

Game Audio Job Roles

If you've ever ventured into a game audio studio and wondered exactly what everyone does (besides sit down eating pizza and talk about motorcycles), here's the truth about all the vital disciplines. It's quite amazing what people get paid to do for a living.

If you are looking to employ someone, we've tried to sum up all of the roles that an audio person could need with a little description and associated buzzwords to help you along. For example a composer would need 1, 3, 6, 8, 9 & 10 in our humble opinion!

1. Composition.

Ability to compose in numerous styles – convincingly. Performing, mixing, editing. Scoring on paper for performers, producing and directing musicians. From orchestral to jazz, industrial to drum 'n' bass.

2. Sound Design

Creation, manipulation, foley, field recording, layering, soundscapes. Sourcing sounds from a variety of means a must. Creating convincing sonic environments – can you close your eyes and tell from sound alone the kind of environment you're in?

3. Sound to Picture Dubbing

Knowledge of video formats, SMPTE / MTC (working with Timecode), film theory (hierarchical structure of what sound elements take precedence in a mix). Experience with industry standard tools - Protools / Sadie / Nuendo. Less is more, blah blah.

4. Vocal Recording

Directing and / or producing a session effectively. Dealing with voice over agencies and artists. Expediting the lengthy process of voice editing. Working with scripts – best file naming conventions for the given situation / utils available.

5. Audio Directing

Supervising the entire audio 'vision' of a product from concept thru pre-production, production all the way to mastering. Become the walking audio 'bible', able to assist on all aspects of the audio production.

6. Implementation

50% of the overall effect IMO. In depth technical knowledge – or ability to learn – of the gaming platform(s). Ability to design a custom audio API with a programmer.

Problem solving on technical issues – compression, buffering, streamed vs. RAM resident samples, maximising the available space at any given point.

7. Managerial

Effective time management and scheduling regular milestones with the team. Provide accurate lead times and deliveries. Being pro-active.

8. Licensed Music

Dealing with record companies, lawyers and artists. Translating producers / designers requests into musically coherent forms that the composer etc. can understand.

9. Outsourcing.

Not becoming precious about your own work. Audio individuals tend to carry a sense of arrogance – they can do everything in audio well. **WRONG!** All audio people have something they're good at, and something they're not. It's understanding your own limitations. Supervising all communication with the freelancer, making sure that you're completely aware of what they are doing at any point.

10. Current Game Audio Trends

Keeping abreast of the latest news, developments, software, hardware (which can constitute a LOT of reading if he or she were to encapsulate composition, sound design, producing, mixing etc.). Keeping up to date and ensuring that your game audio is not somewhat behind what's currently possible.