



For Release at 2:00pm EST May 12th.

RALEIGH, NC – May 12, 2021

## FORMER EPIC AND BLIZZARD VETERANS JOIN FORCES TO CREATE LIGHTFORGE GAMES™

### *New Studio Seeks to Reimagine How RPGs are Played*

Longtime Epic Games and Blizzard Entertainment developers have united to create Lightforge Games, and they're on a quest to change how RPGs are played. The team is developing a new cross-platform, social video game where players have the power to create worlds and tell stories with unprecedented freedom.

"We all love highly social, creative games, and we particularly love games where players drive the narrative," CEO Matt Schembari said. "We are looking to combine elements from Minecraft or Roblox with tabletop RPGs to form a new way to play roleplaying games. Given our backgrounds, making a game that looks to revolutionize RPGs was an obvious choice."

Lightforge recently raised \$5 million with investments from Galaxy Interactive, NetEase Games, Dreamhaven, Maveron, 1UP Ventures, and angel investors from the gaming and tech industries.

"Lightforge is creating a game in a new space that has a ton of potential," said Dreamhaven CEO Mike Morhaime. "The team is full of veteran developers, and I'm excited about their vision."

The new studio was founded by industry veterans Matt Schembari, Dan Hertzka, Nathan Fairbanks, Glenn Rane, and Marc Hutcheson and has since expanded to include another six highly experienced developers. The team brings decades of experience from Epic, Blizzard, Riot, Bioware, and Zenimax Online and have shipped top games such as Fortnite, World of Warcraft, Diablo 3, Star Wars: The Old Republic, Hearthstone, the StarCraft 2 trilogy, Overwatch, Elder Scrolls Online, and more.

Lightforge is an all-remote studio where employees can work and live nearly anywhere. “We're building a studio for the long-haul where empathy for players and developers alike is at the core of everything we do. Building a fully remote company allows each team member to live wherever is best for their life situation,” Matt added.

Lightforge Games seeks candidates from all walks of life. Learn more at [www.lightforge.gg](http://www.lightforge.gg) and follow Lightforge on Twitter [@LightforgeGames](https://twitter.com/LightforgeGames).

Contact: Marc Hutcheson — [marc@lightforge.gg](mailto:marc@lightforge.gg)

## Founder Bios

### **Matt Schembari, CEO**

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/matteo522/>

Matt Schembari is a veteran game developer with nearly 20 years of experience. He has shipped high-profile, globally connected games to millions of players as a Lead Engineer at Blizzard and the Director of UI at Epic Games where he led the Fortnite Platform Team. He is currently the CEO of Lightforge Games.

Matt is passionate about company culture and psychological safety in the workplace. He also prides himself in his ability to GM for new players without ever explaining any rules.

### **Nathan Fairbanks, Studio Director**

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/nathan-fairbanks-0349824/>

Nathan is an accomplished producer that has been entrusted with many large-scale initiatives over his 13-year gaming career. He has held critical production roles across multiple disciplines for some of the largest titles in gaming, including Fortnite, Star Wars: The Old Republic, and Elder Scrolls Online. Nathan is currently the Studio Director for Lightforge Games.

Nathan is passionate about the intersection of executive vision with immediate team goals and how to use just the right amount of process to keep these things in harmony. When not working, Nathan enjoys chipping away at his massive game catalog.

### **Marc Hutcheson, Product Director**

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/marc-hutcheson-3153825a/>

Marc has spent over eighteen years in the marketing and publishing of massive, live-service games.

Marc is a former Marketing Director at both Blizzard Entertainment and Epic Games where he worked on the launches and ongoing live support of World of Warcraft, StarCraft II, Overwatch, Diablo III,

Hearthstone, the iOS, Android, and Switch versions of Fortnite, and the Epic Games Store. He is currently the Product Director of Lightforge Games.

Marc loves storytelling in all its forms and heard the siren's call of worldbuilding when he picked up his first tabletop RPG adventure module as a twelve-year-old.

### **Dan Hertzka, Engineering Director**

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/danhertzka/>

Dan spent his career at Epic Games where he consistently took on some of the most challenging engineering tasks. He led the cross-team effort of adding splitscreen to Fortnite and built the client social layer of Fortnite to support parties, friends, matchmaking, chat, and crossplay. He is currently the Engineering Director of Lightforge Games.

His interests include elegant systems, customized editors, tasteful templates, const refs, deleting code, and reflection. Dislikes include self-evident comments, spaces between Typename and \*, copy-pasta, predictive coding, and setting up dev kits.

When not writing code, you can find Dan in his woodworking workshop or tearing up a room for another DIY project.

### **Glenn Rane, Art Director**

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/glennrane/>

Glenn is an artist and art director who has worked in the video games industry for 20 years. He is currently the Art Director of Lightforge Games.

If you are familiar with Blizzard Entertainment and their games, you've seen Glenn's artwork on character concepts, loading screens, BlizzCon key art, game boxes, book covers, web banners, logos, licensed merch, and more.

Although Glenn is most well-known for his work on the World of Warcraft and Hearthstone franchises, he has contributed illustrations and concepts for nearly every Blizzard IP. He was most recently the Art Lead for Blizzard's first mobile RPG title, Diablo: Immortal.

Glenn lives in Southern California with his wife and their tiny dog loaf, Foxy. To see samples of his art, visit <http://glennrane.com>.