

Facilitating Game Productions



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Abstract

As the game industry expands and the scale of production increases, the complexity and demand for leadership also grow. This paper investigates the leading roles that are responsible for the facilitation of production within the Danish game development industry. This enables a mapping of the organization, role distribution, and key competencies involved in the managerial and facilitative aspects of production companies.

The focus of this paper is to identify what tasks are performed during the production facilitation and what competency they are performed with. The research combines qualitative and quantitative methods.

The paper identifies four key pillars of production facilitation:

- **Deadlines and milestones** - Ensuring that production meets estimated timelines.
- **Stakeholder expectation** - Ensuring that production meets the expectations of various stakeholders.
- **Communication flow** - Facilitating smooth communication within the team and ensuring that critical information is shared.
- **Employee satisfaction and happiness** - Ensuring that employees are thriving in the production environment.

Findings furthermore suggest facilitation & execution of coordinating activities, secondary work activities, and interpersonal skills are key competencies.

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Introduction

The Danish game industry currently consists of approximately 200 active companies, of which about 30% have more than five employees and are headquartered in Denmark¹. This research focuses on this segment of the industry to understand the roles responsible for facilitating game productions, map out the tasks they perform, and the competencies required in their daily work. In this context, the research seeks to answer the following question:

"WHAT LEADING ROLES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FACILITATION OF PRODUCTION WITHIN THE DANISH GAME DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY, HOW ARE THEY ORGANIZED, AND WHAT KEY COMPETENCIES ARE INVOLVED IN THEIR DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITIES?"

The reasoning behind this research question is simply that talking with multiple different producers and mid-tiered leaders within the industry usually indicates a broad and varied set of tasks. And often people are not in complete agreement about what tasks, skills and personality traits are important to these central figure heads. Additionally, we often see promotions of key discipline personnel into a leadership position. This means that the discipline talent that we have now must use a lot of time and energy on leadership and management. This "promotion into incompetence" is an issue often reflected in talks with various industry experts, and the author of this working paper is curious to know if this has any statistical indication as well. And, if there is statistical evidence of something like this, how can we best prepare new leaders in the industry to be as ready as possible for the challenges awaiting them in the role of production facilitators? As a result, this paper will come to suggest different approaches and key areas of focus that the industry might have when recruiting and promoting into key roles associated with production facilitation.

The study adopts a three-phase methodology, starting with qualitative interviews and dialogues with key representatives from companies within the selected segment of the Danish game industry. Secondly, a test case of semi structured interviews with a few representatives from the selected group of companies, to ascertain the quality and scope of the survey.

This is, lastly, followed by a corrected series of semi-structured interviews with a much broader segmentation targeting specific roles within the industry. The research was conducted on 21 key figures from 17 different game development companies in Denmark. 13 of these were conducted in semi structured interviews building on the survey design, and the same design was used to conduct the last 8 digital surveys.

In this working paper the author will provide clarity on both methodology and literature used, as well as give insight into my data set, the sorting and processing of selected data. Lastly, the paper will summarize the findings and condense the key proposals and focus areas, that the research indicates are important to the people in charge of production facilitation within the Danish Game Industry.

¹ At this moment the author is not allowed to share the database openly, but certain amounts of information can be shared on request.

Delimitation

The research that supports this paper is multifaceted, but the focus in this paper is directed towards identifying what tasks are performed during the production facilitation and what competency they are performed with.

Research into the mapping of roles, top company challenges, prior education and occupation is delimited from this paper and will only be referenced briefly, if at all, to establish context.

Producer or Production Facilitator

To both assist the reader and avoid convoluted explanations of roles associated with tasks, the author has opted to use the phrase “*production facilitator*”, as a company and context neutral definition. The reason behind this is that while many identify the role connected to this task as a producer, many companies don’t employ producers but have instead opted to spread the tasks of production facilitation over different individuals, resulting in different combinations of roles taking on different types of responsibilities. In some smaller companies the CEO might be part of the project planning and facilitation process, whereas in others that task may befall the project manager or producer. Another example could be that in certain cases a people manager will handle the 1-on-1s where other companies might assign this task to the discipline manager (i.e. Lead artist etc.).

Danish Game Industry

As this is a research project into the roles, tasks and competencies within the Danish game industry it stands to reason that an overview of the industry is needed.

No public record is, at the moment of writing, available to gather a simple overview of all the companies within the sector². As such the author has connected multiple different sources of information into one database of companies in an effort to ascertain the breadth and scope of the company. This research has been made possible through the aid of the new formed industry association: Games Denmark. Through combining their list of collaborators with the collaborator list of Game Hub Denmark (part of my association), and double checking with Virk.dk, we were able to identify approximately 150 active game development companies.

