communication stays in a good place. So that as the creativity is generating different ideas, the team understands what the impact of those new ideas is, then you can make the informed decisions to make sure that you keep their productivity, and keep the product on track, but also allow good creative decisions to get made.

“There is no shortage of evidence out there that shows that diversity and inclusion result in better business outcomes. If you embrace it and allow it to be a driving force in what you do, everything about your business gets better.”

Key takeaway

It's important to have the tools and process in place that people feel actually enable their creativity, as opposed to it being some extra burden. You want to try to make it as seamless as possible.

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RESOLUTION

Tommy Palm

Prior to Resolution Games, Tommy was the spokesperson and Games Guru at King Digital Entertainment. He previously founded Fabrication Games, which was acquired by King and provided the foundation for the company to successfully change its focus to mobile.

A longtime veteran of the Swedish games scene, Tommy has worked on more than 25 games over the course of his career, establishing a consistent track record of guiding teams to commercial and critical success. Tommy is a regular collegiate lecturer and frequently contributes articles on business and games industry trends.

SEASON 2 EPISODE 11

Scaling a VC-Backed Studio From 2 to 10 Games in Development

In this episode, Tommy talks about how he entered the gaming market and turned his focus to VR, long before it was trendy. He shares that it is always better to enter a rising market if you bet on the right horse — it is way riskier going for a market that is already mature, and it's harder to break into something when there are lower margins and it is very competitive.

Having a strong passion for games and constant new ideas coming to him, he emphasizes the importance of focusing on

one thing until he feels like it can run on its own and he's no longer the bottleneck in the process. Only then does he feel like he can focus on a new idea and make sure it turns into something great.

During his experience in leading teams, Tommy has learned that trust is one of the most important aspects, saying, “when people feel trusted they tend to step up and use that in a fantastic way.” Apart from trust, Tommy says a lot of his success came from simplifying processes.

“Games is this beautiful collaboration project like a concert or classical music where you have all these different fields that need to play in harmony with each other for a great result.”

Key takeaway

The tricky thing is not to scale up to more projects, it's to not scale up to more projects than you can handle.

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FROST GIANT

Jason Savopolos

Jason began his career in game development in 2007 at Electronic Arts; Jason was senior project manager on Creature Quest at VC Mobile Entertainment; in 2018 joined Blizzard Entertainment, and now works at Giant Frost Studios.

SEASON 2 EPISODE 2

Hiring for Success in the Games Industry

Jason shares his best tips for hiring a successful team, that works well together and is both diverse and productive. He says that it is important to not only focus on the candidates' years of experience but to also ask the right questions and figure out if their values match company values. "But passion is probably the number one thing, right?" says Jason, as he explains why you

shouldn't close the door on people if they may not have all the right experience or come from a different industry.

To show an example that each voice in the team matters, Jason makes sure to have regular coffee runs or catch-ups with his teammates, to build strong relationships, provide support and make each team member better.

"For us, it's really just trying to make sure that we have the right people that are both passionate, but also are hungry."

Key takeaway

The beginning is about building relationships and listening to the team so that they feel supported, and then from there you start building off that and creating processes.

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Martina Johannesson

Currently working at Unity, Martina has a strong passion for inclusion in tech. Commonly seen moderating discussions on access to venture capital for female entrepreneurs, her most recent testament to her passion for impact-tech is the organization Random Hacks of Kindness (RHoK) Copenhagen.

Jarune Preiksaite

Jarune founded and successfully led digital communication agency bigNow, was Head of Marketing at B2B SaaS startup Whatagraph, and now leads Favro Marketing operations. She has been a board member of Women Go Tech for 6 years, the first mentorship program in Lithuania for women wanting to succeed in the tech sector.



SEASON 2 EPISODE 10

Boosting Women in Tech

Martina and Jarune both have a passion for inclusion and diversity in the tech sector. In this episode, our guests discuss why it is important to boost women in technology and provide a safe space to help them feel accepted and unleash their potential. Our guests talk about why having inclusion in mind during each step of your hiring process and how allowing remote work can increase diversity in the organization.

Martina notes, that even though companies are now providing more opportunities in the right spaces, they also need to start educating people on how to change their career paths or get into tech. “We are moving towards a more positive environment, but we’re just doing it too slow,” says Jarune, acknowledging the certain change in VCs, current regulations, and employers.

“It’s important to have inclusion as a really big core of the business model, just to make sure that you see someone that you can relate to.”

Key takeaway

Fish can’t see water, and that refers a lot to structural biases.

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Joe Nickolls

Joe has over 22 years of experience in AAA Video Game development. Most recently Joe was the Vice President and GM of Electronic Arts-Maxis, leading the Sims franchise to record-breaking results, and a deep focus on both live service and mobile gaming.

Feeling the pull of his home country, Joe has returned to Canada to build a new team of the industry's best people and create a great new company — Timbre Games Studio. For his entire career, Joe has been at the forefront of change, through 4 console transitions and the explosion of mobile.

SEASON 2 EPISODE 13

Secrets to Building a Company Culture of Fun While Making Fun Customers' Experiences

In this episode, Joe talks about why it is important to let everyone in the company have a voice and provide clarity — everyone in the company needs to understand why they are there and what their goal is. He believes that it is important to help employees accomplish their career goals and guide them through their journey, even if their current position is just a short stop.

