



The Top 30 Leaders in Mobile Gaming

European Edition

2023

Introduction

Europe remains a powerhouse in the mobile games industry with many of the most successful companies being headquartered in the region.

We have deliberately not attempted to rank the leaders in terms of influence as this is too subjective and challenging to measure. We haven't included leaders based in the US or Israel.

No list is perfect, and there are undoubtedly many more leaders within the sector who deserve recognition in future editions.

Mobile gaming is one of the most exciting and vibrant sectors within the technology industry and we are delighted to recognize those who have played a key role in building the industry.

Peter Franks
Founder Neon River



About Neon River

Neon River is a headhunting firm that works with many of the leading mobile games companies in Europe, helping them find and attract the best leaders in the industry.

Our deep sector specialism and network within the mobile games sector sets us apart from our competitors. If we can help you in the future - don't hesitate to reach out us hello@neonriver.com



ILKKA PAANANEN

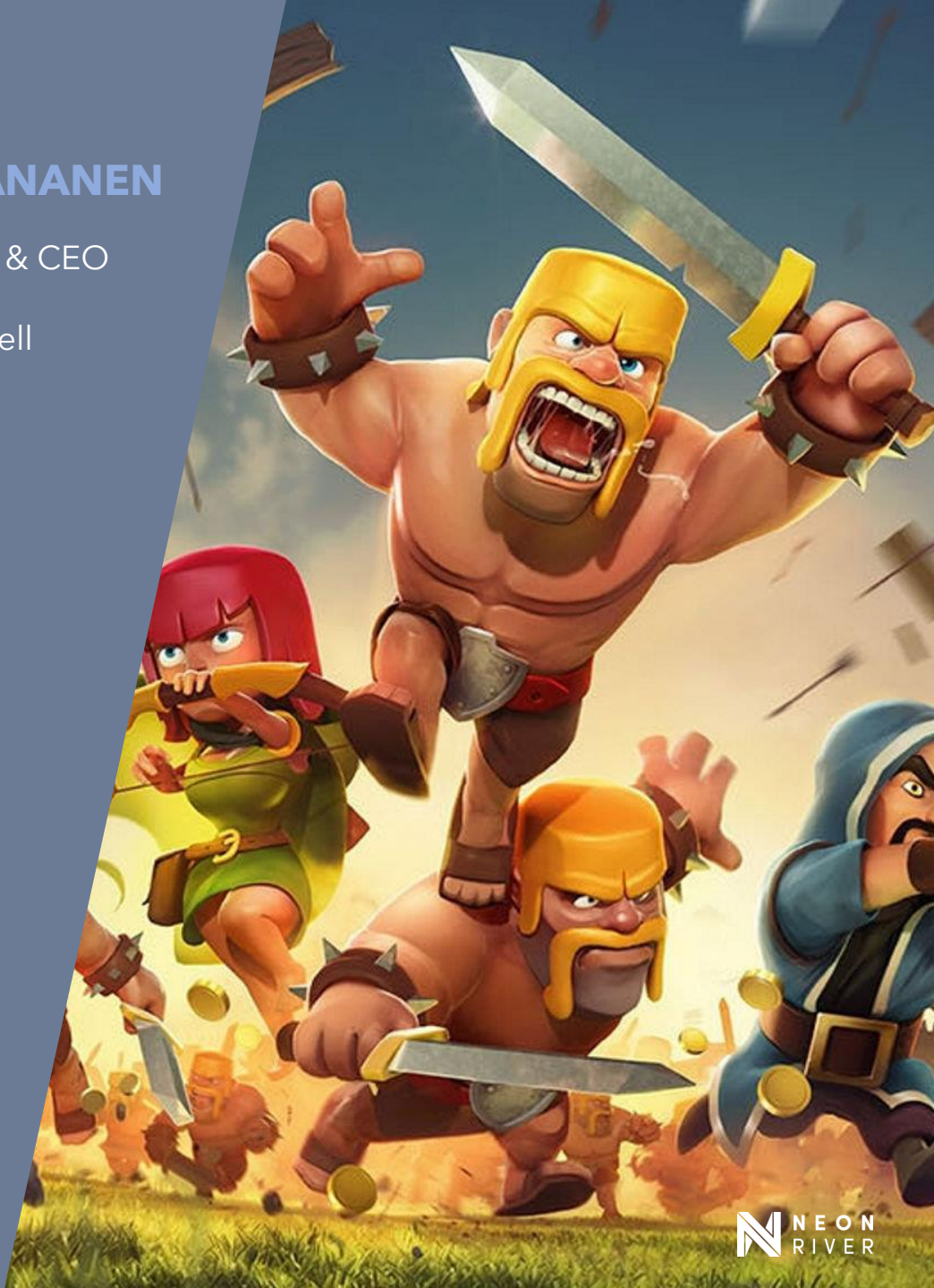
Co-Founder & CEO

Supercell

Alongside King, Supercell has been perhaps the greatest success story for mobile games companies in Europe. Truly a global market leader, Supercell has experienced big hits with titles such as *Clash of Clans*, *Hay Day* and *Brawl Stars*.

