Twitter Thread by Jennifer Scheurle



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It has been super tough to end up here but: Today, I have finally signed an offer for my next gig. TBA, still, but finally after such a tough 2018, honestly!

I learned so much about interviewing and negotiating globally that I thought I'd write a master-thread on my thoughts:



First of all: Everybody always thinks that there are "stars" in this industry who can go anywhere and get a job in an instant - some people would count me as one of them.

Let me tell you: It's a myth. Star or not, companies differ WILDLY in their needs, culture and requirements.

There is no guarantee for a job, ever. There is no holy grail level you can reach that will make you into this being that can pick and choose wherever they want to go. In the end, you need to find the exact right fit for both you and the company. That's a marathon, not a sprint.

Further: Interviewing in this industry takes FUCKING FOREVER. At every place I had interviews with I got at least to mid-tier stages and that always means at least 2-3 interviews. 3-5 interviews before an offer is STANDARD. Jup. I know. It's a lot.

With some companies I have been in on and off discussions for literal months. 2-6 months to get an offer ANYWHERE is completely normal. If you're looking for a job, you need to be really patient. I know that's super tough, especially when you desperately need a new job.

The next thing I noticed: Especially for designers, the industry has almost split into 3 pathways: Console/PC/AAA, mobile games and emergent technologies.
I found it extremely hard to get ahead for gigs that were outside of my core expertise, even though I'm a generalist.

What that means is: Ideally you know what you want and tailor yourself and your application HARD towards that. And then we haven't even spoken about specialisations within your field itself within the company.

Next: The interviews where I did really poorly were the ones where I was reactionary instead of really vetting the other party on whether or not they are a good fit for ME as well.
My no1 interview tip for anybody is now to start interviews with questions of your own.

Don't be afraid to be critical. Don't be afraid to ask hard questions. Don't be afraid to probe THEM. My most enjoyable interviews were the ones where I felt like the playing field was even and we were in a mutual discussion about needs and wants.

Only about 2 months into interviews I actually managed to be properly confident in what I wanted and where I wanted to go next. I stopped trying to figure out what they wanted to hear and instead told them what I wanted to do - and it made me a MUCH stronger candidate.

Also: Don't be afraid to end interview processes early if you can feel that it's not a good fit or that you would be unhappy. I know that's extremely hard when you really need a job, but it's an important part to keep your sense of self-worth alive. Keep control over your choices

I know people always say to tailor CVs towards roles and companies, and I have done that in some special cases where I've left out some side-projects or quirky work that would be beneficial to be mentioned for a different role.
Overall I made my CV according to what *I* wanted.

For example: I'm a really decent concept artist. But I categorically leave it out of my CV because I don't want to be hired for that and I have had companies push me into art or even ask me if I'm really an artist who tries to be a game designer (rude much?).

Don’t be afraid to turn down places that make you do insane amounts of labour to even get an interview, e.g. huge design tests. I turned down places like that and engaged with some that were borderline about it but excessive design tests were always daunting.

Sometimes I had so many of them at once and with so much workload, it was like working 2 jobs. Don’t do that. You want a workplace that is mindful of your time. Trust me.
The best design tests were the ones where I got to do a mock design meeting with the team. So much fun!

By the end of it, I ended up with 4 actual contract offers on the table to choose from with about 9 more companies who were still deciding or could only offer in 2-3 months from now. I’m quite proud of that, but it took a long while to get to this point.

Having offers is awesome but so stressful...! I’m personally terrible at negotiations because I’ve been treated extremely poorly before in those discussions, but was determined to get better at it. Therefore: get help! Run your ideas past someone else to check them.

Negotiations can include many things beyond salary depending on what’s important to you. Health benefits, exit clauses, transit coverage, bonuses, career trajectory within the company, etc etc
Discuss with someone you trust what’s reasonable.

I have good experiences with getting back to an offer by giving them a tiered list of things according to your concerns or what’s most important to you. That can vary depending on your current life situation.
It’s ok to ask for things, you are worthy of compensation!!

Be brave. Negotiations are terrifying. Let people support you through the stress of it. If you ever need help with it, my door is open to you.
The IGDA also offers negotiation workshops in case you want to practice ❤■

And when you decide between your offers: take all factors into consideration. Role, career trajectory, safety nets, location. It’s ok to take your time to think it through. This is the games industry, our jobs are taxing, so don’t let people pressure you into a hasty decision.

I want to say thanks to every single one of you who has written recommendations for me, who has put my resume forward, has supported me or who has given me advice. I know that’s not a given by ANY means and your trust in me will be remembered ❤■❤■❤■

Hope this thread helps, the biggest takeaway is definitely to stay confident and believe you have worth and be persistent.

Can’t talk about what I’m doing next just yet but I absolutely can’t wait to go do it! So many challenges ahead, it’s going to be awesome! ■

Oh, bonus addition for employers/recruiters:

The best recruiters I've worked with have given me multiple avenues to contact them and I loved the ones the most that I could contact somewhere other than email only, e.g. whatsapp or other messengers.

Employers: We research you. I personally REALLY research you. Not only online, I ask all my friends about you, ESPECIALLY on inclusivity. I know your hidden bodies :) All of them.
If you can be open about talking about them in interviews, it's a MASSIVE plus point!!

If I can get time with your team to work on something such as a mock design meeting, that has been the most golden way of finding out whether or not we're a good fit and it can cut down interview numbers and time if you're vetting for culture fit.

And: A bad recruiter can instantly turn me off your company. If they are:
- rude
- unreliable with information and time
- not transparent
- unresponsive
- asking me to pay for international calls for interviews (never do this please, you're the corporation)