

gamescom dev 2026 to Present Panel on Rewriting Game Industry Leadership

"Leading With Trust: Rewriting The Playbook" session features leaders who've built studios, product and executive practices across global games industry

COLOGNE, GERMANY, August 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [gamescom](https://www.gamescom.dev) dev 2026, the developer-conference track running August 23–25 in Cologne, Germany, will feature "Leading With Trust: Rewriting The Playbook" — a panel bringing together five leaders who have built and led studios, product lines and executive practices across Europe and North America. The session will be moderated by Fiona Cherbak, founder of [Rocket Game Talent](https://www.rocketgame.com) and former talent lead for both Xbox Game Studios and Sony PlayStation. The session takes place Tuesday, August 25, from 4:15–5:15 PM on Stage 8, Level 2 at Koelnmesse.



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As co-founder of Women in Games International, I already know women can lead. This conversation is about what it means to lead by building trust differently with your team, investors and developers.”

Fiona Cherbak, founder of Rocket Game Talent

For too long, ‘leadership’ in games has meant one inherited model. The people running studios and leading product vision have too often had to prove they belonged in it before trust was extended to them on their own terms. Competence proven once doesn't stay proven; it has to be re-earned at every next level, in the boardroom, in due diligence and in the studio.

This session brings together five leaders rewriting that playbook from the inside — building businesses, teams and creative visions around a different model of trust altogether, one where compassionate, values-driven

leadership isn't a liability to manage around but a strategy with proven business returns. Panelists will share what it took to stop waiting for permission, how they built organizations that

reflect their own values, and what it means to extend that same trust to the next generation of leaders now finding their own way into the industry.

Expect a candid, business-first conversation about the trust leaders are still asked to earn twice over — and what it looks like to lead by building trust differently, including with a rising generation of developers who are rethinking what leadership itself should look like.

“This isn't a panel about proving that women can lead — that's already been proven,” said Cherbak, co-founder of Women in Games International. “It's a conversation about what it means to lead by building trust differently — with your team, your investors and the next generation of developers finding their own way in. I'm honored to guide that conversation with four leaders who've done exactly that.”

The panel moderated by Cherbak features four game industry leaders spanning studio operations, product, creative direction and executive coaching:

- Katya Dolgova — Co-Founder & COO of Redhill Games, a co-development studio operating from Finland and Cyprus, and a Women in Games and Women in Tech Ambassador.
- Sophie Vo — founders coach at Rise and Play, who has coached more than 300 CEO's, founders and executives in gaming and tech, and founder of ORIN, a leadership community for women.
- Carina Kom — Chief Product Officer and Co-founder of Simply Sweet Games and a longtime advocate for equity in game development who has led Diversity in Games (Vancouver) for over 13 years.
- Dr. Natasha Skult — CEO & Creative Director of MiTale, a Finland-based narrative game studio and leader of the W Love Games organization focused on DEI and support for indie developers globally.

“It consistently takes longer to prove your capability at every level — not once, but again each time you step up,” says Dolgova. “That's the pattern I want to name in Cologne.”

“Capital, opportunity and leadership all depend on trust, and that trust doesn't always flow equally,” adds Kom. “This panel is about asking ourselves where trust is flowing, and why.”

[gamescom dev](#) 2026 runs August 23–25 in Cologne, Germany, as the developer-conference track ahead of the main gamescom show floor, which runs August 26–30 at Koelnmesse. Registration and full programming details are available at [devcom.global](#) and [gamescom.global](#).

Media Contact: info@rocketgametalent.com

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Fiona Cherbak
ThemePark Studios
+1 512-497-4575

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

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