



What, When, and How?

Managing Information in a
Positive and Productive Way

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About me



SYSTEM ERA

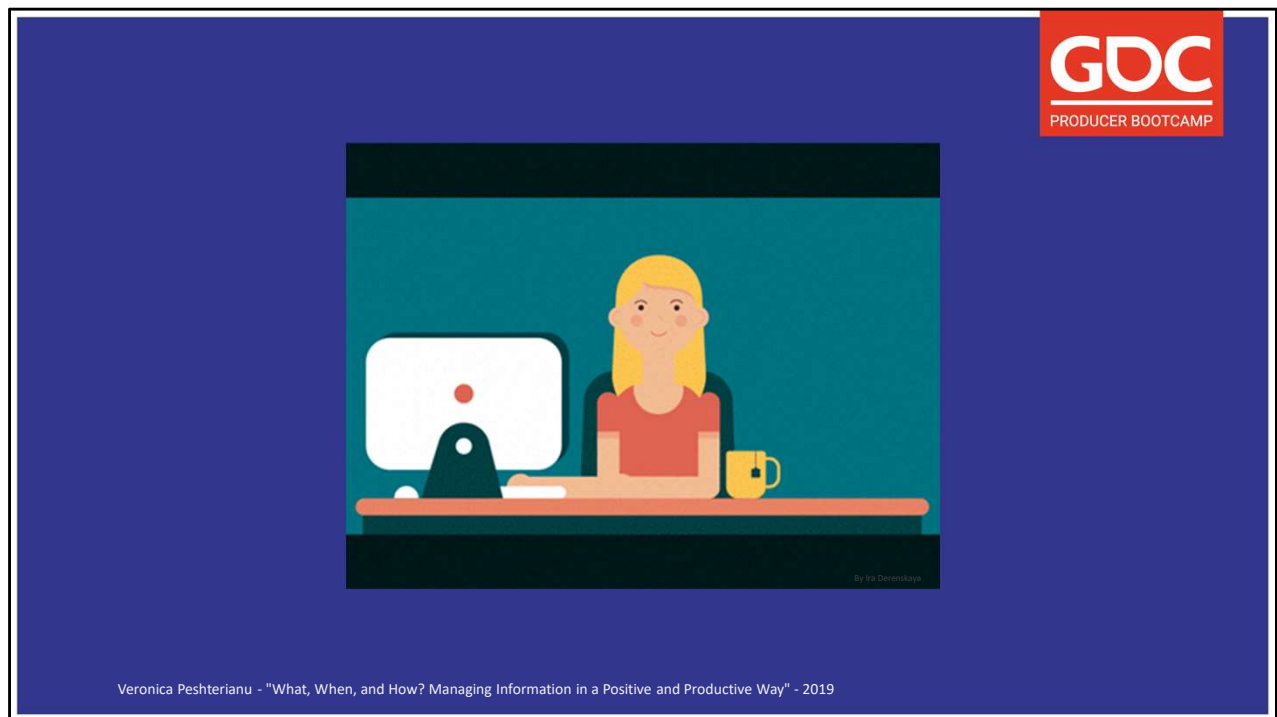
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I am Veronica Peshterianu, I am the Lead Producer at System Era in Seattle and we make a space sandbox exploration game called Astroneer.

I started my career almost 12 years ago as a production intern at the home of production as a game dev discipline Electronic Arts, and from there went on to 343 Industries, Pop Cap Games, and now System Era, working on games and projects whose team sizes ranged from single digits to many many hundreds.



And one of the first things I learned on the job is WOW Producers are exposed to A LOT of information.

Like a lot a lot.

The Vortex



- **Nexus of information**

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Because a producer lives at the heart of a team, from earliest points in your career, you will be exposed to all sorts of information.

And it makes sense -- your role as a facilitator requires a broad familiarity with not only what's going on with your immediate feature or team, but also the studio, your partners, your community, your business goals, in an ever widening circle of everything that affects your end product

The Vortex



- Nexus of information
- **Information needs to be passed around**

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From managing day to day tasks to developing multi-year roadmaps, production is often called upon to provide context, input, and guidance to help make the best decision possible across a variety of situations.

