Cheryl Platz

Creative Director – Multi-Platform Game Development

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Forward-thinking design leader with proven success guiding the conception, incubation, and launch of memorable games and digital player experiences. Builds relationships across levels of leadership to shape the direction of new IPs and creative concepts, empowering design teams to overcome unprecedented challenges while creating a positive, inclusive work culture.

Core Expertise

Product Design Leadership – Design Systems– Cross-Functional Leadership – Creative Vision – Visual Design - Design Strategy

Employee Development & Engagement – Thought Leadership – Process Optimization – Game Design – Production & Localization

Tools & Technologies: Figma – Sketch – Adobe Creative Cloud – Balsamiq – Trello – Mural – Miro – JIRA – Unity

Key Qualifications

- Experienced game design and production leader who has contributed to nearly a dozen shipped titles, ensuring the quality, balance, and usability of multi-platform AAA games and experiences such as The Sims 2, Pokémon TCG Live, League of Legends and 2XKO from Riot Games, Marvel Strike Force from Scopely, Disney Friends DS, and the The Urbz: Sims in the City (GBA/DS)

- Internationally-recognized expert on voice-user-interface technology, artificial intelligence, and multi-modal user interfaces, leveraged to shape the experience of Amazon Alexa, Echo Look, Cortana, Windows Automotive, and the Nintendo DS.

- Dynamic leader with a passion for building purpose-driven design organizations and leveraging applied storytelling to unify teams under a shared creative vision across high-impact initiatives.

- Respected teacher and author on both video game development and user experience design topics.

Current Role

CREATIVE DIRECTOR, GAME STUDIO – POKÉMON TCG LIVE (Android, iOS, Desktop)
The Pokémon Company International ▪ Oct 2024 – Present

Redefined the working culture of our entire studio while establishing clear and direct guidance on new product ideation processes and driving strong strategic alignment through all of our 2025 engagements.

- Leveled up our team's approach to shipping as a live service, establishing Campaign Briefs, an economic strategy, and a new creative ideation process that have helped move our review score from 2.8 to 4.6 in the Google Play store since my start.

- Proactively identified a gap in our strategic plan around a learning pathway for players and helped lead the team to designs for the Professor's Learning Lab, driving a roadmap pivot that resulted in the permanent addition of this learning feature Jan 2026.

- Redefined the entire product ideation process, creating new templates and success criteria for creative briefs, feature briefs, and campaign briefs as well as visual documentation of the roles and responsibilities at each stage in the process.

- Coached the team through their first major new feature release since launch, Card Dex, and an improved FTUE in 2025, both of which combined to measurably improve player retention. FTUE changes resulted in a permanent 2 point lift in D1 retention.

- Changed the creative culture of the team as a whole by clearly creating, modeling, and reinforcing Creative Norms in direct response to behavioral patterns and needs I witnessed on the team: Lead With Curiosity, Solve the Right Problems, Build and Lead with Trust, and Work out Loud.

- Restructured the Creative Line (20 cross-disciplinary creatives) from a 3 pod arrangement to two purpose-driven pods, ensuring all team members had a balanced set of cross-disciplinary peers and a clear sense of creative purpose.

- Modeled a data-driven approach to problem solving that led to identification of critical fixes in how our ELO is handled for more casual players, and supported a major shift in our ranked ladder reset philosophy.

- Supported the team through the release of the end of the Scarlet & Violet series starting with Prismatic Evolution, and oversaw the game's Mega Evolution though Battle Board, music, cosmetics, and visual effects improvements.

- Proactively established partnerships across TPCi and created campaign proposals that lifted up partner goals, including TCG Live's "My Friend Malamar" campaign and the creation of the Study Season campaign concept in support of our Play! Pokemon efforts.

