

KEVIN CHAO

Game Design Leader | Design Direction | Live Ops

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📍 Los Angeles, CA

SUMMARY

Accomplished Game Design Leader with over 10 years of expertise driving design vision, feature innovation, and player experience across mature live-ops titles with DAU of over 500k. Proven track record of managing and mentoring high-performance design teams, working cross functionally to take product goals and needs and turn them into scalable and configurable gameplay features focused on player-centric UX.

SKILLS

Game Design	Design Direction	Free to Play Design	Mobile Games	Feature Design	UX Design
FTUE Design	A/B Testing	Playtesting	Agile Methodologies	Design Documentation	Unity3D

EXPERIENCE

Lead Game Designer

Jam City

📅 04/2020 - Present 📍 Culver City, CA

- Wrote detailed design documents and owned design for over 30 features, systems, and tools in Genies & Gems (200k DAU) and Cookie Jam (600k DAU).
- Assumed Design Director responsibilities on Cookie Jam, defining feature design vision that led to stabilizing DAU decline, achieving ~750k DAU for 3 quarters.
- Focused roadmap on clarity, motivation, and engagement, reaching a peak DAU/MAU of 46.3% in Q1/Q2 2025.
- Directed a design team in launching 15+ features and live events, focusing on original and proven mechanics, targeting specific product concerns including engagement, DAU, and revenue.
- Worked with Consumer Insights team to playtest features, using feedback to guide design through development.
- Partnered with Product team to design a configurable difficulty tuning system, allowing for rapid experimentation and leading to a 10% win rate increase and 0.3% D1 retention gain without revenue loss.
- Led UI/UX redesign for Genies & Gems, increasing DAU by 15% and reducing pre-gameplay friction by 50%.
- Diagnosed and addressed FTUE issues with data analytics team, increasing D14 retention by 5% and D14 ARPI by 20%.
- Designed, managed, and executed live operations for Genies and Gems, increasing ARPDau by up to 25% during event periods.
- Collaborated with Product Managers to execute A/B tests, optimizing tuning of features and events.
- Worked with Lead Engineer to create automatic level tuning tool which increased output from level designers by 50%.
- Managed and mentored a team of 4 designers, enhancing their career growth and satisfaction.

Game Designer

Jam City

📅 11/2014 - 04/2020 📍 Culver City, CA

- Pitched, spec'd, and oversaw implementation for new First Try Win system in Genies & Gems, leading to ARPDau increases of 12% and VC spend increases of 10%.
- Collaborated with Jam City's central technology team to design, test, and implement a dynamic tuning system, leading to a 7% increase in rounds played.
- Created and prototyped in Unity a character wandering and interaction behavior system for open world puzzle title Wild Things.
- Pitched and wrote game design documentation for 8 new gameplay features.
- Designed, tuned, and balanced over 600 levels for 3 different puzzle titles.

Game Design Lead

Playviews

📅 07/2014 - 11/2014 📍 Los Angeles, CA

- Led design of mobile game Zombocalypse, responsible for updating design documentation based on feedback from publisher.
- Balanced combat waves, enemy spawns, and weapon damage.
- Created pitches for two new playable characters, including narrative backstory and gameplay archetypes.
- Managed external development studios, ensuring timely delivery of assets and milestones.

EXPERIENCE

Level Designer

Disney Mobile

📅 09/2012 - 05/2014 📍 Glendale, CA

- Owned content creation process and balancing for number puzzle game Lost Light, establishing the difficulty curve and designing all 215 levels in the game.
- Collaborated with Game Design Lead to create 9 level types, 2 block types, and 3 powerups.
- Implemented feedback from rigorous user playtesting to achieve optimal game balance in both level design and player understanding.
- Designed over 50 levels across 4 different 'Where's My?' titles - Where's My Water 2, Where's My Perry, Where's My Valentine, Where's My Holiday.
- Prototyped new game concepts as part of the studio prototyping team using Unity and C# scripting.

QA Certification Lead

Disney Interactive Studios

📅 07/2009 - 09/2012 📍 Glendale, CA

QA Project Lead

Disney Interactive Studios

📅 03/2006 - 07/2009 📍 Glendale, CA

QA Tester

Disney Interactive Studios

📅 08/2005 - 03/2006 📍 Glendale, CA

QA Tester

Activision

📅 10/2004 - 08/2005 📍 Santa Monica, CA

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Computer Engineering

University of California, Irvine

📅 09/2000 - 08/2004 📍 Irvine, CA

ACHIEVEMENTS & AWARDS



Revitalizing Stagnant Title

Led the Genies & Gems team to being featured by Google and Apple for the first time in over 3 years, resulting in a 2000% increase in daily average browsing app units.



Jennifer Ann's Group Game Design Challenge

Door prize winner of the 2017 Jennifer Ann's Group Game Design challenge - using Unity to design and create a game around the prompt of 'Consent'.