Which means all this information you're receiving will need to be passed around. Constantly, to the right people, at the right time, in the right situations.

The Vortex



- Nexus of information
- Information needs to be passed around
- **Want to know, but don't want to stress!**

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This can be a daunting prospect when you're working with team members whose interest in these things ranges from wanting to know every single possible detail to feeling easily overwhelmed with data that doesn't pertain to their immediate work.

Goals of this Talk



Share approaches and strategies to **managing information** that help **increase visibility** while **mitigating churn**

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My goal today is to share approaches and strategies which you can use to manage the flow of information in a way that helps you increase overall visibility for your team while mitigating distraction and churn.

The Perfect Porridge



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Now, when I first tried to describe ways that producers can best manage information, the process sounded about as precise as trying to find Goldilocks the perfect porridge ...

The Perfect Porridge



- Not too much, but not too little

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Because you're looking to share not so much detail as to totally overwhelm, but not too little so that your team unable to make decisions and move forward.

The Perfect Porridge



- Not too much, but not too little
- **Not too often, but not too rarely**

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Not so often that people start tuning you out, but not so rarely that people feel like they are uninformed.

The Perfect Porridge



- Not too much, but not too little
- Not too often, but not too rarely
- **Not sharing sensitive info, but not dishonest**

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All the while not being patronizing or downright dishonest, but keeping sensitive information safe

And that's a lot to balance

Your Goal



- An informed, productive, healthy team!

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But when information is flowing well, what you get this well-oiled machine – an informed team where decisions can be made quickly and efficiently, leading to greater productivity, and a healthy basis of trust and communication.

Your Goal



- An informed, productive, healthy team!
- **But also a less stressed and more focused you**

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With a huge side benefit of a producer (that's you!) who is focused on solving the most pressing concerns and not fluttering about from place trying to keep everyone on the same page.

What? When? How?

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So how do we get there? Well, as you are staring down this vortex, you can begin by evaluating every new piece of information that comes your way, both from internal and external sources, in terms of the simplest questions

What , When , and How

What do I share?

When do I share it?

How do I share it?



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And that's it, that's all you need to know right?? We're done here?

Strategies



- To be forewarned, is to be forearmed
- Right place, right time
- Meet at the level
- Shop it around

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Of course, I kid – asking those simple question is just half the battle and getting comfortable with these softer skills of production can be a real challenge for some.

So these are the strategies I'll be covering today which can help you get started with managing information on your team along examples to put them into the context of day to day game production

**To be forewarned...
is to be forearmed**



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First up is ensuring that **WHAT** you're sharing with people actually allows them to be as prepared as possible down the line.

To be forewarned...



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Of the list of strategies, I believe this one is the easiest to apply early and get comfortable with because to determine the kinds of things that fall into this category all you have to ask yourself is

To be forewarned...



What would the producer say?

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What would the producer say?

What are the things that the team is looking to you to provide because they recognize you as the primary holder of this information

To be forewarned...



- **Examples:**

- Future milestone **deadlines**
- Incoming headcount and **capacity**
- **Integration dates** between teams or features
- Long term **dependencies** on other features or projects
- KPIs and other **data targets**

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This list may look obvious at a glance, but remember In a lot of game studios, even if it's not explicitly you, it's the production organization that is most often the source of this data.

You are likely learning some of these things far in advance by being exposed to high level and cross team planning, and there will inevitably be times when you'll be the only representative from your team in these conversations.

So Barring any contractual sensitivity, these are exactly the kinds of things you should be sharing as soon as you can and as often as you can

... is to be forearmed



- Team can do **better work from the start**

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Because this is exactly the kind of stuff that helps teams do better work from the start.

Armed with this information, team members can make better estimates, write better design documents, anticipate potential integration headaches, and more, right off the bat.

... is to be forearmed



- Team can do better work from the start
- **You don't have to be everywhere**

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AND you don't have to be everywhere at once serving as the only trusted source of this knowledge.

It's bold, I know, to try and think of ways that you shouldn't be involved in meetings. But trust me, when access to information means you can be somewhere else contributing to a harder problem to solve, that's a win.

