

# Midwest Games Announces Strategic Executive Appointments to Drive Growth and Innovation

*Industry veterans join from a variety of high-profile companies; Bringing years of industry expertise, these executives fill out a strong leadership team*

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-- [Midwest Games](#), the pioneering video game publisher committed to expanding access and opportunities in the gaming industry, proudly welcomes three industry leaders to the company's leadership team. Aligned with Midwest Games' commitment to bridging the gap and creating opportunities for underserved regions in the gaming industry, these seasoned professionals bring a wealth of experience and strategic insights that will play a pivotal role in Midwest Games' future vision and success.

 **MIDWEST  GAMES**

Alyssa Walles joins Midwest Games as Chief Operating Officer. A dynamic leader with over 20 years of experience in technology leadership roles within the entertainment, gaming, tech, and publishing industries, Walles has a proven track record of driving operational excellence, revenue growth, and forging impactful partnerships. She brings a relentless commitment to creative problem solving and a passion for advancing diversity and inclusion within the gaming industry. Alyssa played a key role in the launch of the Walt Disney Gift Catalog, Sony PlayStation, and negotiating national sports league agreements for the video game franchise Backyard Sports (NFL, MLB, NBA) as part of their respective leadership teams. She also founded Amplitude Consulting in 2002, where she provided business strategy, development, sales, and marketing guidance for start-ups and multinational corporations.

In addition to her new role at Midwest Games, Alyssa serves as executive director with the International Game Developers Association Foundation (IGDA Foundation), a global charitable organization providing professional development programs to underrepresented and marginalized developers and individuals building their careers within the gaming industry.

"It is an honor to be part of this talented team that is changing the landscape of where games originate," said Walles. "Together, along with developers in this region, we will push the boundaries of creativity and champion the growth of opportunities in the Midwest."

Joining Midwest Games' already impressive Board of Directors is the Chief Strategy Officer of VentureBeat, Gina Joseph. Gina is a seasoned professional with nearly 20 years of experience in media and tech. A Harvard Business School and UC Berkeley alum, she excels in strategic partnerships, ad sales, go-to-market strategy, business development, and operations, consistently driving significant revenue growth for Fortune 500 partners. As the founder of VentureBeat Lab, an innovative arm specializing in thought leadership consultancy and branded content, she's known for her record-breaking sales in digital media marketing and for closing major partnerships with tech giants such as Google, Meta, Microsoft, Amazon, and more. Beyond her role at VentureBeat, Gina is a dedicated advocate for diversity and inclusion, particularly for women leaders, and serves as a Board Member for The Daily Californian and the Alumnae-i Network for Harvard Women. Her strategic insights and impact extend to global media events and initiatives, reflecting her commitment to positive and disruptive contributions to the world. With this appointment, Gina is the first Afghan American board member in the US for a games publisher. She is also the first and only Afghan American woman to hold a C-level role for a games and tech publication.

"As the first Afghan American woman in the US to hold a board role for a games publisher, I am deeply aligned with the company's mission," stated Joseph. "Midwest Games has a mission that the gaming industry needs, which is innovation driven by inclusivity in how games are created and where they come from. The industry will undoubtedly flourish if we invest in more inclusive teams and underrepresented communities. It's a win-win for the industry and the communities it serves. It's time to change the notion that tech innovation only comes from metropolitan cities in the US, and Midwest Games is here to expand the industry's footprint. I am excited to be part of this journey, contributing to a future where creativity knows no bounds and the gaming landscape is truly representative of the diverse talent across the Midwest and beyond."

Building on this foundation of expertise, Midwest Games also proudly welcomes renowned industry veteran Larry Hryb, whose two decades of experience at Microsoft and Xbox make him a valuable addition to the company's advisory board. Also known as 'Major Nelson,' Larry is a trusted voice for players and industry alike, whose contributions include helping create and launch Xbox Live, developing various Xbox consoles, and advising on numerous titles with Xbox Game Studios, including Halo 2 and 3, Sea of Thieves, and Kinect Sports, among others. He was a pioneer of Xbox gaming communities and a vital part of the Xbox brand until his departure from

Microsoft in 2023. Now, as an advisor for communications at Midwest Games, Hryb emphasizes his excitement about working with a team dedicated to helping creators in new areas of the country realize their dreams.

"Great ideas and games can come from anywhere', Hryb says. "That's why I'm thrilled to be part of the Midwest Games team, which is dedicated to helping creators in new areas of the country realize their dreams. I'm excited to work with a team that shares my passion for innovation and creativity."

Midwest Games Founder and CEO Ben Kvalo expressed the significance of these appointments, stating, "We are honored to welcome Alyssa, Gina, and Larry to further what Midwest Games is building. Their diverse expertise and extensive experience in the entertainment, gaming, and tech industries will play a crucial role in propelling Midwest Games to new heights and realizing our mission of fostering and creating more opportunity no matter where you are."

Midwest Games, which emerged from stealth earlier this year, has been making waves in the gaming industry, recently securing a significant \$3 million investment to fuel its mission of fostering innovation in regions often overlooked by the mainstream gaming industry. The company is also excited to announce its participation in the upcoming [PAX East](#) conference from March 21 to 24, 2024, in Boston, MA. For more information and to keep up with Midwest Games, visit [midwestgames.com](http://midwestgames.com).

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