

Katina Noonan

Principal/Lead Game Designer

Mobile F2P • Systems • Features • Economy Tuning • Social Gameplay • Prototyping • Live Ops

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PROFILE

Game Designer: 17+ years creating mobile F2P features, systems, economies, tools, gameplay, and live services.

Feature Lead: 15+ years defining roadmaps, improving KPIs, and aligning teams around deliverables and goals.

Technical Designer: Built flexible tuning sheets, economy models, feature frameworks, tools, and data pipelines.

Prototype Designer: Created a prototype framework to validate concepts through rapid testing and iteration.

CORE QUALIFICATIONS

Genres: Casual, Midcore, Strategy, Puzzle, Match-3, 4X, Invest/Express, RPG, Virtual Worlds, Coin Looter

Expertise: Core Loops, Progression, Economy Tuning, Game Balance, Live Events, Social Systems, KPI Analysis

Tools: Google Sheets, SQL, Looker, Tableau, JSON, Unity, Figma, Jira, GitHub, Tower, Claude Code, ChatGPT

Top-Grossing History: App Store Top 100 (5), Top 10 (4), Top 4 (3) • Google Play Top 100 (4), Top 10 (3), Top 4 (1)

EXPERIENCE

Lead Game Designer — PeopleFun

01/2025 - 05/2026

Projects: Word Zoo, Prototype Development

- Worked cross-discipline to bring Word Zoo from concept to production release, owning systems, level progression, feature design, tuning, and core gameplay.
- Defined Word Zoo pacing, mechanics, progression, difficulty ramps, system interactions, and content standards.
- Built flexible tuning sheets and models to support balance, review, analysis, and iteration.
- Refined the core loop, tuning, and feature strategy using KPIs, player behavior, and market trends.
- Managed a designer, providing task direction, design feedback, guidelines, and performance evaluation.
- Drove market research, playtests, and prototype opportunities based on underserved markets.
- Delivered a reusable prototype framework and four rapid game prototypes in a two-week period.

Game Director & Principal Game Designer — Pixelberry Studios

09/2022 - 08/2024

Projects: Game Research, Prototype Development

- Directed a small team across five prototypes, defining product goals, creative vision, game pillars, gameplay systems, UI/UX flows, specs, implementation, tuning, and iteration strategy.
- Aligned executive and product goals with team priorities, deliverables, timelines, and risk mitigation.
- Used market and audience research to identify “purple ocean” opportunities, motivational drivers, and player-centric design solutions.
- Led brainstorming and design reviews while balancing creative opportunity, player needs, product goals, and execution quality.
- Built internal tools to accelerate data analysis, content creation, implementation, and documentation.

Sr. Game Designer I & II — Machine Zone (AppLovin)

10/2018- 09/2022

Projects: Final Fantasy XV: A New Empire, Game of War, Mobile Strike, and World War Rising

- Designed progression, economy, social competition, co-op events, strategy systems, and live content for top-grossing mobile F2P titles.
- Built specs, wireframes, and tuning models while balancing metrics, scope, resources, and feasibility.
- Partnered with producers, engineering, design, QA, writing, and art to deliver 250+ content releases.
- Defined design roadmaps with leadership to meet KPI goals, product priorities, and player experience goals.
- Created hiring, onboarding, training, and mentorship best practices to improve designer ramp-up.
- Invented tools that saved 200+ implementation hours per month and reduced critical bugs by 75%.

Lead Game Designer — Storm8

05/2016 - 09/2018

Projects: Home Design Makeover, Candy Blast Mania, Hungry Babies Mania, Frozen Frenzy Mania, Castle Story

- Partnered with the General Manager and product team to lead design strategy across F2P match-3 and invest/express titles.
- Designed PvP, team PvP, King of the Hill, and community co-op events for F2P casual titles.
- Improved KPIs through data analysis, A/B testing, and design framework changes across all game systems.
- Increased monetization across multiple titles while sustaining player retention and sentiment.
- Hired, managed, and mentored designers while ensuring quality standards across multiple genres.
- Developed a reusable tool framework that reduced design time by 80% across multiple titles.

Sr. Systems Game Designer — Three Rings Design (Sega)

04/2015 - 03/2016

Projects: Unannounced Mid-core Game, Unannounced IP Mid-core Game

- Collaborated with engineering, product, design, and QA to evaluate greenlight concepts, prototype new games, and prepare external or existing titles for limited release.
- Directed a small design team on systems, content, level, and economy tuning across multiple titles.
- Managed level-design content pipelines and partnered with engineers to improve tool efficiency.
- Mentored level designers on best practices to reduce implementation time and improve content consistency.

Lead Game Designer & Product Manager — GREE

09/2012 - 01/2015

Projects: Modern War, Crime City, Legends at War, Kingdom Age, Book of Ashes, Zombie Jombie

- Designed and owned specs, gameplay loops, PvP events, competitive social events, live ops, and quests aligned with KPI goals.
- Managed external developers to deliver features, competitive events, art, and content aligned with guidelines.
- Provided technical and design guidance across multiple projects while maintaining a fast-paced event cadence.
- Implemented data-framework optimizations that reduced creation time by 90%, errors by 85%, and QA testing by 60%.

Earlier Experience**Sr. Game Designer — App Ant Studios**

01/2012 - 09/2012

Designed systems, wireframes, narrative, and quests for Dino Life and an unannounced F2P mobile title.

Game Designer — enVie Interactive

09/2009 - 01/2012

Designed systems, quests, and content for VIE the Game, an early audience-driven F2P title for women.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Computer Science — University of North Texas

05/2009