ROBERT SPARKS

Thank You

Since beginning my journey at Immersive Labs one year ago, I have been energised by the opportunities to learn, collaborate, and take ownership of complex projects within a highly creative and professional organisation.

Cyber Crisis Sim has faced many challenges over the past year. Amidst restructuring, directional shifts, and product launch, it has required commitment, perseverance, and foresight to navigate these as opportunities, not setbacks.

I am proud to be part of the team that has adapted and overcome these challenges, and of my capacity to remain a force for reassurance and reliability throughout.

My gratitude towards leaders, mentors, and peers alike - authorities in their own right - is matched only by my drive to reciprocate their time and professionalism, with interest.

Thank you for welcoming me to the Immersive family, and supporting my journey to continually showcase my initiative and care for Crisis Sim. Here's to the future of tabletop.

Robert Sparks
Associate Content Developer - Cyber Crisis Sim

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Communication

Team

Knowledge sharing with juniors

Always ⭐⭐⭐

- Guides colleagues through complicated scenario design over the course of 13 published scenarios.
- Hosted workshops to support copywriters through the development of their first crisis scenarios.
- Onboarded new sales members, including demos of the product and setting up the #askcrisis channel to continue support.
- Engages product queries in slack channels, sourcing relevant outside help where required.
- Provided UX and graphic design seminars to team members.

Proactively executes collaborative content or process improvement ideas with colleagues and other teams

Always ⭐⭐⭐

- Pioneered scenario development procedures such as master events lists, structure templates, role categories, and concept to publication workflow, to advocate clear product focus and mutual understanding.
- Collaborated with Sales to promote product capability and value proposition, deliver POCs, and engage diverse clients.
- Supported roadmap development, providing an understanding of the existing catalogue, and areas of improvement.
- Engaged with the wider crisis and content team to deliver high-quality rich media assets for the product, and offer advice and ideas to encourage involvement with rich media design.
- Facilitates interdepartmental cooperation with Crisis, Content, Pres QA, Marketing, and Legal, to build the scenario catalogue.

Lead 1 annual magic session

Sometimes ⭐⭐☆

- Developed and co-leading the March 11th extortion magic session "Taking on El Chapo".
- Leading a gamification magic session this year on the advantages of non-linear learning experiences, such as games and dynamic choices.

Communication

■ Team ■ Business ■ Info

Proactively promotes, explains and presents new ideas to relevant colleagues

Always ⭐⭐⭐

- Held product orientations with new starters in Sales and Content to cultivate product engagement and confidence.

- Leverages credentials, publications, and experience in the games industry to promote the application of gamification techniques with insights and workshops.

- Outlines UX improvements to the team, encouraging discussion focussed on better user experience, such as with clear, accessible rich media.

- Works with Sales to onboard clients and produce scenarios with sales enablement in mind, for example including adding website defacement injects for Santander, and developing Sales and onboarding scenarios.

Active/conscious stakeholder management

Always ⭐⭐⭐

- Worked with the graphics department to remediate slow delivery of rich media, ensuring the product gets what it needs. This involved facilitating agreements with Design to retain oversight, reviewing brand guidelines, and taking on the responsibility for designing assets to these specifications.

- Continued engagement with Product to deliver content that compliments the platform, such as multi-role, without moving beyond the scope of product capabilities.

- Engages with Sales and CST queries, whilst managing product content expectations based on the catalogue and roadmap.

Presenting work back to the business at Magic and/or Spotlight sessions to showcase the product internally and increase colleague awareness, knowledge and understanding

Sometimes ⭐⭐☆

- Detailed functionality and content in over 10 spotlight sessions, championing product value, improving understanding of scenarios, and motivating the promotion of content to clients.

- Co-leading magic session March 11th extortion magic session "Taking on El Chapo".

- Hosted internal presentations to Content, Product, and Sales, along with senior management, to demonstrate the inner workings and aims of crisis sim.

Expertise

Business

Demonstrates an understanding of how team contributes to business function

Always ★★★

- Engaged in wider product and market value discussions with Product and Marketing, and confident to share my opinions based on extensive internal and external product development experience.

