



The Daily Brief Podcast: Create Advertising's Tom Ham Pays It Forward

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"I wanted to help guide the next round of talent," says Tom Ham, head of business development, gaming and VR at Create Advertising. He's referring to PromaxGAMES, where he's been a mentor for the last year.

Reflecting on the mentorship he's received throughout his career, Tom wanted to pay it forward. He began his career reviewing games for publications including The Washington Post, and then got his big break into marketing, helping to cut trailers for the games themselves.

Daily Brief Contributing Editor Kareem Taylor sat down with Tom Ham to hear his story. He talks about the value of being a PromaxGAMES mentor, navigating a weird career path and the one mistake he made that he tells others to avoid.

DAILY BRIEF: You started as a journalist reviewing games. How did you get this job that you have now?

Ham: A very good friend of mine, Dan, who is a senior producer here, we met when I first moved to LA. We had a shared interest in video games. At the time, I was writing game reviews for the Washington Post and other outlets. He came

over, and we would play early versions of the games, and he was all excited. And then he's like 'Hey can you get me into E3?' So I brought him as a guest of mine to E3 one year. I was an E3 judge, so you vote on all the games. He got to see all the behind closed doors meetings that I had access to. He was blown away at how many people I knew in the gaming industry, and how people knew me. He was working at Create Advertising doing movie and TV trailers. When Create was looking to expand their business, he was like 'I know the perfect guy to consult for us.' I would poke around asking people if they're looking to do any game trailer business. Soon, one trailer turned into two, five, ten, and then eventually it became a vertical for the company.

What are some of the games you're proud to have worked on?

We worked with Namco on the Dark Souls property, we did the launch trailer and DLC's trailers for the Dark Souls 3 campaign (below).

We're really proud of those because it shows off our game-capture capability, as well as editing and motion graphics. We did a Mario Rabbids tease for Ubisoft. A popular thing we did last year was a live action shoot for Just Dance 2017 for the Switch. (launch trailer below) We heard through UbiSoft, our client, that Nintendo showed that around and said 'This is the way we envision marketing for the Switch.' That was great.

You always hear about 'pay it forward' and I'm always wanting to help people. I wanted to help guide the next round of talent that's going to be furthering this awesome industry. I ran into someone at a Promax event and someone mentioned the mentorship program and how rewarding it was. My mentee is Randall Head, who is a writer at Blizzard Entertainment, and he just wanted to learn a lot about the marketing process for games. Since the program started, we meet each other every month, we meet for two hours and we just talk. A big part of mentorship is just listening, and putting myself in my mentee's position. If he has a challenge at work that he wants to figure out, then we will just talk through it. Nine times out of ten; what he's going through, I've already been through it.

To hear Taylor's conversation with Ham in full, listen here:

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