



Winning the War for Software Engineering Talent

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Co-founder, Game Designer

InterGame 2014 in Tallinn

What are we going to talk about

- About me
- About Imperia Online
- Why war?
- What does the cross platform hell looks like?
- Solutions
- The Imperia Way
- QA

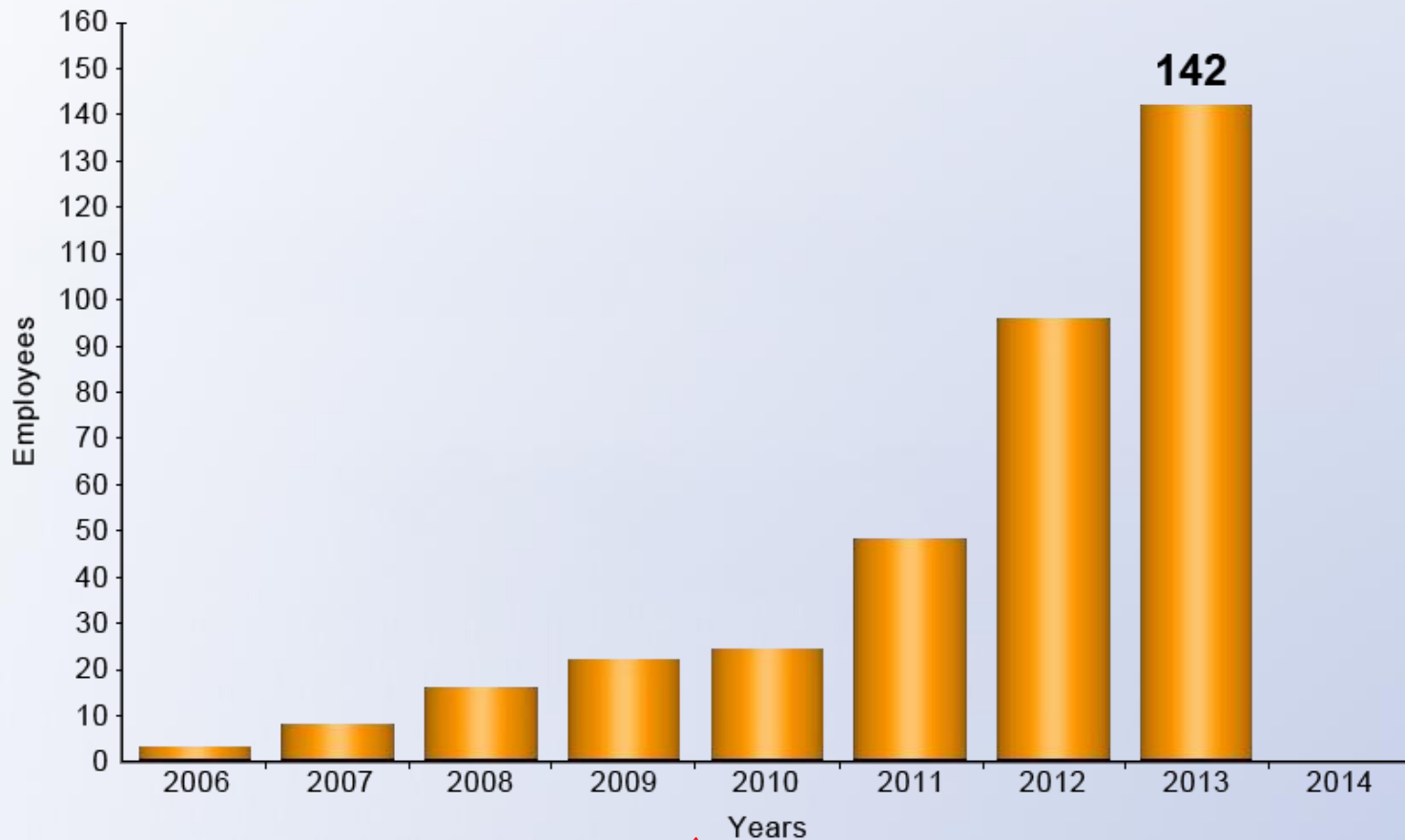
About me

- Graduated Finances in USA
- Serial entrepreneur - 14 years of experience in different fields
- Co-founder of Imperia Online Ltd.
- A leading game designer for over 9 years
- An interesting fact: elected member of the Bulgarian parliament 2009-2014

About Imperia Online

- Founded in 2005
- First investment - \$1000
- No external funding
- 25+ million registrations
- Localized in over 26 languages
- 4 web-based games

About Imperia Online



Imperia Online
Game Production Company

Dobroslav Dimitrov, InterGame 2014

Winning the War for Software
Engineering Talent?