... is to be forearmed



- Team can do better work from the start
- You don't have to be everywhere at once
- **Team feels trusted!**

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Finally, the massive long term bonus of this approach is that the team feels trusted to make decisions on their own, leading to a more open and collaborative relationship between the producer and the team.

Case Study – Engine Upgrade



- Studio leadership wants to take an **engine upgrade next quarter**

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In action, this strategy looks something like this:

Say in a production sync you learn that next quarter, the engineering leadership of your studio has decided to integrate an upgrade to the third party engine you've been using. It will carry with it performance improvements that you need for your game to run well across all of its platforms.

Case Study – Engine Upgrade



- Studio leadership wants to take an engine upgrade next quarter
 - **Engineers can be informed this is coming**

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Great ... even if this upgrade won't begin until next quarter, you can share this information and start to plan with your engineers on how best to react when the time comes.

Case Study – Engine Upgrade



- Studio leadership wants to take an engine upgrade next quarter
 - Engineers can be informed this is coming
 - **Meetings and conversations can be scheduled**

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Folks can start talking among themselves about dependencies and risks of the integration

Case Study – Engine Upgrade



- Studio leadership wants to take an engine upgrade next quarter
 - Engineers can be informed this is coming
 - Meetings and conversations can be scheduled
 - **Capacity of the team can be adjusted**

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An effort like this will certainly involve multiple disciplines so those team leads or producers can spin off to evaluate how capacity would be impacted by this effort

Case Study – Engine Upgrade



- Studio leadership wants to take an engine upgrade next quarter
 - Engineers can be informed this is coming
 - Meetings and conversations can be scheduled
 - Capacity of the team can be adjusted
 - **New engine features can be kept in mind for future**

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And as future plans are being made, maybe the performance gains from the upgrade will allow for different decisions regarding content of features

Case Study – Engine Upgrade



- Studio leadership wants to take an engine upgrade next quarter
 - Engineers can be informed this is coming
 - Meetings and conversations can be scheduled
 - Capacity of the team can be adjusted
 - New engine features can be kept in mind for future

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By sharing the details of a major deadline like this, you can set your team on a path to successfully complete the work and reduce the risk of problems down the line.

Or... Not!



- Share other teams' **plans and milestones**
- **Doing nothing** is still a decision

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Now in other cases, you will learn about another team's content plans or event milestones and other opportunities to collaborate. Sharing that information with your team is still important because the decision might be to not change course at all.

Choosing to not act on information is a completely legitimate path forward. But the important thing was that your team is forewarned, and therefore forearmed to make the right decisions for them and the game.



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So that first one wasn't so bad right? You are probably thinking hey I already do this, give me another strategy to try on!

Well good because we're about to make things a bit harder and talk about timing

Right Place, Right Time



- Build the ability to judge WHEN to share information

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As I mentioned before sometimes you are the first person on your team to learn about something, and you may hear about it months if not a year or more in advance.

Building your ability to judge when to share something more widely is crucial because not everything will be as certain as the engine upgrade

Right Place, Right Time



- Build the ability to judge WHEN to share information
- **Too early? Plans fall through. Chaos ensues**

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A very common mistake is to share early plans and efforts widely, leading the team to adjust their work to match.

But when these shifting plans change, the team has to pivot again, causing avoidable churn.

Right Place, Right Time



- Build the ability to judge WHEN to share information
- Too early? Plans fall through. Chaos ensues
- **Too late? No one is prepared. Chaos ensues**

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Potentially even worse is sharing things too late when the team is not at all prepared to react and produce good results.

Either way chaos ensues.

Right Place, Right Time



- **Exciting Examples:**

- Inclusion in **promotions**
- Inclusion in **consumer shows** or public demos
- **External partnership** opportunities
- Newly revealed **software and hardware changes**
- **Licensing** opportunities

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Here are some classic examples of efforts that are prone to a lot of change early on but can cause great excitement on the team.

I mean, if you think about it, it's not nearly as fun to hear about engine upgrades as it is to hear that your game may be featured on stage at a certain highly attended press event.

All of the things in this list still fall in the realm of the forewarning strategy because they will have a major impact on your product, your timelines, your headcount, and dozen other factors of game development. But what sets them apart is the higher volatility factor which requires an extra level of certainty from you before they're safe to drop on your team.