In 2016, Tencent acquired an 81.4% majority stake in Supercell, valuing the company at over \$10bn. Supercell has also made strategic investments in other mobile games companies such as Space Ape Games, Trailmix and Metacore.

Paananen was previously President of Digital Chocolate – an early pioneer of the social games sector.





TJODOLF SOMMESTAD

President
King

Tjodolf has been with King since the company's very early days in mobile gaming. Initially responsible for King's skill games, Tjodolf became responsible for King's influential *Candy Crush* series of games in 2014.

Tjodolf became Chief Development Officer responsible for development across King's studios before becoming President in 2022. During Tjodolf's tenure, King has grown to become one of the most successful mobile games companies in the world, and has completed a successful NYSE IPO and trade sale to Activision Blizzard.



ROB SMALL

Founder and President

Miniclip

Rob Small founded Miniclip back in the year 2000. Before the advent of smartphones, the company offered a broad range of games on its own website, before very successfully pivoting into the mobile games sector.

Miniclip is best known for its multiplayer sports themed games like *8 Ball Pool* and *Football Strike*. In 2015, Tencent acquired a majority stake in Miniclip, and the company has grown to become one of the leading players in the industry, and has recently acquired Sybo, makers of *Subway Surfers*.

Rob was CEO of Miniclip until 2020, before moving into the role of President.





DOUG HARE

Founder & CEO

Outplay Entertainment

Alongside his brother Richard, Doug founded Outplay Entertainment in Dundee in 2011. Outplay has a strong focus on developing casual mobile games with broad market appeal, and is best known for games like *Gordon Ramsay's Chef Blast* and *Angry Birds POP!*.

Outplay's games have been downloaded over 160m times and the company is one of the largest independent mobile games developers in Europe.

Doug is a serial entrepreneur within the games industry having previously founded Foundation 9 Entertainment and The Collective along with Richard and others.





CAROLIN KRENZER

CEO & Co-Founder

Trailmix Games

Carolin co-founded Trailmix Games back in 2017 with Tristan Clark, with a focus on creating positive, long-lasting mobile games. The company is best known for its hit game *Love and Pies* where players can merge ingredients and build their own café.

In 2022, mobile gaming powerhouse Supercell acquired a majority stake in Trailmix, enabling further growth for the business.

Krenzer is highly experienced in the mobile games sector having previously worked for King for five years, founding their London development studio.





