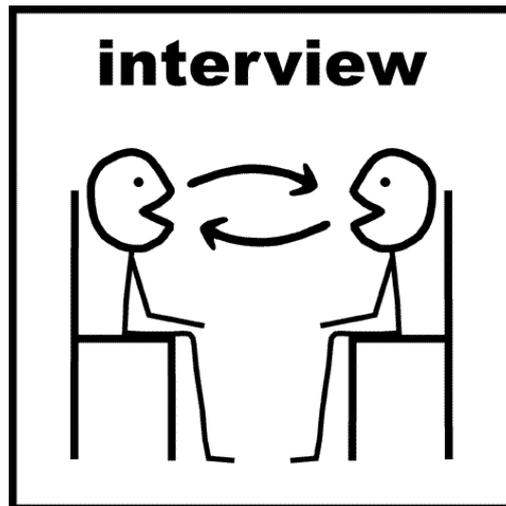


BEHIND THE PIXELS

ISSUE 13

Interviewing Rishell Biermann





As you know, Rishell is one of the new faces in our Sulake offices, adding to an impressive roster of game companies such as Electronic Arts, Zynga and Playdom! This week, Mark sat down with her to find out more about her and her new role. Grab a bowl of buttered popcorn and read on!

Had you heard about Habbo before you started working here? If so, what were your impressions of it?

Yeah, everyone knows about Habbo! They created the blueprint for virtual worlds and social interactions. I actually had to study it, so to speak, when I first got into social gaming. One of the things that I've always been impressed by are the creations players make. Some Habbos are soooo amazing and it's something I've never been truly good at.

What's your name on Habbo.com?

Everyone keeps asking me this, but some of the fansites beat me to it! I'm RisBia on most Hotels and RisBia808 I think on another. :)

How did you come to work for Sulake?

I worked with Paul at Playdom (a little known secret!), but I did play Habbo a while back, so this was not the first time I visited. However, I'm a total newbie now and have to re-learn everything. :)

What's your role in the company?

I'm acting like the glue between the departments of Marketing, Customer Care and Product. The world is huge and often times we need people who can be flexible and shift priorities quickly. Basically, if there is a great idea that will help the company and the Habbos alike - I want to be its champion!

What's the most important factor you consider while working?

Seeing the whole picture. Making decisions is difficult, but to do the right thing means you need to really consider all sides of an argument. Also, being able to listen to people and figure out what they need versus what they want. You can please them temporarily if you give them what they want, but you can make them truly happy if you give them what they need.

What are your wants in terms of projects in the near future?

Tools. I can't say this enough. Really, building better tools so the Habbos can become active participants in the community. Also, improving our tools internally so we can get back to having fun with players, really being able to answer questions or dig into any issue.

How will you be listening to Habbos' needs and desires in the coming months?

It's important to have an open channel of communication, but if you really want to be able to hear people, you need more than just one person listening. So it's a team effort between Product, Customer Care and Marketing departments, using various channels like Twitter, Forums, Facebook, as well as new products and features.

Have you mastered the art of stacking yet?

No, and I probably never will. It takes a certain skill and creative mind to visualize a swirling staircase from a bunch of brown blocks. I admire those that can create things like that, but it's not a skill I have.

Best movie you've seen recently?

I don't get out too often so I'd have to say that the best movie I saw recently was The Cabin in the Woods. I'm a Lovecraft fan and although the story wasn't really about the Cthulhu mythos...it was still close enough for me to love it!

Who do you think would win in a fight, Iron Man or Cthulhu?

Cthulhu - no contest.

What's your favourite video game?

Impossible. I play everything and have everything. I work only to fuel my desire for more games. I played Skyrim and then switched to Mass Effect and then switched to Kingdoms of Amalur and then decided I needed a break to work. I'm looking forward to Diablo III and night of sleeplessness!

What did you think of the ending to Mass Effect 3?

The ending I chose matched my characters' arc, but I can see how those who were renegades from the start would be upset. The overall story was fantastic and I think personally the series ended on a good note for me. Don't get me started on Dragon Age II, though... that's a rant that will last for ages.

Favourite Bruce Springsteen song?

Born in the USA. It's what they played during my high school football games.

How much wood could a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?

42, answer to everything as anyone knows.