As I needed to research people that were central to the facilitative aspects of production, I also needed companies where such a role might exist. And from my years of experience in incubation, I know that startup companies typically don’t have a specialized role for something like this, they typically either spread out the role between multiple candidates or they “just” select one “unlucky” team member to do the “project-thing”. This is often a solution born out of necessity, and not a professional choice, but no matter the cause I want the data in my research to represent the workflow of professional companies. Therefore I made a selective choice, which was to disregard companies younger than one year and those who had less than 5 full-time employees.

² Virk.dk is a potential database to look through, as it contains all CVR registration within Denmark, but companies with the games industry tend to choose rather varied when selecting their industry segment code.

With these selective parameters in mind my list of possible candidates within the Danish sector came to 69 companies. Bearing this in mind, the author spread out the inquiries for both interviews and survey into three segments of the selection pool:

1. Small: 5 to 19 people (approx. 68 % of the selection pool)
2. Medium: 20 to 50 people (23 % of the selection pool)
3. Large: +50 people (9 % of the selection pool)

To maintain the best possible relation between the selection pool and the respondents, the author chose to focus mainly on the small and medium tier of companies within the selection pool.

Literature review

The observation of the key challenge within the game development industry, that there is a growing cost and complexity, has been inspired and supported by various different sources. Among these are the thoughts and research of Raph Koster both at Casual Connect in LA 2017 and in general³. Koster is both an experienced game designer, founder, CCO and CEO of various companies.

In his research Koster looked at the development cost for over 250 games ranging in release-year from 1985 to 2017. Statistically he arrives at the conclusion that the price of production is multiplied by a factor of 10 for every 10th year. With pricings averaging about 50M\$ around 2010, we would assume (based on his findings) that here 10 years later the costs average about 100M\$ per title. But, as Koster points out, even though the price per MB of data developed has plateaued the size of games are increasing, and as such we can expect the next generation of AAA games to become even more expensive. As a result, Koster forecasts that the average development costs might increase to as much as 250\$ in the early 2020s. Various different sources report different game productions both reaching and surpassing those cost levels⁴.



Figure 1 - Forecast #1 MB Price [Cost/Payment]

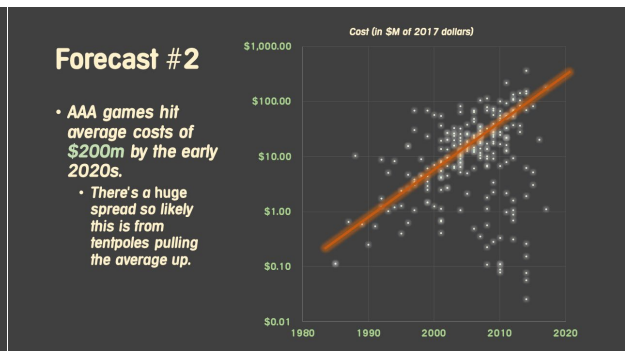


Figure 2 - Forecast #2 AAA Average Cost

Additionally, in an effort to research more into the main problem area of rising cost and complexity in game industry as a whole, multiple other news sites and articles have been reviewed. Among those I want to highlight both Kotaku & RockPaperShotgun as examples of sites where investigative research has been conducted.

³ (Koster, The Cost of Games, 2018) & (Koster, Some current game economics, 2017)

⁴ (Ball, 2024) & (Zollner, 2023)

RockPaperShotgun⁵ presented in 2024 the state of competition on the PC market, and data shows that it has skyrocketed over the last couple of years, with approximately 14.000 different games launching, just on the Steam platform, in 2023.

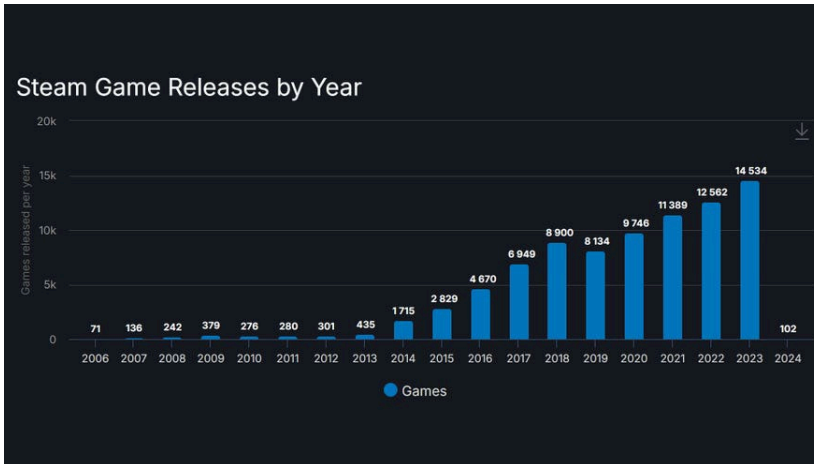


Figure 3 - Number of game releases on steam

This increase in competition has sent marketing costs soaring, as reported by Kotaku⁶. Numbers reported vary a lot from publisher to publisher, but we are seeing marketing costs ranging from a third of production cost to a 1 to 1 ratio, thus totaling 500M\$ for some titles (with one report at around 1B\$).