PAUL CROFT

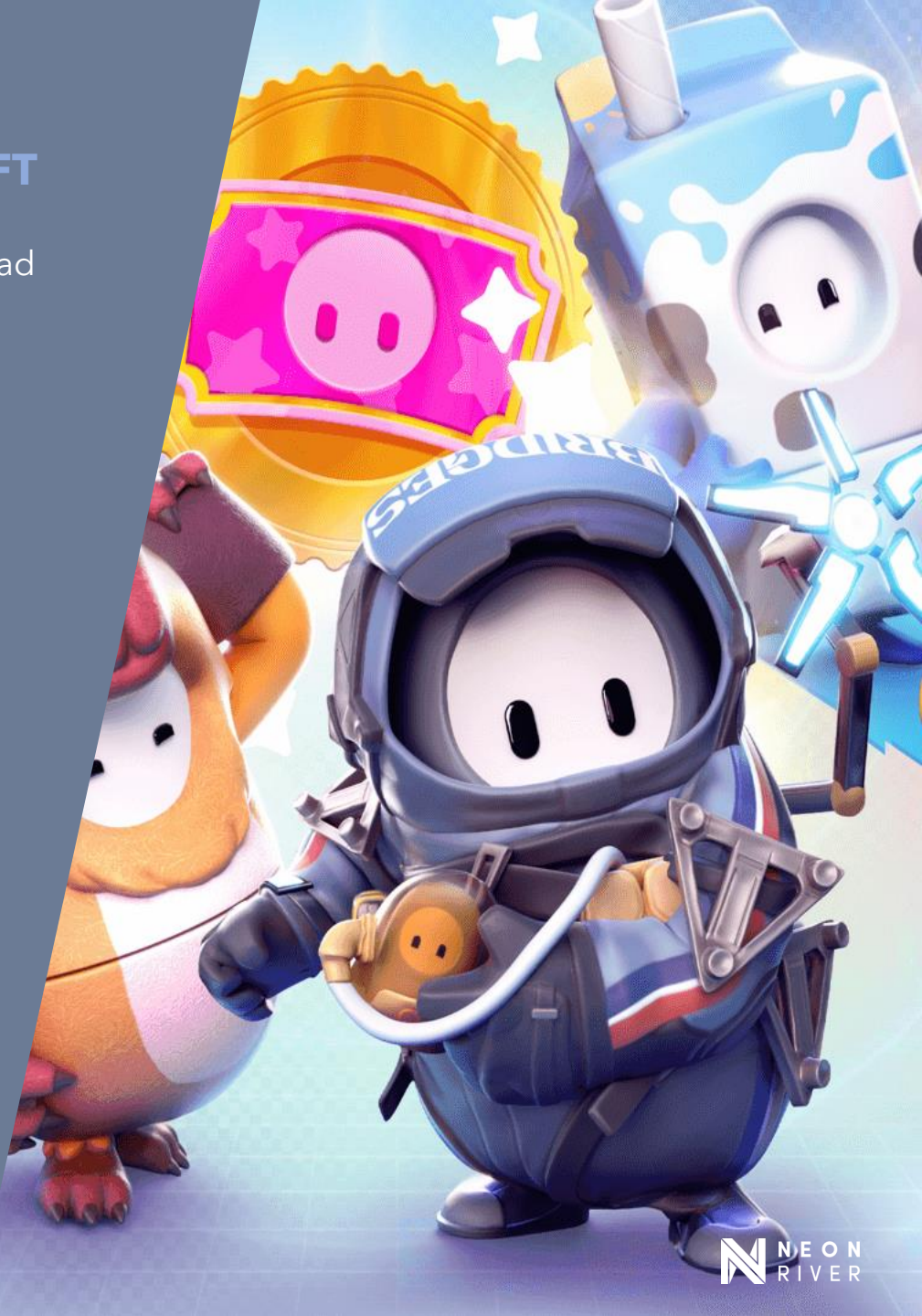
VP & Studio Head

Tonic Games

Alongside Dave Bailey, Paul co-founded Mediatonic Games in 2005 and has built the business to become one of the most successful mobile games companies in Europe. Mediatonic is perhaps best known for its hit game *Fall Guys*.

In 2021, gaming giant Epic Games acquired Mediatonic parent company Tonic Games Group, and following the acquisition, Paul has been responsible for managing Tonic Games Group within the Epic Games portfolio.

Croft holds a First Class degree in Multimedia Technology and Design from Brunel University in London.





SHAUN RUTLAND

Co-Founder & CEO

Hutch

Shaun Rutland has built Hutch to become one of the leading developers of racing games within the mobile games industry. With hit titles like *Top Drives* and *F1 Clash*, Hutch is one of the most innovative companies in the sector.

In 2020, Swedish media conglomerate MTG acquired Hutch, providing further investment for the business to expand.

Rutland is a veteran of the games industry, having previously worked as a producer for Sony Computer Entertainment Europe and Lionhead Studios – the studio founded by legendary game developer Peter Molyneux.