- Constant team motivator, ensuring content is delivered on time, to a high standard, and within roadmap scope.

- Product-value focused - engaged in interdepartmental discussions and feedback to improve content marketability, such as collaborating with Chris Pace to amend injects in our Sunburst scenarios and writing content to incorporate labs.

- Highly interested in client queries and feedback, especially relating to potential customers - adjusting content to ensure these are addressed - e.g. including SCADA and website defacement content for Santander and PepsiCo.

Level 4/5 Corporate Risk and Crisis Management

Sometimes ★★☆

- Level 5 Award in Corporate Risk & Crisis Management training booked for April.

Develops and implements a Research/Gamification methodology to the crisis scenario design process

Always ★★★

- Comprehensive iterative research methodology applied to each scenario - varied external sources reviewed (research papers, news articles, videos, forum threads, etc), as well as internal consultation where necessary.

- Researches external organizations before engaging, investigating their function, product, and people to understand client needs, and highlight complementary content and features.

- Applies relevant gamification knowledge to the product, and offers consultation with the wider content and product teams to encourage continued implementation of gamification practices.

- Attends cyber industry seminars to further understanding.

Expertise

- **Customer** **Crisis**

Attend customer facing external meetings and events in order to communicate value of the product and business to wider audiences

Always ⭐ ⭐ ⭐

- Executed 15 customer-facing meetings, demos, and events to key clients such as Federal Reserve Bank, NHS, Goldman Sachs, International Monetary Fund, IBM, and the National Crime Agency.

- Involved in co-presenting and answering queries with clients when engaging in high stake POC work, such as with IBM and FRB.

- Volunteered out-of-work availability during client events to reassure presenting clients and remediate potential issues, including JPMC's POC.

- Supported webinars with Sli.do management and audience question moderation, whilst documenting audience insights.

Developing specialist crisis & cyber knowledge, contributing to the design and delivery of new scenarios. Continued professional development in crisis management and business continuity

Always ⭐ ⭐ ⭐

- Advanced knowledge of relevant cyber and crisis management principles required to produce 13 unique scenarios covering 5 sectors and 8 vectors.

- Developed awareness of gold, silver, and bronze team roles, how they're structured within an organisation hierarchy, and what capabilities and responsibilities they exercise during a crisis.

- Continues to research, seek internal consultation, and learn from clients further knowledge of the unique problems and considerations different organisations face.

- Implemented these understandings into the product with varied inject types and scenarios accommodating multiple roles and circumstances.

- Undergoing further development in crisis management through accredited training, participating in crisis exercises, and continuing to develop cyber knowledge through study, labs, and internal consultation as the catalogue expands.

Expertise

Starting to create own brand in field of technical expertise

Always ⭐⭐⭐

- Cultivated a knowledgeable and committed reputation within the company, leading to mutually beneficial relationships with Content, Sales, Product, and UX.

- Proprietor for the design of rich media commended internally and by customers.

- Highly professional relations with clients, leading to preferential requests from Sales and Product to join key conversations and events.

- Built a reputation amongst the crisis and product team for innovation and project management; iterating on the success of each scenario, taking ownership of finalising projects, and pushing the limits of product capabilities with dynamic content and new gameplay elements.

- Influencer within the games industry; a published a board game, game design contest victories, game brand with over 2,300 followers, 7 educational podcasts, features in news publications like NY Magazine, seminars, and stalls.

Plans & Procedures

Ability to effectively organise own workload or that of others to achieve objectives

Always ⭐⭐⭐

- Cultivated a disciplined and self-motivated drive for work over an 8-year remote working career.

- 3 years of project management experience, cultivated through my experience as founder/director at Board Game Bud Ltd, and project manager in my previous role.

- Key contributor in the development and review of crisis scenario processes, to improve the quality and delivery of content, and manage project scope.

- Informed and involved with all areas of content creation, using this to motivate team progression towards key milestones, and offer prompts and support to steer a project back on track.

Proactively take ownership of scenarios, ensuring their realism, volunteering ideas and taking them forward where agreed

Always ⭐⭐⭐

- Active ownership over projects, taking responsibility for the development and quality assurance of POC scenarios in collaboration with IBM and JPMC, and managing internal scenarios, such as Blind Administration, when team members were absent or occupied.

