

Blitz launches 1-up scheme to help indie devs

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UK independent plans to help other Britsoft firms; Stickman Studios signed as first partner

Blitz Games Studios has unveiled a new scheme to help fledgling developers find their feet and get their games released.

Called 1-Up, the UK independent stalwart wants the scheme to use its resources to help smaller developers get their titles to a wider marketplace, including frontiers such as console digital distribution typically hard to approach by small studios.

“In the current climate it’s very hard for a small team to realise their goals on some of the larger platforms. We have the resources and experience to help them out,” Chris Swan, business development director of Blitz Arcade told Develop.

“With more than 230 employees, we’ve amassed development experience in most areas, from solid work-for-hire titles for retail and download to generating our own IP and self-publishing. The resources we can offer through Blitz 1-Up are substantial.”

The range of services potentially on offer ranges from resources such as audio and QA to the company’s established and cross-platform BlitzTech engine, access to its PR department and even funding. Even less tangible things such as access to Blitz’s network of contacts could prove extremely useful, said Swan.

“We’ve been an independent company for 17 years and have built up a huge address book of clients across all channels, so another option is to simply match a developer to an appropriate publisher.”

The scheme is something that Blitz has been doing on an informal ad-hoc basis in the past, such as the collaboration with Middlesbrough studio 3rd Dimension Creations (previously revealed in Develop 86). But applying an official name to the scheme means more than just publicising such a potential partnership, explained Blitz CEO Philip Oliver.

“We’ve already been practising this initiative to some extent. Previously it’s been handled on an ad hoc basis, with us simply taking advantage of opportunities as they came up.

We’ve formalised the process into Blitz 1-Up to show other potential partners what we can offer, while we also work on scaling up our internal support for what looks to be a very successful venture.”

Its first official partner is Stickman Studios and its game *Buccaneer: The Pursuit of Infamy*. Stickman had been doing some external artwork for Blitz, and showed them the title in development.

“We loved it,” enthused Oliver, “so we offered them a deal to get them to the finish line.”

Each deal will be tailor-made with the developer depending on their needs, with the financial terms decided appropriately. The programme doesn't preclude the option of the developer keeping the IP, either.

"In the case of Buccaneer, the IP stays with Stickman, while with another title we've purchased the intellectual property rights," said Swan. "It's down to what makes sense in the given situation. If a partner wants Blitz to put it's full support behind their game, it could make sense to sell the IP."

Currently in 'soft beta', 1-Up will be starting small as Blitz itself scales support staff to manage the relationships. "Although we're one of the largest independent developers, we don't have infinite resources," continued Swan. "We're launching with a soft beta, so we can choose partners that fit with our available resources. It also gives us time to scale up internally to increase our capacity at a safe growth rate.

"People who know Blitz will know that 1-Up definitely an extension of our ethics, but we'll be aiming to make a profit from each partner so it absolutely has to make commercial sense for both parties. That's not to say that we're trying to become a fully-fledged publisher either – it's simply about broadening the opportunities open to less experienced developers."