ALEXANDRE YAZDI

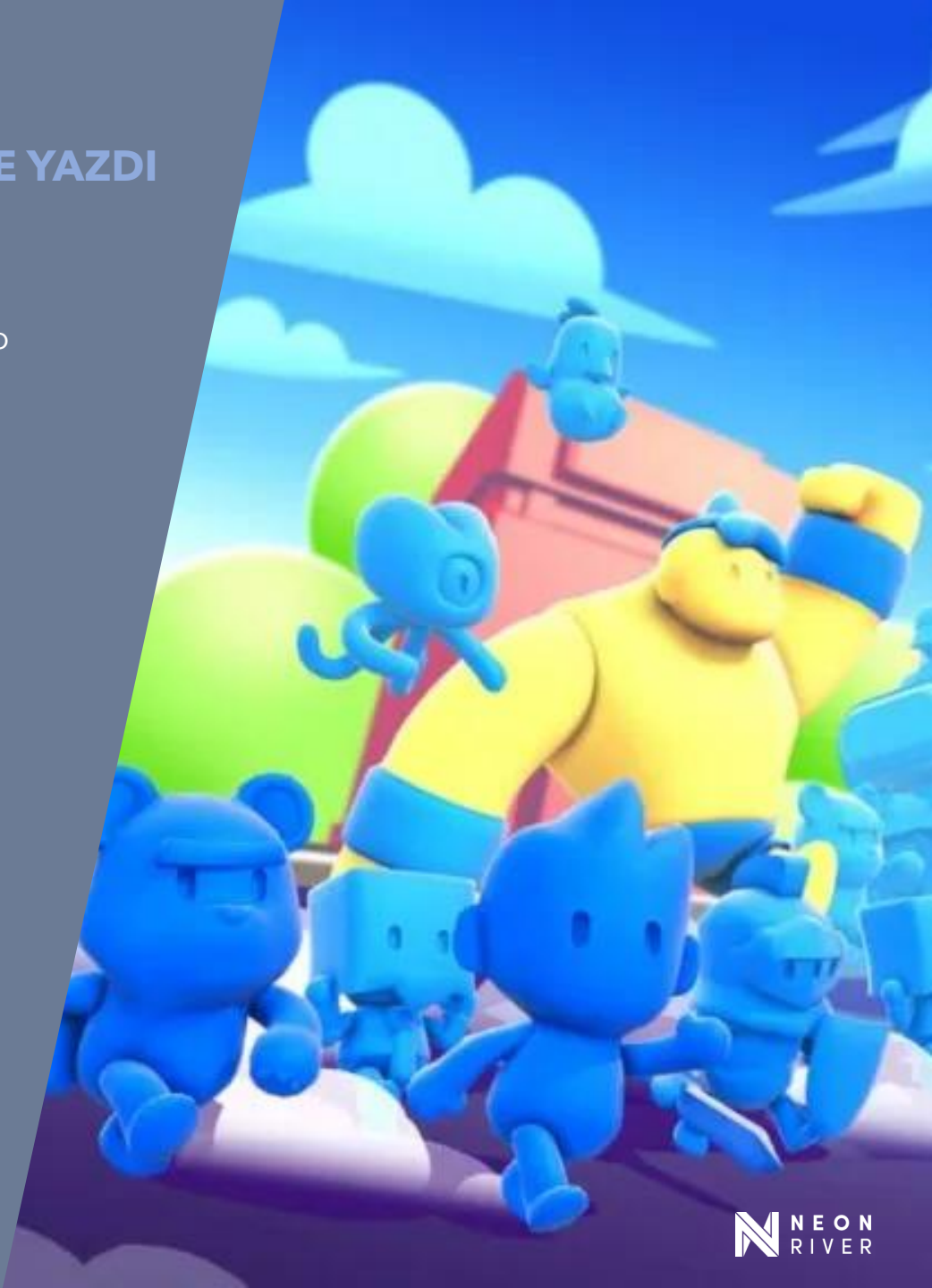
CEO

Voodoo.io

Alexandre Yazdi co-founded Voodoo in 2013 with Laurent Ritter, and has grown the business to become one of the pioneers of the hyper-casual genre within mobile gaming and since diversified in other segments (casual, hybrid casual, consumer apps).

In 2018, the company raised \$200m in investment from Goldman Sachs - one of the largest ever fundraises in the French technology sector. In 2020, Tencent acquired a minority stake in Voodoo, valuing the business at over \$1bn. Voodoo's games have been downloaded over 6bn times.

Voodoo has grown from a small studio in Paris to a team of over 700 people.





NAZ AMARCHI-CUEVAS

SVP & General Manager,
Stumble Guys

Scopely

Naz Amarchi-Cuevas has built a strong career in the mobile games sector over the last ten years or so. Based in Barcelona, she is responsible for Scopely's hit franchise *Stumble Guys*.

Amarchi-Cuevas was previously Chief Commercial Officer for Sybo, the Danish mobile games developer best known for the hit game *Subway Surfers*.

She also spent four years leading consumer products licensing for Rovio between 2012 and 2016. Amarchi-Cuevas holds a BA in Economics from the University of California.





ALEXANDRE DE ROCHFORT

Group CEO

Gameloft

Alexandre de Rochefort joined Gameloft shortly after it was founded in 2000. He spent over twenty years as CFO of the business before being promoted to CEO in 2023. He has been instrumental in building Gameloft into one of the biggest mobile games companies in Europe.

Gameloft has seventeen studios around the world and is best known for games such as *Asphalt*, *March of Empires* and *Disney Magic Kingdoms*.

In 2016, French media conglomerate Vivendi acquired a majority stake in Gameloft.