Regarding the methodology appropriated in the research, much is inspired and informed by the book: *Survey* by Dines Andersen et. al.⁷. When it comes to understanding and defining the size of the population, the process of data collection, the formulation of questions and the survey design, this book has proved a valuable insight. The idea of both pilot-testing and mixed methodology (or combination design) in regard to personal interviews, and paper surveys are also described in *Survey*. These thoughts and ideas on how to design surveys as well as how to gather and collect data, have helped me establish the baseline of my methodological approach.

Additionally, the book: *“Interview”* by Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann⁸ has been used as a guide in the process of both preparing and conducting the interviews, as well as how to implement an operationalization of the different questions in the interview. This operationalization is done in an effort to help the interviewee internalize the questions and make sure they reflect and respond in accordance with their own practice.

⁵ (Smith, 2024)

⁶ (Gach, 2023)

⁷ (Dines Andersen et al., 2017)

⁸ (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015)

Methodology

In this research project different research methodologies have been used to extract different aspects and assumptions in different phases of the project. In this section of the paper, insight will be provided into the choices and reasonings.

Qualitative delimitation of roles and responsibilities

My methodology in approaching the subject was to initially try to identify the most important aspects of production facilitation as well as gain access to relevant key discipline personnel that could help elaborate and ultimately complete the survey. This initial round of inquiry was done through qualitative interviews, and it was through these interviews that I ultimately got an indication of my four main pillars of tasks:

- **Deadlines and milestones** - Ensuring that production meets estimated timelines.
- **Stakeholder expectation** - Ensuring that production meets the expectations of various stakeholders.
- **Communication flow** - Facilitating smooth communication within the team and ensuring that critical information is shared.
- **Employee satisfaction and happiness** - Ensuring that employees are thriving in the production environment.

Semi structured interviews for testing and implementation

Through my findings in the interviews a draft survey was constructed and tested through semi structured interviews with potential respondents and members of the initial inquiry round. And with the feedback of those involved in the test-case the final version of the survey was created on the MS-Forms platform.

During the initial part of the data collection phase, my approach was semi structured interviews with the survey as a guideline. This was done both to make sure I reached the right percentile of companies, in correspondence with my defined segmentation of the industry, but also make sure I got the right level of information in the questions. In this part of the data collection, I did 13 semi structured interviews.

In the latter part of the data collection phase the survey was used more quantitatively as I didn't conduct the interviews but instead selectively shared the survey with companies fitting my criteria, making sure to balance out the percentage distribution to again fit my industry segmentation. In this part of the data collection, I got 8 survey responses.

To be specific, the 13 semi structured interviews were conducted as assisted surveys, where I filled out the survey in accordance with their answers and wishes. Thus, the data follows the exact same structure as the last 8 survey responses. The reason for the need to assist in filling out the survey and doing the semi structured interviews in the initial part of data collection was primarily due to securing the completion of the survey, which will be explained more thoroughly in the following section.

The Survey

Framing

When designing the survey, the time available to the respondents has to be considered, and typically they are able to assign a short amount of time to conduct a survey. If the survey is too long, the respondents might skip out during the survey if there isn't an immediate reason for them to finalize it. Sometimes the survey designer is able to retain the focus of the respondent by indicating how much time is left or how many questions/sections are left. But more importantly it is imperative that the survey is to the point, and that the essence of the survey is relevant to the respondent and that the questions are interesting and easy to understand.⁹

All these qualifications have been taken into consideration in the design of the survey, but because of the depth needed the scope of the survey was hard to contain. The number of questions was not that many, but the time needed to answer them through reflection would end up taking a fair amount of time. The average respondent took 30-40 minutes to answer the final iteration of the survey, and typically it is advised that a survey doesn't take more than 10 minutes¹⁰. So, because of the length and depth it was decided that semi structured interviews were the best way to start out. Interviews are typically considered to be a bit longer, and as such there is an acceptance of the increased time scale. Furthermore, the interviews were done online, where the author would share his screen while taking notes and answering the survey questions with the words of the interviewees. The interviews were recorded for the sake of documentation, but also as source material to support some of the argumentations provided in the paper.

This semi structured interview methodology was incorporated throughout the entire data collection process, but in the last months of data collection, a duplicate survey was made available so that new respondents could answer themselves. This way the collected data from the semi structured interviews and the regular quantitative surveys would not get mixed up, and the author had a way to keep those data entries separate up until the analysis phase.

Design

The survey¹¹, was put into three sections, each with a primary purpose of providing specific data, and each with the secondary purpose of informing correlated data points.

In the following the purpose of each section of the survey will be covered, in order to help inform the reader on what data will be used and how, in the analysis segment of the paper.