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Design Leader ⬥ cheryl@cherylplatz.com

Previous Professional Experience

DIRECTOR OF EXPERIENCE DESIGN – MARVEL STRIKE FORCE (Android, iOS)
Scopely, Inc. ▪ Mar 2024 – Nov 2024

Unified the design operations of disparate UX and UI disciplines while improving relations with our overseas design vendors, and helped ensure that Experience Design is showing up as key partners at the earliest stages of product ideation and pre-production.

- Created the Marvel Strike Force Player Journey / Game Loop Map as a shared understanding artifact to reduce the common misconception that all players were having the same experience. Researched and depicted the entire player unlock journey from Levels 1 – 100 (game modes, features, gear tiers, challenges, events, campaigns, etc.). My MSF journey map has been shared across the entire game development team & led to vastly increased cross-discipline collaboration, becoming a living document.
- Coached my team through the visual design and branding development for our "Pool Party" event tied to the blockbuster Deadpool and Wolverine movie release, a critical event for our game and community.
- Led the Experience Design team in pitching and delivering a transformation of the player experience of our "Open All" Orbs feature after a major server incident in March 2024 caused the feature to go offline. In tandem with a backend engineering fix, we pioneered a new solution that was more efficient with fewer clicks while allowing greater control over the number of orbs opened at once for power players. The experience launched in August 2024.
- Successfully rehabilitated my team's design collaboration processes within and across disciplinary boundaries, documenting our full end-to-end process with techniques and exit criteria in a way that enabled even vendor designers in other countries to successfully engage in blue-sky design ideation that led to tangible product outcomes.
- As a member of the Stakeholder Review team, review and approve all proposed one-pagers, briefs, and specs for Marvel Strike Force on behalf of Experience Design since my arrival, providing detailed feedback and partnership where appropriate.

DIRECTOR OF USER EXPERIENCE – PLAYER PLATFORM; HEAD OF RIOT UX ▪ Riot Games ▪ 2021 – 2024

Expanded the capabilities of a growing user experience design team, overseeing the design strategy for mobile, client, console, commerce, and web experiences while streamlining processes across multiple internal divisions.

- Grew the Player Platform's user experience discipline from a team of four to 15 professionals, creating a new developer-focused sub-team and a revised leadership framework – ensured 100% employee retention and guided the majority of direct hires to promotions and continued professional development.
- Defined the product vision of the studio's Microsoft Game Pass offering, establishing a cross-organizational strategy, documentation, and improved design process used by a working group of 300 people – launched the product within six months, exceeding expectations for player engagement and building out new design processes used across upcoming Riot releases.
- Partnered with the Arcane design team to build the digital experience vision for Arcane Season 2, aligning more than 60 employees on a multi-stage creative plan encompassing web, client, mobile, in-game, and out-of-game interactivity.
- Built and refined new processes and design operations frameworks as the User Experience Craft Lead, enabling the continued growth and engagement of 70 full-time UX designers company-wide.
  - Launched the Cross-UX Shareout Series, building an internal resource for designers to share in-progress work – promoted collaborations across teams and led to significant improvements in employee performance and belonging.
  - Audited and standardized the studio's UX hiring practices, including onboarding documentation, interview processes, and portfolio review guidelines, refining the studio's talent acquisition goals to double the number of full-time UX designers.
  - Mitigated more than $100K in software licensing costs by deploying a new Figma governance process, proactively addressing viral license adoption among partners and parent companies while driving progression towards enterprise licensing.

PRINCIPAL USER EXPERIENCE DESIGNER – PRODUCTIVITY AND COLLABORATION
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation ▪ 2018 – 2021

Defined the design strategy for the organization's Productivity & Collaboration pillar, improving communication and efficiency across digital channels by implementing cutting-edge systems and securing additional resources.

- Designed and presented a business proposal to accelerate the foundation's migration to Microsoft Teams, securing $2M to replace global conference room hardware to address persistent roadblocks to international collaboration.
- Launched a usability testing program and multi-phase training plan to exceed voluntary adoption rates by 30% – completed full migration in February 2020, directly enabling the transition to virtual operations prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

PRINCIPAL DESIGN LEAD – AZURE PLATFORM & POWER PLATFORM ▪ Microsoft ▪ 2016 – 2018

Oversaw the design, pre-production, and alpha launches of new cloud computing and AI-powered solutions, auditing and refining design systems to accelerate development.