SAAD CHOUDRI

CEO

Miniclip

Saad has been a key figure within Miniclip since 2011, working closely with founder Rob Small. Holding various executive positions Saad was instrumental in Miniclip's strategic initiatives such as building the M&A functions, third party developer relations and sourcing games for Miniclip to publish. Publishing and acquisitions have been some of the cornerstones of Miniclip's success.

In 2021, Saad was promoted to become CEO of the company and has overseen the acquisition of Sybo, best known for its highly popular *Subway Surfers* franchise.

Saad holds a degree in Law from the University of London.





JOHAN SJÖBERG

CEO

Star Stable Entertainment

Johan Sjöberg has spent the last thirty years working in the games industry, and is currently CEO of Star Stable Entertainment, best known for the hit horse-themed game *Star Stable Online*.

Star Stable Online started life as an online MMORPG before a successful transition to mobile platforms. *Star Stable Online* is the #1 horse themed game in the world and Star Stable Entertainment has over 150 employees today.

Sjöberg was previously Chief Product Officer for the strategy game developer Paradox Interactive, who completed a successful IPO in 2016.





ALVARO DUARTE

Vice President Live Games

Voodoo.io

Over the last 15 years, Alvaro Duarte has forged an impressive career within the mobile games industry. He is currently responsible for leading hyper-casual games publisher Voodoo's live games portfolio.

Previously, Duarte was in charge of King's games studio in Barcelona. He also spent over six years with Gameloft, building their studios in Asia, managing studios in Japan, Korea and New Zealand.

Duarte's deep experience of building hit mobile games has made him one of the most influential product-oriented leaders in the industry.





HENRIC SUURONEN

Founding Partner

Play Ventures

Henric Suuronen is one of the pre-eminent investors in mobile games companies through his VC fund Play Ventures. Suuronen secured \$135m for his Play Ventures Fund II, investing typically at seed and Series A stage. Current Play Ventures portfolio companies include All-Star Games, Gamefam and Playsome.

Suuronen has had considerable success as an entrepreneur himself in the mobile games sector. He founded Non-Stop Games in 2012, selling the business to King in 2014, and worked as a Senior Creative Director from King following the acquisition.





SONER AYDEMIR

Co-Founder & CEO

Dream Games

Under Soner Aydemir's stewardship, Dream Games has risen quickly to become one of the most successful mobile games companies in the world. Its smash hit game, *Royal Match*, is regularly one of the highest grossing mobile games in the world, and is estimated to have generated almost \$1bn in revenues.

Aydemir has had success previously in the mobile games sector as Product Director for the Istanbul-based mobile games company Peak Games, which was acquired by Zynga for \$1.8bn in 2020.

Aydemir holds a BSc. in Computer Engineering from Koc University.





DAVID GARDNER

General Partner

London Venture Partners

David Gardner has built on his extensive experience as an executive within the games industry to become one of the most influential investors in mobile games companies.

His VC fund - London Ventures Partners - invests in companies across the gaming ecosystem and has had successful investments in companies like Supercell, Playfish and Unity.

As an executive, Gardner was COO for EA's global studios as well as Managing Director for EA's European business, and was CEO of Atari between 2008 and 2010.





STEPHANE KURGAN

Venture Partner

Index Ventures

As both an executive and investor within the mobile games industry, Stephane Kurgan has experienced significant success. He made his name as COO of King, working closely with CEO and co-founder Riccardo Zacconi.

Kurgan played a key role in growing King, helping the business to achieve a successful \$7bn NYSE IPO and then a trade sale to Activision Blizzard.

Kurgan now works as a Venture Partner for leading VC firm Index Ventures, and sits on the board of Dream Games, who have had significant success with their title *Royal Match*.





SIDAR SAHIN

Founder & Former CEO

Peak Games

Sidar Sahin is one of the most successful entrepreneurs in the history of mobile gaming. With a focus on casual mobile games, often oriented towards MENA players, Peak Games effectively targeted a player base that was often underserved by many Western games companies, who often targeted a different audience.

Peak Games found significant success with hits such as *Toy Blast* and *Toon Blast*. The growth of the business did not go unnoticed, and Peak Games was acquired by Zynga for \$1.8bn in 2020.

A serial entrepreneur, Sahin is also a co-founder of the highly successful online fashion site Trendyol.





RICCARDO ZACCONI

Founder, Sweet Capital

Former CEO and co-founder
King

Few people have had as much influence over the mobile gaming industry as Riccardo Zacconi. As co-founder and CEO of King from 2003 to 2020, he built the business to become one of the largest and most successful mobile games companies in the world.

Zacconi oversaw King's successful transition from web to mobile gaming and its creation of huge hits such as *Candy Crush Saga*. Zacconi steered the business through a successful NYSE IPO and trade sale to Activision Blizzard.