Case Study – Summer Promo



- **Your game may be featured in a Summer Collection** on the front page of the store alongside other similar titles.

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Here is a common scenario from the world of mobile game development

Your platform partner reaches out to your marketing lead and lets them know that they are considering including your game alongside other similar titles in a big summer collection promotion.

This promotion will take over the front page of their store, and would lead to great exposure and potential sales.

Case Study – Summer Promo



- Your game may be featured in a Summer Collection on the front page of the store alongside other similar titles.
 - Themed in-app content
 - Themed marketing materials
 - New promotional trailer and store assets
 - Social Media coordination

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They let you know that if your game is chosen as part of this promotion, they would like to see themed in-game content, custom marketing materials, and coordination with your social media team.

Immediately your producer brain is off and running – all of these asks mean that at least three different groups on your team will need to readjust their plans to meet this ask, and soon!

What not to do



- Pull everyone into a room and immediately to create a plan of action

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It's natural to want to act on this kind of information right away. It's a great opportunity and your production spidey sense is right to tell you that this will require a lot of work from your team

But because you don't yet have certainty, if this plan falls through you've lost precious time working on features and assets that may never see the light of day

So instead of derailing everyone with this information what can you do to try and avoid chaos?

Do your homework



- What information would I need?

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At first, put yourself in the team's shoes and recognize what information you'd want to hear from the producer to safely navigate this change

In the cases of developments that have the potential to thrash your team, find out deadlines by which decisions have to be made, when final answers will be given. Find out if there are submission timelines you have to hit. Any and all hard facts that are available to you.

Do your homework



- What information would I need?
- **Talk to the experts, do historical research**

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Also remember that you don't have to determine this in a vacuum. If you can, talk to other experienced producers on the team or to your manager about how this may have gone in the past. If you're on a small team, maybe post on a forum or look for articles. You're trying to accumulate as much historical information as possible.

Get back to answering that foundational "What" question. Your goal is to arm yourself with the clearest picture of how an uncertain decision or plan becomes a reality.

Plan Ahead



- **Create your own timeline** of how uncertainty becomes certainty
- **Determine the impact** on your team

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Using all of that, you can now create a timeline or a rough flow of how such a development becomes a certainty

Allow yourself to assume for a moment that it will become a reality, then sketch out what the impact on your team would be

- How many people for how long
- What other plans need to move around
- What options are no longer available once a decision is made

Find Certainty



- Find the point where **certainty intersects with impact**
- **Add buffer!**

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What you're looking for is the intersection point at which there is enough certainty that this opportunity will pan out and when work would have begun to execute appropriately then add enough buffer beforehand to account for planning

Find Certainty



- Two fold impact!
 - You have a **communication plan**
 - You have an **implementation plan**

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Going through this process has a two-fold impact

One, you will now have an idea for when may be the right time to start speaking about plans like this as their certainty increases, and the risk of chaos decreases

And two, well you've already done a bunch of planning in advance. So when you do share the news, you can more confidently speak to your team about what needs to be true to execute on this plan.

Share it out



- Find that **"Just Right" Porridge**
- **Watch for distractions!**

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Once you've determined that Goldilocks place that's just late enough that you have more certainty and just early enough that the team still has time to react, it's time to share and prep your team for the incoming change

And when in doubt? Well a bit earlier is better than a bit later so your team isn't caught unaware, but you will have to keep an eye on things to make sure that the team doesn't spin off into this effort to the detriment of their other work.

Right Place, Right Time – Redux



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There's another aspect to timing of communication that I want to mention, which looks at the issue from a different but equally important perspective

Right Place, Right Time – Redux



- Not only if INFORMATION is ready

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Choosing When to share information with your team isn't only about when the information is ready to be acted on

Right Place, Right Time – Redux



- Not only if INFORMATION is ready
- **But also if THE RECIPIENT is ready**

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It's also about considering if your team is actually in a place to receive it and to act on it. Remember you're trying to mitigate churn and keep your team healthy and productive

Taking regular stock of your team's focus and attitude will help you judge the right time to introduce new information and changes.

let's quickly take a look at two scenarios that will help illustrate

Two Scenarios



- Your new art headcount has been approved early!

