

SARAH KAO

Community Strategy & Player Engagement Leader

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Community strategy and player engagement leader with 15+ years of experience building and growing communities around some of the world's most recognisable games and entertainment brands, including PlayStation, Bethesda, SEGA, King and Fortis Games.

I specialise in building communities into products from the beginning — developing the strategies, programmes, creator ecosystems and operational infrastructure that turn audiences into active participants. At PlayStation, I led community strategy for LittleBigPlanet 3, contributing to its user-generated content ecosystem, moderation tools and community programming. At Bethesda, I supported community engagement across major launches and oversaw programmes involving more than 25,000 pieces of fan-created content.

More recently, I established community capabilities from zero at Fortis Games and expanded my work into audience intelligence, scalable operating models and AI-enabled workflows. My approach combines creative community leadership with the systems thinking needed to make community a meaningful part of product and business decisions.

CORE EXPERTISE

Community Strategy & Leadership: Community building from zero · Global player engagement · Growth and retention · Community operating models · Moderation and governance

Player Participation & Creator Ecosystems: User-generated content programmes · Creator and fan engagement · Community content programming · Livestreaming and video · Player feedback and audience insight

Product & Business Collaboration: Community-informed product development · Early-stage launches · Go-to-market strategy · Cross-functional stakeholder leadership · Audience intelligence and social listening

Technology & Operations: Community tools and infrastructure · Workflow and process design · AI-enabled research and operational tooling · Knowledge management · Measurement and reporting frameworks

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

FORTIS GAMES

Community Growth & Technology Manager

Aug 2026 – Present

Leading initiatives at the intersection of community strategy, audience intelligence and emerging technology, helping teams make better decisions and work more effectively.

- Develop scalable systems and operating models connecting community insight with product, marketing and leadership decision-making.
- Translate community and audience signals into actionable insight that supports business planning.
- Design processes that improve knowledge sharing, cross-functional planning and internal communication.
- Implement AI-enabled workflows that reduce operational friction while keeping human judgement and oversight in place.

Senior Social Media Manager

Jun 2024 – Aug 2026

Joined as an early member of the team to establish the studio's community capability ahead of its first game launches.

- **Built the community function from zero:** foundational strategy, operating model and workflows for an emerging games portfolio.
- Established processes for bringing player feedback and audience insight into product and launch planning.
- Developed brand voice, community engagement frameworks and pre-registration approaches focused on sustainable audience growth.
- Worked closely with product, marketing and leadership to align community activity with wider business objectives.

KING — ACTIVISION BLIZZARD

Global Social & Community Lead

Jun 2022 – May 2024

Led community, creator and social strategy across major mobile initiatives, including Candy Crush Saga and new IP.

- Developed an audience-led strategy for Candy Crush Saga, **increasing engagement on business-as-usual content by 17%.**
- Led community and influencer strategy for new IP Rebel Riders, supporting audience development ahead of launch.

- Directed community and creator programmes across major game milestones, seasonal events and partnerships, including Candy Crush All Stars 2024 (11M+ impressions).
- Managed agency relationships, budgets and performance frameworks; worked across marketing, PR, product and partnerships on coordinated player communications.

SEGA EUROPE

Senior European Communications Manager

Apr 2021 – Jun 2022

Communications Manager — ATLUS & Japanese IP

Nov 2017 – Apr 2021

Led European communications, community and creator engagement for major Japanese franchises, including Persona and Yakuza.

- Adapted community and communications strategy for passionate, established fandoms across European markets.
- **Increased ATLUS European media coverage by 12% and ATLUS West social audience by 7.3%.**
- Directed communications across approximately eight releases a year; created the award-winning Persona 5 Royal press event and coordinated 23+ media and creator tours.
- Collaborated with Japanese development partners and regional teams to keep audience engagement consistent across markets.

BETHESDA SOFTWORKS

UK Community Manager

Aug 2015 – Nov 2017

- **Managed programmes involving more than 25,000 pieces of fan-created content**, giving player creativity visibility through official channels.
- Supported community strategy and engagement across 18 major game launches.
- Developed community growth and launch activation approaches across the European market, connecting player sentiment with launch communications.

SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT EUROPE — XDEV

Lead Community Manager

Apr 2013 – Aug 2015

Led community strategy across PlayStation titles, including LittleBigPlanet 3, Beyond: Two Souls and Housemarque's Resogun, through the PlayStation 4 launch.

- **Led community strategy for LittleBigPlanet 3**, developing its social strategy and content programme around a franchise built on player creativity and user-generated experiences.
- Briefed the LBP.me user-generated content portal from initial concept through delivery, helping shape how players discovered and engaged with community-created levels.
- Contributed to the development of community moderation tools for a highly creative, participatory player ecosystem.
- Created and hosted livestreams and video showcasing player-created levels, celebrating community creativity through official channels.
- Supported community and launch activity for Beyond: Two Souls, Resogun and first-party titles around the PlayStation 4 launch; presented at Sony's E3 press conference.

ROCKSTEADY STUDIOS

Community Manager

Aug 2010 – Apr 2013

Community management for Rocksteady Studios during the Batman: Arkham era.

EARLIER CAREER

SEGA — Online Digital Marketing Manager

Jun 2008 – Apr 2010

Affiliate Window — Senior Account Manager

Dec 2006 – Jun 2008

RECOGNITION

MCV Top 100 Women in Games · MCV 30 Under 30 · Women in Games Award nominee, Best PR Manager · Sony E3 press conference presenter · Award-winning Persona 5 Royal campaign

EDUCATION

Keele University — BA English Literature & History