Zacconi is now investing in a range of technology companies through his investment fund Sweet Capital.





DMITRI BUKHMAN

Co-Founder and CEO

Playrix

Dmitri Bukhman co-founded Playrix in 2004 with his brother, Igor. They would initially focus on developing games for the PC market, before pivoting into the mobile games sector in 2012.

The company has had several hit games on mobile, including *Township* and *Gardenscapes*. In 2017, the company was ranked as one of the top 10 mobile game developers in the world for the first time.

Through a combination of acquisitions and organic growth, Playrix today is one of the largest mobile games publishers in the European market.





ALEX DALE

Non-Executive and Chairman

Various mobile games companies

Alex Dale has forged an impressive career as both an executive and non-executive within the mobile games industry. Dale is the former Chief Marketing Officer for King, and was instrumental in growing the business to become one of the largest mobile games companies in the world, helping to guide the business to a \$5bn NYSE IPO and \$7bn trade sale to Activision Blizzard.

Since leaving King, Dale holds a number of board roles in the sector – as a non-executive for Snowprint Studios, Chairman of Whossa, and an advisor to Riyadh-based mobile game developer Sandsoft Games.

He has recently launched a new classical music app called *Conductor.i*.





ANDRZEJ ILCZUK

CEO

Ten Square Games

Andrzej Ilczuk is CEO of Ten Square Games, best known for its hit game *Fishing Clash*. With over 30m players in 100+ countries, the success of the game has propelled Ten Square Games to become one of the larger mobile games companies in Europe.

Ilczuk has deep experience of working in the games sector, having spent many years working for Aeria Games, and ultimately becoming their Director of Live Operations.

He joined Ten Square Games in 2019, and was promoted to CEO in 2023. Headquartered in Wroclaw, Poland, Ten Square Games is listed on the Polish Stock Exchange with a market cap of c. €130m.





ANTON GAUFFIN

CEO

Huuuge Games

Huuuge Games has grown rapidly to become one of the bigger mobile games companies in Europe with over 600 employees across 10 locations. The company is best known for its social casino games such as *Billionaire Casino*.

Anton Gauffin founded Gamelion in 2002, and the business would rebrand to Huuuge Games in 2014. In 2020, the company completed three acquisitions to surpass \$300m in revenues, and floated on the Polish stock exchange in 2021.

Over recent years, Huuuge Games has diversified beyond the social casino sector – for example with the match three game *Traffic Puzzle*.





ASBJOERN MALTE SOENDERGAARD

Founder & CEO

Tactile Games

Headquartered in Copenhagen, Tactile Games has found success with hit titles such as *Penny and Flo* and *Lily's Garden*. The company is best known for its puzzle games, aimed at a mass-market casual gaming audience.

Soendergaard founded Tactile Games in 2008, and has grown the business to over 200 employees today. The company has raised money from leading technology venture capital firm Index Ventures.

Soendergaard is a veteran of the computer games industry, having previously worked as a Development Manager for Crytek - where he worked on the *Crysis* franchise.





LIOR SHIFF

Co-Founder & CEO

Tripledot Studios

Tripledot Studios was founded in 2017 by Lior Shiff, Eyal Chameides and Akin Babayigit. Today, Shiff is CEO whilst Babayigit is COO and Chameides their Chief Games Officer. With approximately 400 employees, the growth of Tripledot Studios has been impressive and the business has had hit games with puzzle games like *Woodoku* and *Solitaire*.

Shiff is a serial entrepreneur within the mobile games sector, having previously founded social games publisher Product Madness, with a successful exit to Aristocrat.

Shiff holds a BA in Computer Science and Accounting from Tel Aviv University and an MBA from Stanford University.