Why War?

- Developers, developers, developers :)
- Ever harder to find
- Ever more platforms requiring more of them
- Ever more companies wanting to do the same

= the most competitive industry today... on global scale

Why War?

However...

Why War?

The greatest victory is that which requires
no battle...

Sun Tzu

Cross-platform hell

Description

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Cross-platform hell

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Cross-platform hell

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- **Manpower** - daunting - native app requires many separate teams repeatedly doing 1000+ screens
- **Skill** - different platforms, mean different skills... some like iOS are all too new to have a pool of ready specialists...
- **Time** - ever changing product, always a catch up game



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Cross-platform hell

Interlocked problems

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Cross-platform hell

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Cross-platform hell

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- **Manpower** - boring and repetitive work = experienced people don't want to do it
- **Skill** - few specialists = a great choice of companies for them to do interesting things

Cross-platform hell

Interlocked problems

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Cross-platform hell

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= problems with **motivation**



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Cross-platform hell

Solution

- **Task** - teams of 1 experienced developer and 3-4 juniors
 - The senior dev plans and oversees the work, while taking care of difficult tasks
 - The juniors take care of the repetitive and massive task of hundreds of screens
 - In the process the juniors are becoming extremely familiar with the product

Cross-platform hell

Solution

- **Manpower** - clever division of labor in order to half the time of development
 - One team is working on iOS/Android, one on PhoneGap, starting from opposite directions
 - After launch works continues until full native support is achieved
 - At the end you have full mobile support for all major platforms

Cross-platform hell

Solution

- **Skill** - where you don't have it - create it
 - Experienced developers migrate easily to new technologies
 - Sometimes it's better to start from 0
- **Time** - with permanent teams, catching up is no longer an issue



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The Imperia Way

Asking the right questions

- Do we need only experienced people?
- Where do we find juniors with the right skill?
- How hard can it be to create a developer?
- How long would that take?
- Would people be interested?
- Is it economically feasible?
- Do we dare try?



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The Imperia Way

Asking the right questions

- Do we need only experienced people? **No.**
- Where do we find juniors with the right skill?
Create them.
- How hard can it be to create a developer?
Doable.
- How long would that take? **5 months.**
- Would people be interested? **Ooooh yeahhh!**
- Is it economically feasible? **Yes.**
- Do we dare try? **What do you think? :)**



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The Imperia Way

The Imperial Training Camp

Dobroslav Dimitrov, InterGame 2014



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The Imperia Way

The Imperial Training Camp

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 - 600 applicants, 100 interviews, 40 final draft students, 20 hired, 20 still work for us

The Imperia Way

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 - 1400 applicants, 200 interviews, 80 final draft, 60 finished the course... interviews for hiring are in progress

The Imperia Way

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- **Third season**: planned to start in August 2014



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The Imperia Way

The Imperial Training Camp

- Outfitted two classrooms - one with PCs, one with Macs
- Created a system of testing and screening candidates
- Created a system for recording all courses and uploading them for later use
- Hands on teaching, with senior developers participating the whole way



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The Imperia Way

The Imperial Training Camp

- 4 courses of 20 people: Java, PHP/MySQL, JavaScript, Objective-C
- Survivor way of teaching - every month the lowest scored students leave
- Second season expanded
- A second company attracted to participate
- The future: IT Talents Training Camp

The Imperia Way

The moral of the story

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no battle...

Sun Tzu



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The Imperia Way

The moral of the story

Generally, commanding of many is like commanding of a few. It is a matter of dividing them into groups.

Sun Tzu



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Questions?

Thank you!
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