JULIAN MERCER

GAME DESIGNER

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Game Designer with 7+ years shaping systems, progression, and live-service content for mobile and PC titles. Turns player data and playtest feedback into balanced mechanics, clear design documentation, and features that lift retention. Works daily with engineers, artists, and producers to ship on schedule.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Senior Game Designer Feb 2023 - Present
Riot Games, Los Angeles, CA

- Own the progression and reward systems for a competitive team-based mode used by several million monthly players, from concept pitch through live tuning.
- Raised day-30 retention by 4 points by redesigning the first-week reward track after reviewing funnel data and 40 recorded new-player sessions.
- Balanced 12 new characters over four patches using win-rate and pick-rate dashboards, keeping every character within a 48 to 52 percent win band.
- Wrote 25 design documents and prototype briefs that engineers could estimate without a follow-up meeting.
- Ran weekly internal playtests with 15 to 20 participants and turned the notes into a ranked backlog of fixes for the sprint.
- Mentored two junior designers on spreadsheet modeling and encounter pacing during their first year on the team.
- Present design reviews to studio leadership each milestone, using playtest clips and metrics to justify scope cuts that protected the ship date.

Game Designer Jun 2020 - Jan 2023
Kabam, San Francisco, CA

- Designed the economy for a mobile strategy game event system, setting currency sinks and faucets that held inflation flat across 10 seasonal events.
- Prototyped four limited-time modes in Unity, and two of them reached production after clearing playtest thresholds.
- Cut live-event design cycle time from six weeks to four by building a reusable template for rewards, tuning sheets, and QA checklists.
- Partnered with analytics to run A/B tests on store layout, lifting purchase conversion among new players by 9 percent.
- Wrote quest and tutorial copy with a narrative designer to shorten the tutorial from 11 minutes to 7 without raising early drop-off.

Associate Game Designer Aug 2018 - May 2020
Glu Mobile, San Francisco, CA

- Built and tuned 60 levels for a casual puzzle title, balancing difficulty so about 75 percent of players cleared each level in three attempts or fewer.
- Documented feature specs in Confluence and kept them current through three release cycles.
- Triaged 200+ player-reported design issues and escalated the highest-impact ones to the lead designer with reproduction steps.
- Created paper prototypes and clickable mockups in Figma to test onboarding ideas before engineering time was committed.

CORE SKILLS

Systems design | Progression and economy balancing | Level design | Unity prototyping | Live-service operations | Game design documentation | Playtest facilitation | A/B test analysis | SQL and spreadsheet modeling | Narrative and quest design | Figma | Jira and Confluence | Perforce | Player retention analysis

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Game Design and Development, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY

CERTIFICATIONS

Unity Certified Associate: Game Developer | Certified ScrumMaster (CSM), Scrum Alliance