MIKA TAMMENKOSKI

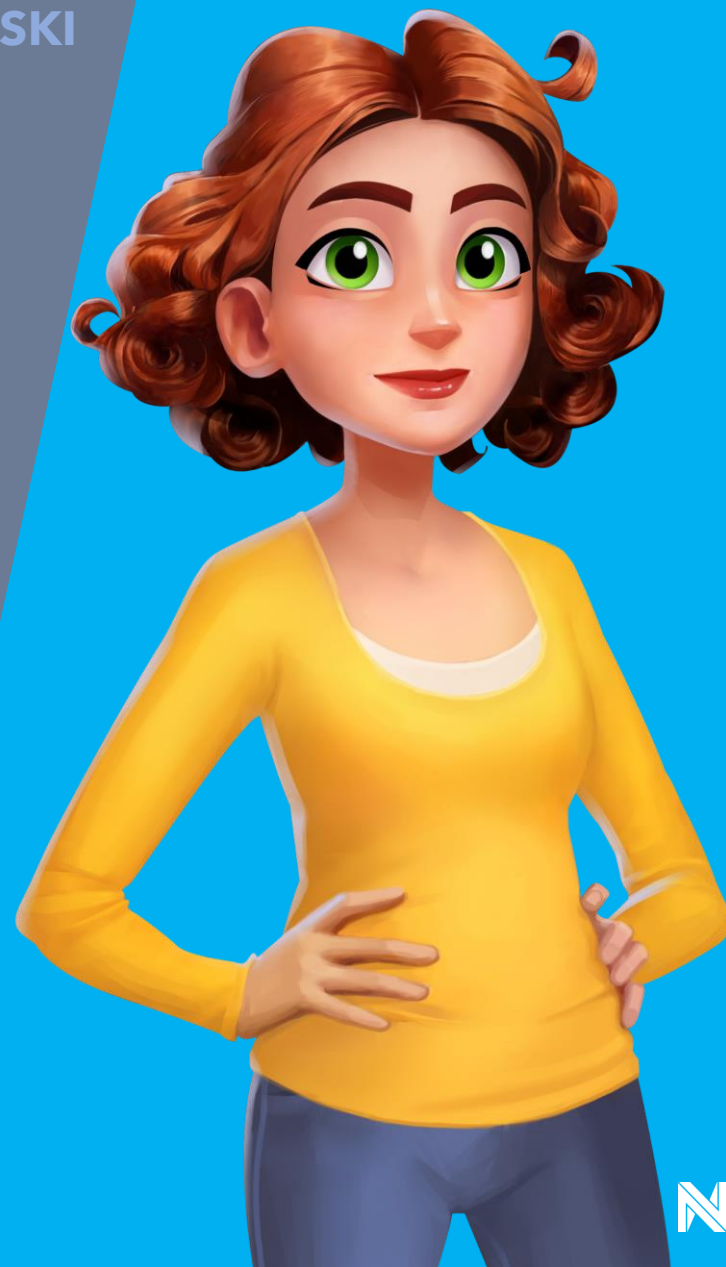
Co-Founder & CEO

Metacore

Mika Tammenkoski is the CEO of Metacore Games, creators of Merge Mansion – the hit mobile game launched in 2020 with 45M+ downloads globally.

The Finnish company is building a portfolio of global hit mobile games with a team of 170 professionals, generating €129 million in revenue in 2022. The company has raised €180 million funding from Supercell and is one of Supercell portfolio companies.

Mika Tammenkoski has 25+ years of experience in the gaming industry as a developer, investor and entrepreneur in studios like Remedy, Sumea, and Digital Chocolate where he worked with Supercell founder and CEO Ilkka Paananen.





ALEXANDRE PELLETIER-NORMAND

CEO

Rovio Entertainment
Corporation

Rovio is one of the best known mobile game companies in the world, and Pelletier-Normand has been CEO there since 2021. Rovio built one of the strongest early mobile game franchises with the *Angry Birds* series, but had struggled to transition from premium to free-to-play games business models.

Under Pelletier-Normand's stewardship, the company is likely to complete a \$775m sale to Sega, representing a good return for shareholders of the business.

Pelletier-Norman has deep experience in the mobile games sector having previously spent many years with Gameloft, rising to become their EVP Production.





JOHN EARNER

Founder & CEO

Space Ape Games

John Earner has built two influential social and mobile games companies in his career so far - Playfish and Space Ape Games. Playfish was an early pioneer of social gaming, and was acquired by EA for \$300m in 2009, with Earner acting as Playfish's VP Product at the time.

As founder and CEO of Space Ape Games, he has had hits in the mobile gaming sector with *Beatstar* and *Chrome Valley Customs*. In 2017, mobile gaming powerhouse Supercell acquired a majority stake in the company.

Earner holds a BSc in Industrial Engineering from Stanford University and an MBA from the University of California.





JÖRGEN LARSSON

Founder & CEO

Stillfront Group

Jorgen Larsson founded Stillfront Group in 2010, and the company has been highly acquisitive within the mobile games industry. Notable acquisitions include Goodgame Studios for €270m, Storm8 for \$400m and Nanobit for \$100m.

The company is listed on the Swedish stock exchange and has a market cap of approximately €850m today. The company employs around 1500 people around the world, making it one of the biggest mobile games groups in Europe.

Under Larsson's stewardship, the company has sought to build a diversified portfolio of games and push into new markets such as Japan.