Section 1 – Initial entry

Inquires: Company name and role

Besides needing the company name to document and make sure that the respondent was within the selection pool of companies, this role would give me the opportunity to look back and correlate data points towards specific roles. For instance, if there were tasks that were only mentioned by a specific type of role.

⁹ (Dines Andersen et al., 2017)

¹⁰ (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015)

¹¹ (Pedersen, 2024)

Section 2 – Main data

Inquires: Primary responsibilities, tasks performed, hard and soft skills used, secondary tasks performed

These questions were at the core of the research, and as such this was where most of the time was consumed. In three separate questions the surveys inquired about 10 tasks, 10 hard skills and 10 soft skills. The reason for that delimitation was that through initial testing it was difficult to keep this dialogue focused and concise enough to be usable. A delimitation of 5 was also tried, but that ended up being too brief and shallow, without offering the necessary scope to define the depth of each type of task/activity and skill appropriated.

This key data entry could be viewed either by itself, or through the lens of the entries from the other sections. For example, it could be interesting to investigate if there were types of tasks and activities performed by a specific role and if there was a connection between the skills used and the educational/employment background of the respondents.

Section 3 – Background information

Inquires: What is the educational background, how was the current employment attained, what was the prior employment?

The primary interest of this section is to provide insight into the breadth of backgrounds and ways into games business. This will in turn inform the project of potential trending ways to enter the business, but more importantly show possible correlations between the skills mentioned and used to complete certain tasks. However, this part of the research isn't a part of the data treatment in this paper.

Methodological Critique

There are a couple of key points within my methodological approach that, upon reflection, could have used some adjustments.

For instance, in the main part of my survey (Section 2) I ask the respondent to select between four different types of primary areas of responsibilities. While they can select more than one, it would have been interesting to hear from the respondents, in their own words, what responsibility areas they were invested in. While these were carefully selected through dialogue with C-level representatives, it would have opened up the possibility for the respondents to share insights into previously unnoticed areas of responsibility.

Additionally, the tasks mentioned by the respondents had to be categorized by the researcher, which is in itself an interpretation process and thus error prone. It would be more prudent to ask the respondents themselves to categorize the tasks regarding the chosen key responsibilities. This process could result in a lot of time-consuming reflections and potential changes, and thus would have increased the already long completion time.

Data

Through the survey different types of data have been collected:

- Raw data gathered from the survey.
- Audio/voice recordings, gathered through the interviews.

The audio and voice recordings are viewed more as historic data, and while there were certain aspects of the interviews that have helped inform and opionate me, this is not the majority case. Thus, the voice recordings are treated as historic and documentative data.

The raw data from the survey is my primary data source for this working paper, though the data in itself needed sanitization in order for me to be able to quantify certain aspects. All the original data, though anonymized, is available upon request, whereas an un-anonymized version is kept in data storage as per requirement and for the sake of documentation.

In this paper examples and snippets of data from the sanitized data set will be shown, and when data has otherwise been treated or abbreviated, the reader will be informed.

Role levels represented

The main body of respondents were appointed in the lower to mid-tier of management, and a few of the respondents were in the upper end of management. These Top-level managers where all key representatives associated with production facilitation, which made them relevant to the research.

Roles mentioned were all the way from Producers to lead engineers to CEOs. In figure 4 the data set has been interpreted to allow for a generalization into three different categories. This was in an effort to better understand the markup of the respondents.

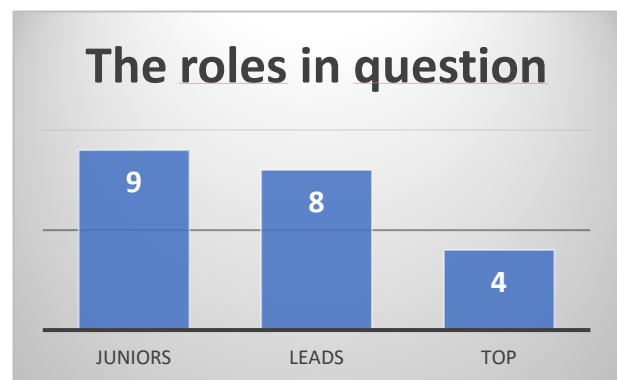


Figure 4 - The Roles in Question

Areas of Responsibility

When looking at the areas of responsibility (figure 5), as seen below, the interviewees were asked to rate their primary areas of responsibility, and if they had more than one, they were allowed to select multiple.

It was clear to the author that most of the people asked had a focus area in either Deadlines and Milestone (DM) and/or in the Communications flow areas. About 75% had both marked as primary¹²

While the other tasks might not be that strongly represented, they are mentioned in over half of the cases, and from reviewing the sanitized data sheet it is apparent that the engagement with employee satisfaction is not necessarily attached to the higher echelons of leadership, but rather distributed widely across the field from both junior to top level.

