

CASE STUDY



EA BRINGS CO-DEVELOPMENT TO THE NEXT LEVEL WITH GLOBANT

BACKGROUND

Back in 2007, with many games on its calendar for release and limited resources internally, EA started to explore turning to external outsourcing partners that could help with ease the workload.

EA called on Globant and started a relationship with a handful of developers. A decade later, the relationship thrives with a large contingent of Globant people dedicated to EA.



THE CHALLENGE

Andrew Pojar is a group technical director at Electronic Arts (EA) in Vancouver, Canada. “There are a number of reasons why you might be interested in co-development,” Andrew says, looking back on why EA engaged with Globant. “It could be access to local knowledge in international markets, leveraging time zones for 24/7 support of live services or access to specialized talent.” Cost can be a driver, but Andrew notes that flexibility was more important to him. “We

use the Globant team to scale as we go through the business cycle,” he says. “But we also turn to Globant for areas where we don’t have expertise—and don’t see that as a core competency.”

Often, companies like EA wrestle with work that isn’t in their sweet spot, yet it is critical for the business. So, in addition to game-focused work for EA, Globant has been architecting payment gateways, managing big

data projects, and building customer support systems.

That undaunted approach to tackling challenges is all in a day’s work for Globant and is the primary reason EA initially turned to Globant.



THE SOLUTION

About five years ago, Globant and EA moved to a single, extended dev team. It was a turning point for the partnership.

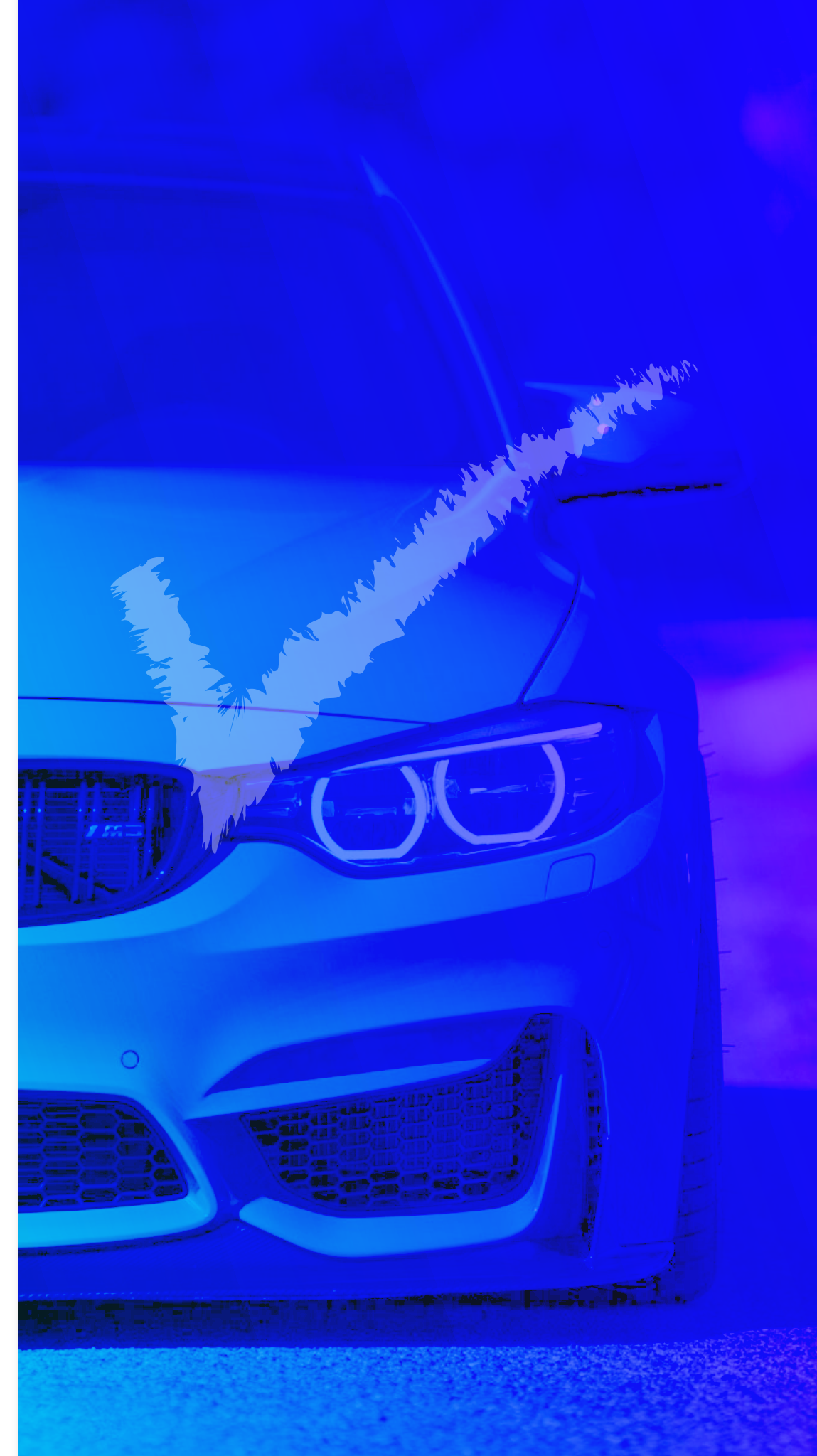
“We started including the first dedicated project managers, then we moved to other roles, such as embedded QA and producer roles,” Andrew says. “Recently, we added embedded 2D artists so that we can have end-to-end feature production.” In the same timeframe, EA and Globant started working on a single code branch, which really fostered the co-development model--with everyone working as a single, united team.