- Aligned 70 internal partner teams as the design lead for Azure and the Azure Marketplace, transforming existing design systems in less than six weeks to drastically improve design quality and efficiency.
- Drove the unification of four complex administrative portals as the design lead for the Power Platform Admin Center, recruiting and leading a team of five to create a cross-product information architecture and shared design system in less than one year.

SENIOR UX DESIGNER – ECHO LOOK & AMAZON'S ALEXA PLATFORM ▪ Amazon ▪ 2014 – 2016

Pioneered product features and concepts for the company's next-generation voice-activated assistant products, Echo Look and Alexa – drove concept design, storyboarding, feature iteration, and user testing alongside platform teams.

- Created the initial storyboard for the Echo Look as the product's first designer, outlining the resulting prototype's gesture, voice, and touch control systems, as well as an internal AI data gathering function – secured the team $20M to integrate voice-user-interaction capabilities and notifications into the final product design.
- Created a scalable framework for the Alexa Notifications platform, unifying existing notification and interruption behaviors while streamlining the implementation of new scenarios across devices.

SENIOR UX DESIGNER ▪ Microsoft ▪ 2007 – 2014

Oversaw UI and feature design for seminal server software products deployed across thousands of desktop, phone, and voice systems, including the Windows System Center Configuration Manager, and the Cortana speech input, meeting scheduling, messaging, and email alert systems. Co-led groundbreaking information architecture research to transform the user experience for the System Center Configuration Manager, paving the way for the design and implementation of next-generation UX and UI capabilities.

LEAD PRODUCER ▪ Griptonite Games Studio (Amaze Entertainment) ▪ 2004 – 2007

Oversaw the strategic vision, project management, design, and quality control of five shipped Disney Interactive Studios games, leveraging budgets of up to $1.85M to exceed quality, efficiency, and team engagement standards across accelerated development timelines. Titles included Chronicles of Narnia: Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe (GBA). Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest (GBA/DS), Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End (DS), and Disney Friends (DS).

ASSISTANT PRODUCER ▪ Maxis Studios (Electronic Arts) ▪ 2003 – 2004

Partnered with multi-disciplinary teams to guide research, writing, localization, and production across the Sims line of games, including Sims: Makin' Magic, The Sims 2, The Sims Bustin' Out (GBA & console). Oversaw production operations and partner communications for Urbz: Sims in the City's multi-platform release on the Game Boy and Nintendo DS.

Additional Projects

- Wrote the best-selling books "Design Beyond Devices: Creating Multimodal, Cross-Device Experiences" and "The Game Development Strategy Guide: Crafting Modern Video Games That Thrive," published by Rosenfeld Media and adopted as a foundational tool by multiple major corporations and universities to shape their technology innovation practices.
- Adjunct instructor for Carnegie Mellon's Masters of Entertainment Industry Management program in Hollywood, CA (2024 – present). Teaching a self-created annual course called "What Makes Us Play: The Craft of Video Games", helping entertainment MBA students develop an end-to-end understanding of the modern video game industry.
- Founded the boutique design consultancy IdeaPlatz, engaging clients across industries as an educator, workshop facilitator and keynote speaker in 15 countries across five continents - including UX Days Tokyo, TedxSeattle, and UX London.
- Connects with diverse audiences as an actor, improviser, and emcee – credits include 13 years as a professional ensemble member and teacher at Unexpected Productions, home of Seattle TheatreSports improv comedy, co-star of multiple Twitch Actual Play TV shows, and the Toastmaster for the 58th Annual Nebula Awards.

Education

Bachelor of Science, Computer Science & Human-Computer Interaction · Carnegie Mellon University

Graduate Studies – Entertainment Technology · Carnegie Mellon University