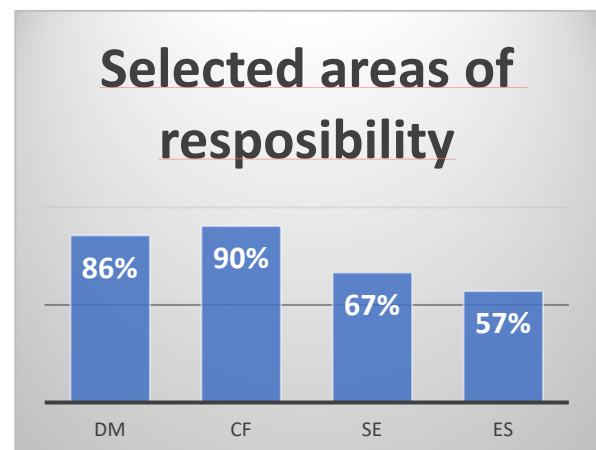


Figure 5 - Select areas of responsibility

¹² As reviewed from the sanitized data sheet

Primary tasks

167 tasks were indexed, where 120 of them were unique mentions. A lot more indexes were relatively similar, or had similarities, but not enough to qualify as similar mentions.

As the tasks were described in a very personal matter and with varying degrees of precision, information from the interviews themselves has been used to allow for interpretation and categorization. As a result, the author has been able to categorize all except four specific task-mentions within my four primary areas of responsibility:

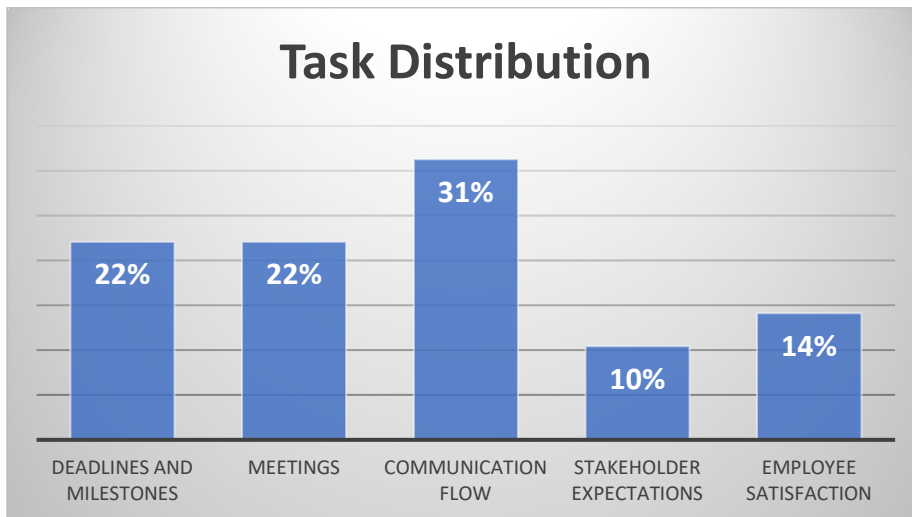


Figure 6 - Categorized distribution of tasks

A new column of tasks called “Meetings” has been included as there was a significant number of specified meeting-mentions. Most of the Communication flow task mentions are also meeting related, but not specifically “a meeting”.

Below is a list of the most important mentions within each category:

Deadlines and Milestones	Meetings	Communication Flow	Stakeholder expectations	Employee Satisfaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Grooming •Estimations •Make sure project is still on track •Milestone planning •Roadmap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Daily standup •Setting up meetings between teams •Sprint planning/review •Sprint retrospectives •Admiralty Meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Team coordination •Feedback •Alignment •Playtesting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Stakeholder management •Communicating and Maintaining Vision •Expectation alignment with internal and external stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1 on 1 meetings •Mediator in conflicts

Figure 7 - Selective list of tasks

Secondary work activities

During the enquiry it was evident that most of the interviewees, 76%, were in some part associated with secondary work activities. Below is a categorization of their responses.

