

Hello, I am Mason waters Studio Director for B2Z games and I am writing to not only my team but everyone in the game industry who has been questioning the state of our game studio and after serious consideration, I have come to a decision on what I think is best for the studio and for myself. First I would like to thank the directors for working with me all of these years as what we have been able to accomplish here has been amazing and we really have made some incredible things happen. But after the recent developments that have come with being brought into Microsoft's fold, I have decided it is time to move on and start up a new studio giving me some time to reflect in between.

As mentioned before I appreciate everything the team has done over the years and think they will go onto to do great things in the future. However, I believe I need a new change of scenery as well as a team that is more concentrated on the direction that we want to go. We made games that were groundbreaking but continuously flip-flopped between wanting to work for publishers/corporations and then trying to work on our own.

This happened mostly due to us not being sure which way we wanted to go, on the one hand, we really wanted our financials to be good so that we could afford to do these incredible projects that would really be what we were known for. On the other we really wanted to start out with something that was our own but at the start of the studio knew we were going to need money so we went ahead and made the first game our studio had made that really set us up for success. Maybe we should have kept going down this path because next thing you know we are developing a game we can truly say we built from the ground up. We really thought we were going to hit it big but when the game wasn't a commercial success we had to take a really deep look into what our studio was doing and decide if we were really going down the right path. We decided to continue making games that had our own mechanics and ideas and we got to the point where it was looking like we were really about to make some headway when we got the call from Microsoft. We debated and decided to take the offer and that's when our creative liberty was stopped and locked away. Forced to change the engine and change what we were doing entirely and our studio immediately had to crunch. Luckily we were able to still release our game but it wasn't ours anymore, and now we didn't make the decisions for our own games. I found our situation comparable to when Disney bought out the STAR WARS franchise and games in development had everything change, and example would be in this quote from Schreier's *Workaholics*, "One of those LucasArts projects, Star Wars 1313, had stolen the show

at E3 less than a year earlier. There were conversations about EA taking over production of the game — Conversation so serious that a squad of Star Wars 1313 developers even drove down to Visceralk to show off wha they'd made — but those fell through. Star Wars 1313 was canceled". When I had learned about this situation and how it had played out I kinda laughed at myself for falling into something so similar but at least our game wasn't canceled and at least we had made the choice.

For a while I have felt the need to move on, even before we got out by Microsoft I felt that I knew it was going to end up this way, with the team unsure of what to do, and as soon as things got hard we would search for the easy way out. Usually, those things aren't simply handed to you on a silver platter and the amount of strings attached usually only gets higher depending on how good the offer is. At least I can say that the team worked really well together and that once we had reached a decision we knew what we wanted to do and worked on it. Almost the complete opposite of Bungie in the past. Who had multiple times where they disagreed on something or something went completely wrong, like when a supercut was released for *Destiny*, a quote from Schreier's *Destiny* says, "Opinions vary on the story, but almost everyone outside the writer's room agreed that the supercut itself was a disaster". Luckily we never had that kind of disaster play out for us but I can't say ever since we joined Microsoft that things were much better. As mentioned before changing the game engine used for our new game set us back months in production and even though we were ready by release it took a toll on me and the team at B2Z. It seems that we also would have to run our ideas through Microsoft before we could even get started on making a new game. Seeing that it seems that I will not be the only one leaving soon and I expect there to be more.

So that's why I plan on leaving. A combination of recent developments in our studio's structure, as well as new management, has left us at a crossroads, one I have decided it would be best to leave behind and allow someone new to take on the mantle at the studio. As mentioned before I plan on creating a new studio and this one will plan on allowing our creative freedom to flourish and the plan will be to publish our own games instead of allowing a publisher to dictate what comes out of our studio. So I thank all the wonderful people at B2Z for the time we spent creating games, and I look forward to making many new things in the future at my new studio.