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On Monday morning your manager lets you know that art headcount that you've been asking for has been approved to start earlier than anticipated

They're asking that you and the art lead determine when would be a good time for the new artist to start

Two Scenarios



- Your new art headcount has been approved early!
- **Art lead is busy and can't take action.**

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Now, you know that your art lead is trying to get through some piled up asset reviews and is going to need some focus time for the next few days.

So giving this information to them immediately may be distracting and will probably not result in immediate action being taken.

Two Scenarios



- Your new art headcount has been approved early!
- Art lead is busy and can't take action.
- **Use existing meeting with the right context**

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But if you have a regular 1:1 with the art lead in a few days where you normally talk about upcoming work and planning

You can use the timing and context of the meeting as the perfect place to share the good news and tackle next steps together.

You are offering information to the art lead at a time when they are ready to receive and act on it without detracting from other work

Two Scenarios



- Creative Director needs new screenshots!

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In the second scenario You receive an e-mail from the creative director of the project who is working on a quarterly business review presentation for studio executives.

The CD is asking for some gifs of the flashy special attacks that your main character can do.

They've been using screenshots, but want to spice it up a bit and show off the new visual effects that have recently come in.

Two Scenarios



- Creative Director needs new screenshots!
- **Effects team is wrapping up milestone.**

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Your team is working hard on finishing their milestone and the folks that would be making these gifs are already full up on ship-critical work.

So you can see that it's not the right time to present them with such a request because you know that since it's coming from the Creative Director, the team is probably going to feel obligated to accommodate the need.

Two Scenarios



- Creative Director needs new screenshots!
- Effects team is wrapping up milestone.
- **Check criticality, offer alternatives.**

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So instead, you can reply to the CD, explain the situation, highlight the fact that the team would likely stop critical work, and determine how vital these new gifs are to the presentation.

If they aren't, great. You did not disrupt your team with a request that ultimately didn't end up being mandatory.

But if they are, you can take the next steps of asking for goals and deadlines, and gathering as many facts as you can, before talking to the team about this ask.

Right Place, Right Time



- Don't be the Agent of Chaos on your team!

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The most important takeaway from this strategy is if at all possible don't be the agent of chaos for your team

Always be thinking about when is the right time to present new information on your team so that what you're bringing to the table is primarily additive than subtractive

Right Place, Right Time



- Don't be the Agent of Chaos on your team!
- **Judgement improves with time and experience**

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Having said that, these approaches to timing are examples, there's unfortunately no cookie cutter process get you from zero to perfect judgement in the span of one talk.

But the more information and outcomes you're exposed to, the better you become at judging volatility and impact of new information the team.

Right Place, Right Time



- Don't be the Agent of Chaos on your team!
- This judgement improves with time and experience
- **Your mileage WILL vary**

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So of all the strategies here, your mileage will vary the most with this one.

Not every event will be an invitation to an E3 stage demo or inclusion in a major promotion,

you will be faced with other opportunities that require commitment before comfort but don't have quite the same impact radius

Right Place, Right Time



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Give yourself space to be bad at this for a bit, and if you have the benefit of a manager or a mentor, lean on them to help you build this judgement over time.

Meet at the level



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Now moving beyond the What and the When, we get more into the How ... how can we share information with our teams in a way that is constructive and helpful

Meet at the level



- When sharing information, match the desired level of detail

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The more teams you work with, the more personalities and styles you will encounter, which will help you be a more effective communicator.

But one strategy I find useful regardless of the communication style, is to match the desired level of detail of the person you're sharing information with.

This approach allows you to offer the most useful information possible in a way that feels tailored to the person receiving it

Meet at the level



- When sharing information, match the desired level of detail
 - What do they **want to know**?
 - **How relevant** is the detail to their work?

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Some folks want to know every single detail they can about a decision, or want to have a lot of forewarning and time to prepare.

Others prefer to only be aware of what's most immediate to their needs and workflow, because having an even larger context can make them overwhelmed or anxious

You need to balance what the person wants to know with what they need to know to do their best work.