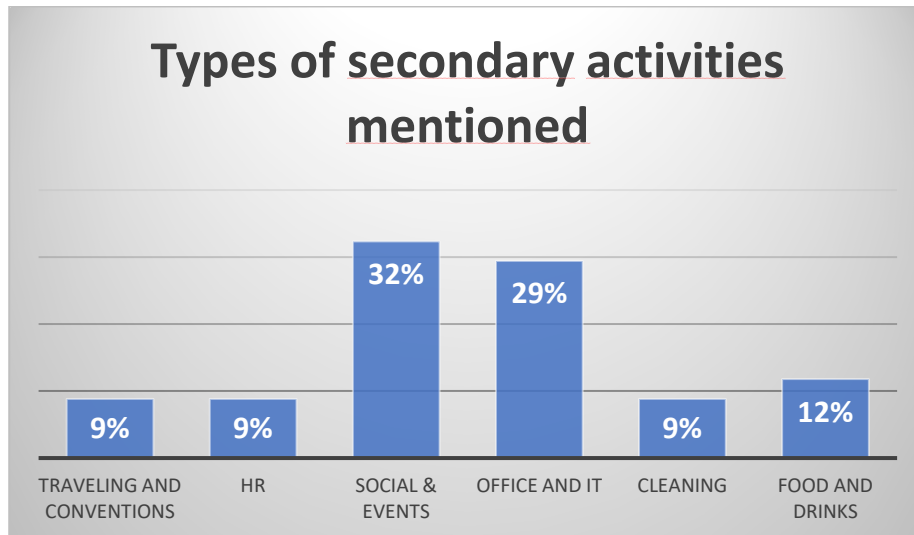


Figure 8 - Categorized list of secondary work activities.

Mentioned specifically as activities not related to their primary work responsibilities were:

Social Events:

- Holiday preparations, like Christmas dinners and decorations for the season.
- Booking different social and informal activities for the team

Office and IT:

- Ordering hardware/software and managing licenses.
- IT support and office management

Hard skills

The breadth of hard skills involved in production facilitation surmounts to 109 unique skills which are mentioned in the survey results. But more than half of these skills are associated with either specific tools or technical proficiency and know-how. An interesting observation is that the number of skills associated with the employee satisfaction area of responsibility is fairly low and either broad or vague in their terminology

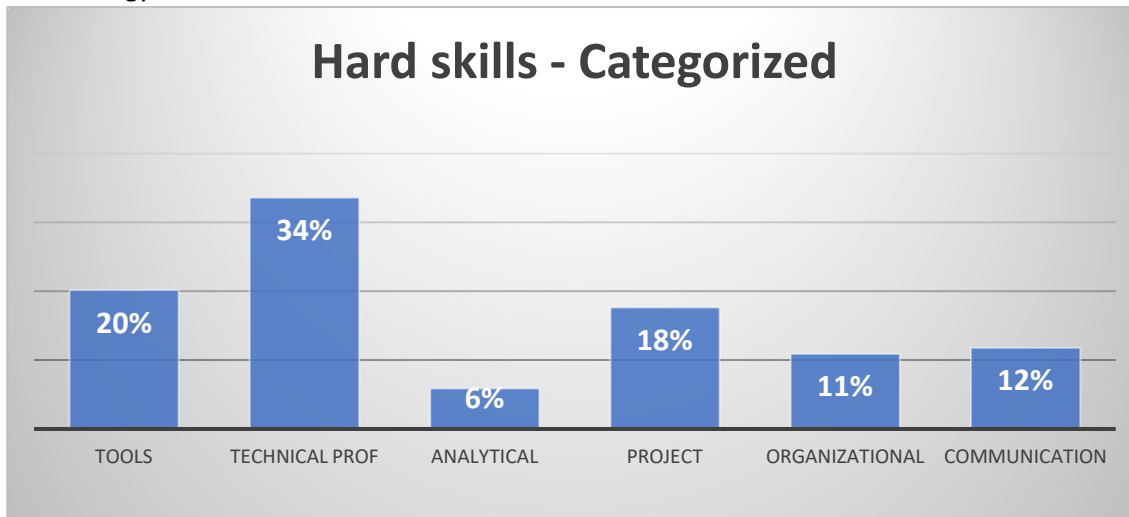


Figure 9 - Categorized hard skills.

Looking closer at the mentions within the data set there are lot of varying tools, but a significant overlap in the technical profession mentions. The core pillars of production, except animation and audio are mentioned with significant overlap. Not a lot of leadership-oriented skills are mentioned within the hard skills category. Most of the mentions center around either organizational behavior and navigation or conflict resolution and pitching.

Tools	Technical Know-how	Analytical	Project Management	Organization	Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Unity •Art production •Unreal •Excel •Jira •Notion •Miro 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Art •Engineering •Design •UX 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Data Analysis •Data tracking •Playtesting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Waterfall •Scrum •Agile •Production Roadmaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Budgetting •Financing •Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Organizational behaviour •Conflict negotiation •Presentation and pitching

Figure 10 - Appropriated list of hard skills.

Soft skills

With 105 unique mentions of soft skills, most of them were possible to categorize under personal attributes, interpersonal intelligence and leadership:

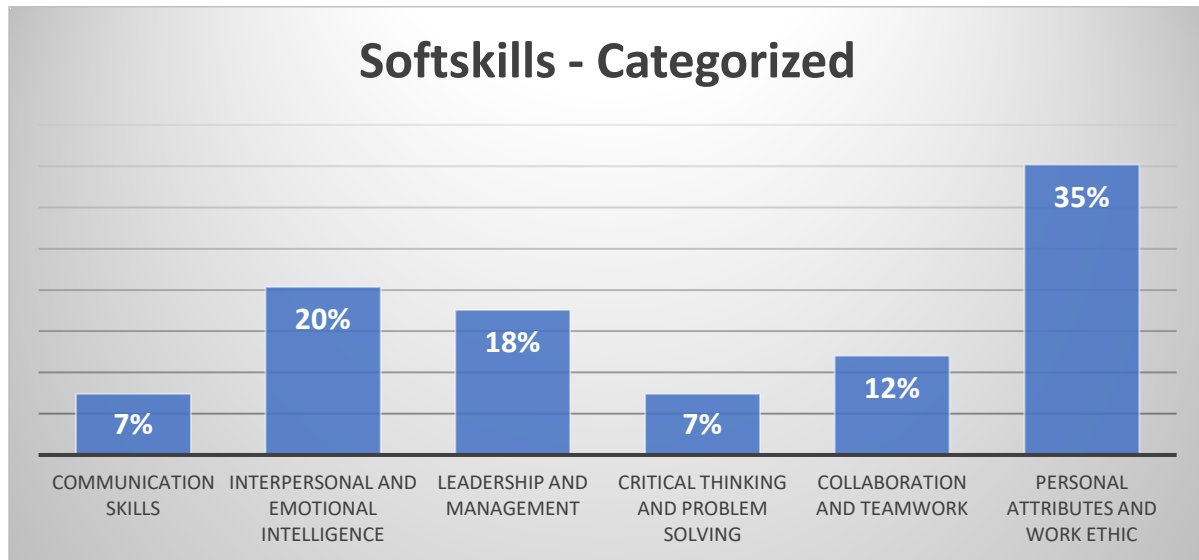


Figure 11 - Categorized Soft skills.

Looking more closely at the specific mentions, the skills with most mentions have been selected and entered them into a list below. Here it's worth noting the "ability to motivate others", the ability to employ "active listening", "understanding team dynamics" as well as being both "diplomatic" and "empathetic" while "communicating clearly". This trail of soft skills seems highly cohesive which will be investigated in the analysis section of the paper.

Communication	Interpersonal and Emotional Intelligence	Leadership and Management	Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Collaboration and Teamwork	Personal Attributes and Work Ethic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating clearly • Public speaking and presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathetic • Feedback • Diplomatic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directing a Team • Understanding team dynamics • Gatekeeping information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of risks and consequences • Problem solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active listening • Asking the right questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daring • Objective • Motivate others • Reflective • Resilient • Note taking • Honest • Embrace mistakes • Decisive • Calm • Willingness to act dumb

Figure 12 - Selective list of soft skills

Analysis

The vast majority of the respondents within the survey have a primary responsibility towards making sure communication flows freely within the organization and across disciplines and teams. They are also responsible for making sure that each team member is able to work without hinderance. This involves both doing and planning a lot of meetings, and those meetings typically revolved around either making sure people are “on par” with each other, the vision, or the production plan¹³. This type of task typically involves knowledge and understanding of how productions are typically built up, and especially the understanding of how the relationship is between production, product vision, and player. This type of product overview knowledge is central to the facilitative aspect of these meetings, as the respondent will often have to actively listen and ask the right questions in order to verify and secure that the team is working towards the same goal as the stakeholders have provided and that the team is on-time and on-budget.

More often than not tasks such as updating and grooming backlogs, and breaking features into tasks and estimating, befall the production facilitator. Whether done in conjunction with the aforementioned meetings or on their own, this type of activity is heavily reliant upon technical profession knowledge and sometime, even tools.

Additionally, it is of interest to notice, that even though the smallest category of responsibility that the respondents selected is “employee satisfaction”, it is represented in over half of the respondents. This indicates that it is an important field within the selection pool, and thus should be evident in the tasks and associated skills. But when looking into this, only 14% of the tasks mentioned are associated with the category “employee satisfaction”, and even fewer hard skills are mentioned. This deficit of hard skills, associated with the small number of tasks, points to the fact that this area of responsibility is viewed as more closely associated with soft skills than actual hard skills. This is supported by the large majority of soft skills pointing to personality traits, interpersonal skills and communicative abilities like “active listening”, “providing feedback”, and “being radically candid”. While those soft skills are important, there are specific practices and methodologies centering on tasks like 1-on-1, peer review and conflict resolution that are not mentioned in the hard skills category. This deficit could indicate an area competency where the selection pool needs further insight and sparring, potentially through some kind of employer branding setup.