Joe shares how his organization built close connections while working remotely, by overcommunicating, having online team lunches, and regular on-sites. He believes that keeping the atmosphere light and flat is key, and if you can have fun talking about cilantro, product management software, or anything, the game you're making will end up being fun too. People play games to have fun, and it only makes sense if people making it are having fun in the process too.

“You should have a connection with the people that are tasked with running the studio. So by keeping it relatively flat, open, and consequence-free, I think it makes for a better place.”

Key takeaway

In the organization, keep everything light, so everyone could feel like they can ask anyone anything.

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Ryan Snyder

Ryan has been in game production for over 17 years after getting his start in audio engineering and spending time in TV production, mostly notably working on the X-Games. He's held a variety of production roles at several studios including

Disney: Wideload, Phosphor Games, and Iron Galaxy. Ryan joined Kongregate in the summer of 2021 as Director of Production to help them build up better production processes and launch great games.

SEASON 2 EPISODE 9

Not All Producers Are Cut From the Same Cloth

During this episode, Patric and Ryan discuss the differences between game producers. With a diverse pool of talents we can begin to see some patterns emerging and a variety of people types can be broken down into categories — the coach, the parent, the philosopher, the map-maker and the business developer. Ryan shares his advice on how to put together a team that plays and works well together, by defining what skillset you expect from them.

Ryan says, that it is important to always learn and take these lessons along with you as you grow in your career. Even if you're not working on your dream project or your dream game right now, it is still essential to work on that specific skill and challenge yourself, and practice.

“If you end up building a team that's all hardcore data, but the team they're leading is very empathy-based and needs a lot of soft skills, you're going to offset that too much.”

Key takeaway

The path isn't always to go from being an intern, all the way to being the top-of-the-line production. There are lots of different ways you can maneuver within that path and have tremendous success.

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A black and white portrait of Adrian Fiechter, a man with curly hair, smiling. The word "Wolt" is in the top left corner. His name "Adrian Fiechter" is written in large blue letters across the bottom of the portrait.

Wolt

Adrian Fiechter

Adrian started as a software developer and now has more than 18 years of experience in various IT roles with the main focus to bring business and IT together to deliver efficiently more value. Before Wolt he

worked as Head of Digital Workplace at Nordea. He was attracted by the flexibility to explore and implement new technology much faster, which is what brought him to his current company.

SEASON 2 EPISODE 5

The Role of IT in the Working-From-Anywhere Organization

A conversation about IT in a cloud-native fast-growing company. During this episode, Adrian shares why he feels that working from anywhere is the new normal, why enabling that can empower your company, and how IT plays a big role in implementing these changes. It requires the team to always be fast and efficient, to onboard new people in a few days or send equipment safely halfway across the world.

And even with all the efforts required, Adrian says IT is more of a supporting role in a company, it needs to be invisible and just work. While working at Wolt, he is motivated by contributing to building the idea of the future, “we set the future as the default, and then we figure out how we integrate legacy things into it.”

“If you want to have an organization that is fit for the future, if you enable working from anywhere, you’re simply more flexible. You get access to a global talent pool, where your competitors who work in one location are very limited to the talents in one specific location.”

Key takeaway

IT is the enabler that allows people to work from anywhere.

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Brian Graham

A true amalgam. Brian has a passion for bringing creative products to market and focusing on user experience and quality, almost as much as he loves Product Operations and development. Coupled with the

complexities of cutting-edge technology, user experience, interaction, and joy, there are always problems to solve, processes to make better and relationships to build.

SEASON 2 EPISODE 12

Do's and Don'ts of Building a Sustainable Foundation for Developing Great Games

Looking for challenges, Brian found himself relocating and starting a job in the gaming industry. Leading teams, understanding what makes them unique, and finding ways to work better, while bringing quality experiences to market, make Brian happy — and he's here to share his secrets of building a great team and the lessons he learned during almost two decades in games.

Our guest talks about the changes he has seen in production management over the years, saying that the biggest change he has seen is the expectations of gaming. And if before, you could package things on a disk and move on to the next, games have now moved to this live service where things are expected to live forever. Another big change he noticed happened when switching from traditional project management to agile, is that people are looking at things not in terms of particular metrics but in terms of leading indicators.

“You need to have some patience and expect that, hey, the first several deliveries out of these sprints, the focus isn't so much on what they produced, it's more focused on how they're producing it.”

Key takeaway

It is important to understand that project management requires a lot of patience, and it's a lot of trial and error.

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Favro enables individuals and teams from the world's most progressive companies to operate with agility, autonomy, and alignment. With the game industry increasingly facing challenges of rapid delivery in a working-from-anywhere environment, Favro becomes the natural tool choice to support the necessary culture and workflow improvements.

Favro promotes team autonomy and alignment toward company goals. With Favro, evolved leaders can level up their game and keep hierarchies flat. From our experience, Favro can replace many tools and also integrates with your IT infrastructure (e.g. SSO, Jira, Slack).

With a combination of Favro collections, boards, content cards, and relations to connect everything, all aspects of a business including both agile cross-functional teams and traditional departments can achieve their goals, communicating with each other in real-time. Favro gives a single source of truth and helps in breaking down organizational silos, making work faster — faster collaboration, faster responses to feedback, faster execution, and faster time to market.

At Favro, we love discussing everything collaborative planning, business agility, working-from-anywhere, project management, culture, and leadership. Find more content and best practices on our website.

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