Meet at the level



- When sharing information, match the desired level of detail
 - What do they want to know?
 - How relevant is the detail to their work?
- **Very applicable to small teams!**

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This is particularly relevant to small, indie teams where the information can range from the highest levels of how the business is being run to the lowest implementation detail.

Case Study - Porting



- Your team is **porting your game to the Switch**. You've just received information about next steps from publisher.

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So let's take a quick look at an example which can happen on a team of any size

Your team has decided to port your game to the Switch and you just got off the call with your publisher to talk about what needs to get done to get the process rolling.

Case Study - Porting



- Your team is porting your game to the Switch. You've just received information about next steps from publisher.
 - **Acknowledgement – everyone!**

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Now, if this information isn't contractually sensitive, then it's great to acknowledge to everyone on the team that this is happening and that you'd be updating folks regularly as this progresses.

Case Study - Porting



- Your team is porting your game to the Switch. You've just received information about next steps from publisher.
 - Acknowledgement – everyone!
 - **High level of detail – People doing the work**

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At the highest level of detail should be the people doing the day to day work on the project

There are inevitably technical considerations to be discussed so the engineering team needs to thoroughly evaluate the work and the risks.

Your QA team will now need to consider another platform in their passes and will need access to kits and documents and requirements as soon as possible.

So whatever detail you have, these are the folks that are getting the full firehose of information

Case Study - Porting



- Your team is porting your game to the Switch. You've just received information about next steps from publisher.
 - Acknowledgement – everyone!
 - High level of detail – People doing the work
 - **Medium level of detail – Partner teams down the line**

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At that medium level of detail would be the teams that will receive the work down the line like your marketing team

their part of the process won't get rolling until later but it's good to let them know that the conversations have kicked off, share any key dates if you have them, and let them start working into their roadmap.

As the development continues they will need higher and higher levels of detail and information.

But for now they need more than just an acknowledgement but have less immediate action.

Case Study - Porting



- Your team is porting your game to the Switch. You've just received information about next steps from publisher.
 - Acknowledgement – everyone!
 - High level of detail – People doing the work
 - Medium level of detail – Partner teams down the line
 - **Lower level of detail – People not directly working on project**

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Finally at the lower level of detail is the rest of the team of folks who are not directly contributing to the effort

Because they're likely to not be affected by the port work, going into great detail with them on everything you've learned so far about shipping on the switch isn't really helpful.

They may choose to opt into a greater level of detail because curiosity or professional development reasons, but it's not immediately necessary to give them a full rundown

Meet at the level



- “Overprotecting” is a common pitfall

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Now that last part, about deciding on the level of detail you give to the team, is a great segue into the most common pitfall to this approach

Which is adopting a “protecting the team” stance where information and details are withheld by someone as a response to a perception or belief that the team would get too distracted and overwhelmed.

Meet at the level



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But Veronica, you may say, you just told me to meet the team at the appropriate level of detail. And now you're telling me that too little detail is bad?

Meet at the level



- "Overprotecting" is a common pitfall
- **Did the team opt in?**

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Well, the key differentiator here is – did the team ask for a lower level of detail or did you determine it on your own?

Meet at the level



- "Overprotecting" is a common pitfall
- Did the team opt in?
- **Team doesn't feel trusted**

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If you've decided unilaterally at the amount of information you're going to provide and the rate at which you provide it, it can result in your team feeling like you don't trust them, or that you're parenting them, which erodes your relationship over time.

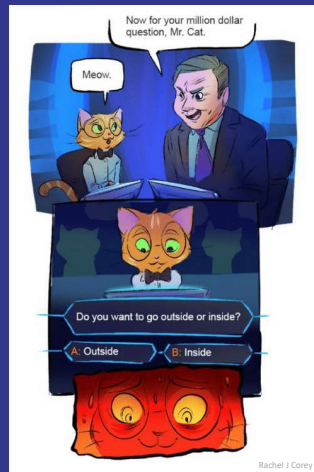
If you have done this or are considering this kind of approach, ask yourself why did you make that decision?

Why do you think the team is not able to respond to certain kinds of news?

What is the outcome you are trying to prevent by holding this close to your chest?