Lastly, it is important to notice the large number of production facilitators working with secondary work activities. This type of activity wasn’t represented in the list of primary responsibilities, and how much time it takes up during the day of the respondents is unclear. But through the interviews, it became apparent that it was indeed a set of activities that was time-consuming, but definitely in specific periods of time. The skills employed to conduct these secondary work activities are not clear either. Though the “Office & IT”-category must mainly rely on IT know-how and experience, and the “Social events”-category is bound to be tightly coupled with understanding the team makeup. There is a clear connection here between the broad set of technical skills and knowledge that the production facilitator needs to know (as previously covered), and responsibility for office IT. This sort of task responsibility could prove to be a large undertaking in the larger segment of our industry, but in the small and mid-tier segment it seems to be doable, at least to the technically inclined. This, however, doesn’t make it the most efficient setup, as a specifically appointed IT responsible employee would be better suited to this kind of undertaking. But more often than not, this kind of job position is not afforded in small to mid-size companies. And thus, it befalls the production facilitator and underlines the importance of technical understanding and know-how. Likewise, the social events part of the secondary work activities is handed to (or perhaps taken by) the production facilitators. The skill set appointed to this kind of activity is not represented either, but only

¹³ As per indications in the data set, seen in the Data chapter.

noticed by proxy. Because if we look at the primary responsibilities and the task chart, it is clear that a lot of primary work is centered around “understanding the team”. This is, yet again, underlined by the specific soft skills showcased such as “motivating others”, “understanding team dynamics” and “empathetic”. These will help inform the production facilitator of when a social event is needed and also what specifics should be taken into consideration. Of course, the specific task of arranging these events isn’t mentioned in the skills section, but this could be due to the fact that they are simply seen as second nature and not something specific to the role they possess. To understand this more thoroughly there should be a series of follow-up questions specifically into the nature of secondary work activities.

Discussion

Technical know-how, both as prior knowledge, as in-house production flow knowledge, and practical discipline knowledge through tools usage, are all important parts of the facilitative aspects. They are important for multiple reasons, but mainly to assist in coordinating activities between teams and different levels of the organization. In these cases, the facilitator will have to assist in estimations, work breakdown, and prioritization, while making sure the next release lives up to the requirements and vision of the stakeholders. This type of knowledge can be an issue for new facilitators to the industry in general, but also for experienced facilitators switching companies that work with other platforms or simply other ways of handling production. As such, a broad base of know-how and knowledge regarding project management in general is important, as this can assist both the new and experienced with appropriating the production methodology to the team and the circumstance.

With new facilitators joining in from adjacent industries the production flow and pipeline knowledge can be a bit harder to live up to. In these cases, either internal or externally provided employer branding is needed in order to onboard new employees, to help them understand the mechanics of production.

Most of the findings indicate that some prior technical knowledge and know-how are necessary, so it could be interesting to investigate how new and technically deficient facilitators approach the task that other facilitators typically solve. Especially in internationally large (hundreds or thousands of employees) companies, where the author assumes that some facilitator roles are technically removed and specialized in handling more banal project management assignments, such as conducting meetings and appointing tasks in the chosen toolset. The findings indicate that those types of facilitators don’t exist within the Danish game industry, but feedback during presentations at various venues suggests that those profiles exist especially in the larger company sectors outside of Denmark.

The findings also indicate that the production facilitator should be ready to assist or conduct secondary work activities, typically associated with social gatherings, either in connection with hallmark holidays or with playtesting and casual boardgame nights.

While one could argue that this type of activity is not conducive to a productive work cycle (as it doesn’t directly connect with the primary responsibilities), one could also argue that supporting team cohesion and health is an important part of the facilitative role.

Whether important or not, it is undoubtedly a part of the task portfolio of the production facilitator (as seen in the findings), and as such, the company should make sure to be specific on this. If this is not done, there is a risk of this being outside everyone’s responsibility, and thus ends up on the production facilitators table either way. By specifically appointing the task, it can be used as a specific tool for team cohesion and health, which is bound to be and feel more effective.

The alternative solution would be to assign the task to a specific event coordinator or another role responsible for team health and cohesion. However, by looking at the findings the benefits and the tools to

plan something that aligns with the team are all present at the production facilitator level, so this might be the right place for the task.

Continuing on the team cohesion and health segment, the findings further suggest that over half of the interviewees consider this one of their primary responsibilities. This makes sense to the author, as these people are very close to the discipline directs, and as such, they might be the best people to do 1-on-1 and feedback sessions with each team member. Doing this requires not only practice but also methodological knowledge and a certain set of personality traits. When selecting leadership to be promoted, the industry already considers the personality traits and the production knowledge, but as a result the focus on leadership skills and methodologies are potentially neglected. Reversely, the findings indicate that when hiring, the industry has personality traits and leadership knowledge or experience as key parameters. As a result, production and technical knowledge or know/how might be deprioritized.

To the author, this indicates that companies and the industry as a whole need to consider how they are to qualify either of these types of production facilitators. This should be done especially to help prevent “promotions into incompetence”, where new leaders don’t know how to lead other than by instinct and experience. The industry can do this qualification in multiple different ways, but the most direct ways will be through internal or external programs to qualify and boost these skills sets. By doing this, the industry will help improve and solidify the leadership capabilities and the technical understanding of production flow, to create better leaders as well as safer and more productive work environments.

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