In addition to great people, the hallmarks for the successful Globant solution are process and workflows. The highly structured Globant Agile approach includes a number of very focused meetings that cover every project level. Weekly management meetings cover contracts, priorities and risks, are a perfect forum to escalate any problems.

Two to three times a week, there are engineering-specific meetings. Only the engineers that are relevant to a meeting topic participate. There may be four engineers working on implementing Feature A in a game and another three working on Feature B. If the team is discussing Feature A in a meeting, the Feature B team can keep working. In addition, Globant and EA peers meet one-on-one to stay in touch.

Globant and EA are relentlessly focused on quality, which means everyone needs to own their work. To ensure zero bugs on release, Globant creates “user stories” to test various scenarios--these can be anything from a simple requirement like “I can see the screen” to more complex gameplay issues.

At the end of each sprint (which usually last about two weeks), the Globant QA team examines these stories closely and grades the work “pass” or “fail.” To be cleared for release, of course, the project must pass across the board and hit zero known bugs.





VALUE

EA relies on Globant to build teams just like EA would.

Diego Tartara, Globant's VP of Technology, says that there are number of aspects in finding good people that might not be considered important in similar relationships. Andrew agrees.

"Things like career progression, fit and culture matter just as much as C++ skills," Andrew says. "Beyond that, we want a blend of junior and senior engineers on the teams. That allows room for the career progression and ends up reducing turnover in the long run. This is a long-term investment for EA, so we take a long-term view."

The 80 people from Globant are not just focused on engineering. Globant is now providing additional skillsets, such as producers who help develop the vision for a

game and QA people who test and retest products before they go live.

It could be a challenge to find the right people to fit the EA culture. But Andrew notes that it's pretty rare for EA to veto a candidate Globant suggests. "As you progress further in a relationship the partner team can really drive the interview process. You can help facilitate this by including leads from both sides in the interview process. This helps build alignment on what key attributes you are looking for. This saves us a lot of time, and this is down to Globant's pre-screening process."

VALUE

THE TAKEAWAYS

EA AND GLOBANT HAVE WORKED CLOSELY ON NUMEROUS PROJECTS. AND THERE ARE MANY MORE IN THE PIPELINE TODAY. IT IS A SIGNIFICANT SUCCESS STORY THAT HAS BLOSSOMED BECAUSE OF A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT SHARED VALUES:

Make your investments for the mid- to long-term: A short-term mindset won't enable you to build a relationship or establish trust.

Bring a single team mentality to everything: Get away from the us-and-them mentality and look at it as one team—with one set of goals and one set of values.

Engage early: Don't let issues fester. Engage the team early to eliminate any open issues and make it a regular habit.

Build workflows to become and remain efficient: The only way to ensure a team spread across multiple time zones and different offices is to have establish, iron-clad workflows. This ensure that everyone know what they need to do and when they need to do it. Proactively communicate: Hoarding information is not helpful. Stay ahead of the curve and over-communicate.

Set clear expectations so you can develop trust: At the outset, it's important to have the expectations laid out in clear terms. That way, you'll define success and everyone will have something to shoot for.

TM

Globant has been a Tier I partner to EA for nearly a decade, with engineers working on projects like NHL, UFC, and many others. Globant staff members have taken on a variety of important tasks for EA, including video content production, content management services, game art and animation, digital platform services, analytics targeting, e-commerce, virtual and augmented reality, e-sports, online services, game development, game testing, UX and UI, companion apps, smart toys, and network development.