If this is a common tactic you find yourself employing, there may be deeper communication and trust issues to resolve so it is worth spending some time and reflecting

Meet at the level



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In reality, what you'll find is that your team's desired level of detail will shift over time, even from person to person and topic to topic.

Meet at the level



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So want to make sure you give people the chance to opt into the information they want to hold onto. Whether that's insight into how a particular strategic decision is made or what were the determining factors to taking that engine upgrade next quarter.

Meet at the level



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And then let them opt right back out again when it's too much! And they didn't really want to know how payroll is set up for your indie team or the number of icon versions your platform partner needs for your shipped title.

Meet at the level



- Is this **interesting**?
- Is this **stressful**?
- Do you have **what you need**?

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To keep on top of this changing landscape I recommend checking in often and asking

“is this information interesting to you?”

“is it stressful or overwhelming?” and most importantly

“do you feel like you’re getting the level of detail you need to make good decisions to do your job?”

This way you can continually gauge how opted in or out your team is and adjust accordingly

Shop it Around



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Finally, let's put the what, when, and how together to talk about how all three combine in a great strategy that helps prime team members for an incoming change

Shop it Around



- All about change management

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Unlike the Forewarned tactic, “Shopping it around” is less about transmitting information vital to day to day functioning but more about change management

Shop it Around



- All about change management
 - When you want to **make a major decision**
 - You know a **major change is coming**

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This strategy comes into play when you find yourself needing to make a major decision, implement a change, or you know a big shift is coming

Shop it Around



- All about change management
 - When you want to make a major decision
 - You know a major decision is coming
- **Needs comfort with previous strategies**

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I think this is the most advanced tactic because it requires you to be comfortable with your own judgement of the content, when the right time to talk about it is, and to have some idea of how you're going to roll it out.

You are using the previous three strategies simultaneously on a subset of the team

Shop it Around



- All about change management
 - When you want to make a major decision
 - You know a major decision is coming
- Needs comfort with previous strategies
- **Not always worst case scenario**

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The change or decision doesn't necessarily have to be a dire one, for instance, I often use this tactic when I need to make a decision about scope of a feature, or budget, or process – which are normal parts of game development.

Shop it Around



- When you want to **make a major decision**:
 - **Get expert opinions** (Right place, right time)

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So when you want to make a decision that would impact the whole team,

You can first meet individually with other stakeholders during 1:1s or other planned conversations, and ask them for their point of view on a particular situation,

Shop it Around



- When you want to **make a major decision**:
 - **Get expert opinions** (Right place, right time)
 - **Validate your assumptions** (Meet them at the level)

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It gives you the opportunity to share the details of why you're thinking about this decision and gives you a chance to "check your work" with others to make sure that you haven't overlooked a risk or outcome

Shop it Around



- When you want to **make a major decision**:
 - **Get expert opinions** (Right place, right time)
 - **Validate your assumptions** (Meet them at the level)
 - **Prepare for outcomes** (To be forewarned...)

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All the while you're giving these stakeholders the time to process what you're proposing and prepare for the change in advance, leading to smoother outcomes

Case Study – Short Milestone



- Your team's regular 4-week milestone schedule is less effective than before.

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So let's say you're the producer of a live feature team. You've been using a 4 week milestone schedule to deliver new content updates to the game.

Case Study – Short Milestone



- Your team's regular 4-week milestone schedule is less effective than before.
 - **Problem:** Fewer planned features released, more bugs introduced.

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This worked out fine for a while, but as the complexity of proposed features has increased to meet the needs of the game, you've found that over the last few releases fewer planned features actually shipped and more bugs wound up being introduced .

Case Study – Short Milestone



- Your team's regular 4-week milestone schedule is less effective than before.
 - **Problem:** Fewer planned features released, more bugs introduced.
 - **Decision:** Extend milestone to 6 weeks

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So as the producer, you've determined that a process change is the answer and you'd like to extend the milestone schedule from four weeks to six, in order to add dedicated iteration time and bug fixing time to ensure releases are more stable and of higher quality

Case Study – Short Milestone



- Shop it around!
- **Meet with your own stakeholders**

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This is a broadly reaching change so it's time to shop it around. First you can meet with the leads of the disciplines most affected by the change to see if extending the milestone to six weeks will actually be an improvement. This will help you check those assumptions and maybe refine the process even further

Case Study – Short Milestone



- Shop it around!
 - Meet with your own stakeholders
 - **Meet with your partner teams**

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Once you've gotten to gut check the change with your own team, you can then chat with those affected down the line such as your community manager.