Max Petrov

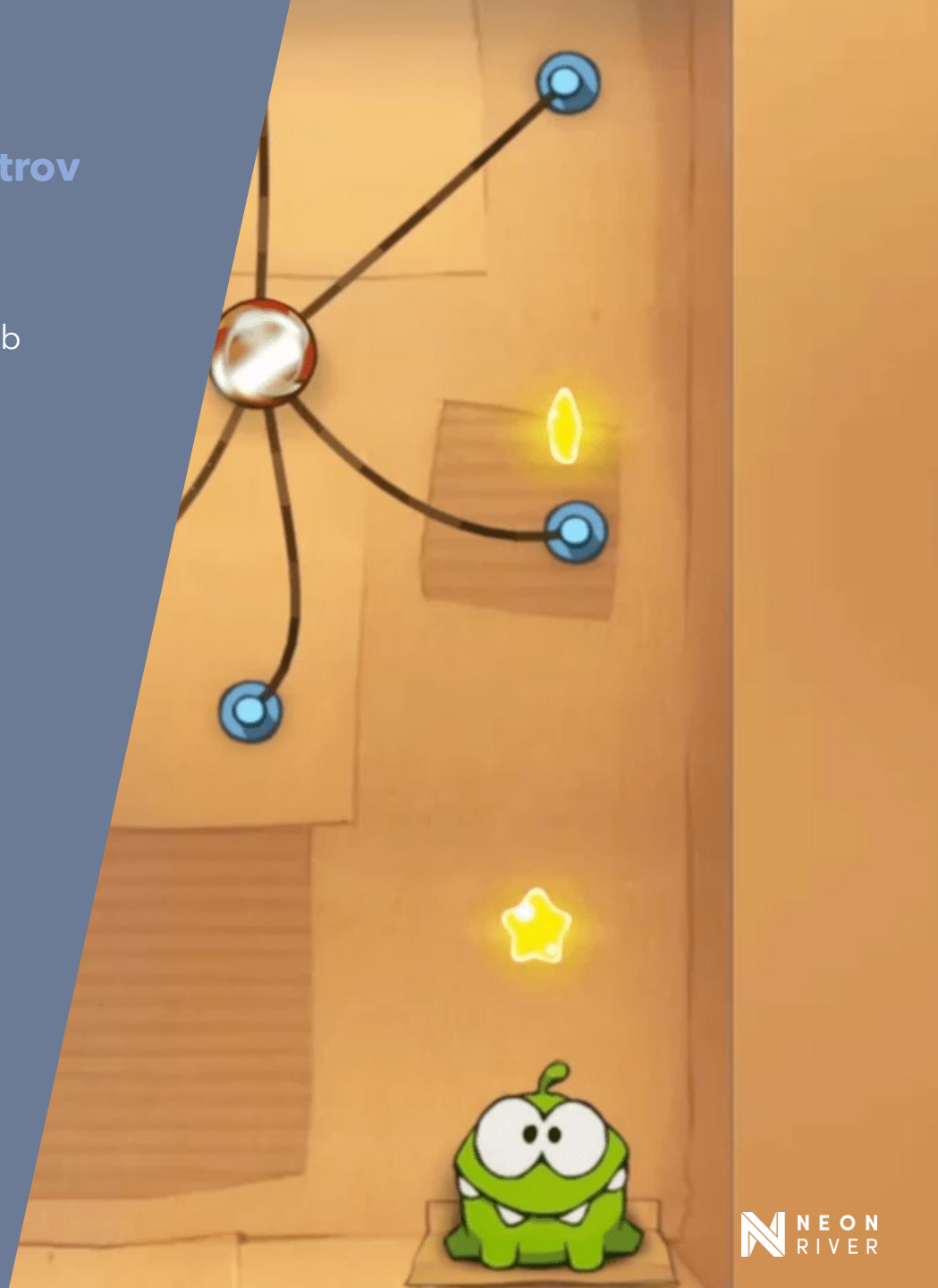
CEO

ZeptoLab

ZeptoLab has built a reputation as one of the most innovative mobile games businesses in the world. The company is best known for its successful series of physics-based puzzlers - *Cut the Rope*.

Zeptolab was founded in 2008 by twins Efim and Semyon Voinov, and has been entirely self-funded throughout its history.

The company is headquartered in Barcelona, and Petrov has been crucial to the success of the company - initially as Chief Product Officer from 2013-2019, and later as COO between 2019 and 2022 and CEO from 2022 onwards.



Neon River is a headhunting firm that specializes in partnering with mobile games companies to hire the best leaders in the market.



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Next Generation Executive Search

hello@neonriver.com