Extending the milestone schedule means that your content updates will now happen every six weeks instead of four, which will necessitate some adjustment on their part. Explaining to them the reasoning behind the change and offering them a chance to contribute their point of view allows them to be better prepared when it happens and strengthens your collaborative relationship.

Case Study – Short Milestone



- Shop it around!
 - Meet with your own stakeholders
 - Meet with your partner teams
 - **Roll it out!**

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Finally, once all the stakeholders are on board, you can roll this change out to the team and let them know that you're trying this approach with an eye to getting improvements in stability and quality.

If instead you chose to roll this out without shopping it around beforehand, you would probably get some pretty grouchy teammates and partners.

Shop it Around



- When you know **a major decision is coming**:

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As you progress in your career and become responsible for larger swaths of a project, communicating out major changes, especially those that are out of your hands, can become more common

So when a big decision is made such as a change in ship date, a big pivot to design, and other things that your team will need time to adjust to, you can help them weather the storm by using a similar approach.

Except instead of vetting a decision, you're trying to create other strong support pillars on your team that can help you share the load of change management when the decision is made public

Shop it Around



- When you know **a major decision is coming**:
 - **Offer as much detail as possible** (Meet them at the level)

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In this case, you're working through the strategies almost in reverse by first offering as much detail as you can about the decision to other key leaders of your team,

Shop it Around



- When you know **a major decision is coming**:
 - **Offer as much detail as possible** (Meet them at the level)
 - **Give adequate time to process** (Right place, Right time)

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By shopping it around with them in advance you're giving them adequate time to actually process the information and understand the outcomes for themselves and their teams

Shop it Around



- When you know **a major decision is coming**:
 - **Offer as much detail as possible** (Meet them at the level)
 - **Give adequate time to process** (Right place, Right time)
 - **Create additional support structure** (To be forewarned...)

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And in the end, they are armed with as much information as possible and therefore can help disseminate it to the rest of the team, answer questions that come up, and make sure the whole organization stays strong

The goal here is that when massive change happens, it's as least surprising as possible

Shop it Around



- But you **won't always be able to do this**

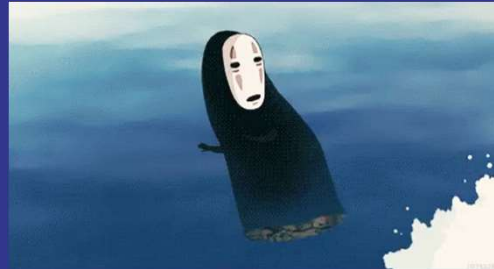
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Having said all that, sometimes you will find that things can't be shopped around in advance. In the very tragic cases of project cancellations or reductions in force, you may not actually get to prepare or warn. But by practicing all of these strategies on lower stakes situations, you can become more comfortable in these scenarios and help your team weather the storms in the smoothest possible way.

Strategies



- To be forewarned, is to be forearmed
- Right place, Right Time
- Meet at the level
- Shop it around



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To wrap up, these are the strategies we went over today. Maybe you're thinking "hey I already do one or two of these things." and that's good!

That means that you are starting to understand that facilitation is a big piece of what you do and are exploring the best ways to be successful at it. Building your skill at managing information on your team is a crucial piece to your success as a producer

And I hope you are already considering ways to combine or modify these for your own needs to better manage the waves of information coming at you

In Summary



- Keep asking **What? When? How?**
- **Ask for feedback**, learn from the missteps

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Remember, with each new thing that comes your way to ask yourself what do I share, when is the right time, and how do I do it? As much as possible .

And whenever you can, ask for feedback from your peers, your team, and your mentors because the best thing you can do is try keep what works, and learn from the missteps



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And as you progress in your career as a producer keep practicing these skills on the increasingly complex situations that come your way and one day you'll find that hey ... you've actually gotten quite cozy in the vortex of information

Veronica Peshterianu

Lead Producer – System Era

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