- Embraced opportunities to advance the product in terms of gamification, and pioneered new ideas, developing proof of concepts models to support the case for their inclusion. This includes championing replayability, variable outcomes, dynamic choices, performance indicators, and role dependent injects.

- Committed to driving accessible and intuitive user experience; including mitigating decision overload, providing transcripts for audio content, designing rich media with accessible fonts and layouts, limiting inject word-count, and sense checking option cohesion.

Plans & Procedures

Ability to interpret technical concepts for a technical & non-technical audience to make creative, interesting and engaging content

Sometimes ★ ★ ☆

- High proficiency in communicating complicated crisis management, product, and gameplay concepts to clients of varying technical understanding, such as in demonstrations with the NHS.

- Comfortable communicating cyber concepts present within our content, and driven to seek consultation on enquiries outside of my expertise.

- Excellent context-specific communication; appropriately addressing people and topics sensitively, and with respect to recipient knowledge, authority, and relationship to Immersive Labs, as displayed in many high impact demos and team workshops.

- Patient and thorough parsing of complex gamification practices and decision tree logic with clients and the crisis team - producing examples, documentation, and facilitating workshops.

- Broad logical and creative project experience; ranging from explaining and demonstrating graphic design and UX techniques, to educating non-technical colleagues on programming required for scenario development.

Play ID	Player	Inject Order				
		Inject Number	Inject ID/Name	Option Chosen	Issue	
1	Rob Sparks	1	Name	1	☑	Example issue details
		2			☐	
		3			☐	
		4			☐	
		5			☐	
		6			☐	
		7			☐	
		8			☐	
		9			☐	
		10			☐	
		11			☐	
		12			☐	
		13			☐	
		14			☐	
		15			☐	

Options	Choice	Share Price	Customer Retention	Power Continuity	Reputation	Rank
First	a ▼	0.02	4	0	3	4
Second	b ▼	0.03	4	2	6	4
Third	c ▼	-0.03	0	0	2	4
SELECT & COPY	(option rationale: A customer fatality due to your actions is a huge crisis point for the company. Yo					
	(option strength: 4)					
	(option impacts: share price => -0.08, customer retention => 5, continuity of power supply => 34,					
Total (+ Base)		-0.08	5	34	9	4

Innovation

Work with the wider Product team to bring ideas back into the business and implement them into product development

Always ⭐ ⭐ ⭐

- Identifies and presents product features raised by clients, internal teams, and from personal experience to influence product direction.

- Validates new ideas through proof of concepts, temporary workarounds, and outlining a repeatable process where features are not yet available.

- Promotes confidence within the product team to implement and build new features within tight constraints of product capability, such as the master events list, game and decision tree logic, and multi-role scenarios.

- Introduces new ideas for structure and gameplay to each scenario, ensuring fresh iterations of simulations develop inline with, and ahead of, product capabilities.

## Leads the implementation of new ideas

Sometimes ⭐ ⭐ ☆

- Taken ownership of new features and processes to ensure timely execution of the product roadmap. For example; defining role capabilities, writing role-dependant content, prototyping scenario structure, and developing multi-role.

- Openly involves members of Crisis, Product, and UX in progress reviews - encouraging fertile, grounded discussion, and restructuring approach based on feedback.

- Designs and oversees rich media, ensuring quality and cohesion between each scenario and the Immersive Labs brand.

Innovation

Research and present ideas to enhance individual and team's wider cyber security and crisis management knowledge and networks

Always ⭐ ⭐ ⭐

- Furthered crisis management and cyber knowledge through research, ideation, development, and publication of 13 scenarios.

- Embraced a consultative role with clients and partners to ensure stimulating scenario development, becoming well informed in the nuances of the needs of different organizations, sectors, and product use-cases.

- Aware of my limitations when handling unique or complex cyber procedures. Careful not to make assertions that could undermine the product, instead recognising when to pull in an expert, who they are, and cultivating an effective relationship.

- Spotlights interesting and relevant news reports, videos, threads, and similar products to stimulate discussion over innovation.
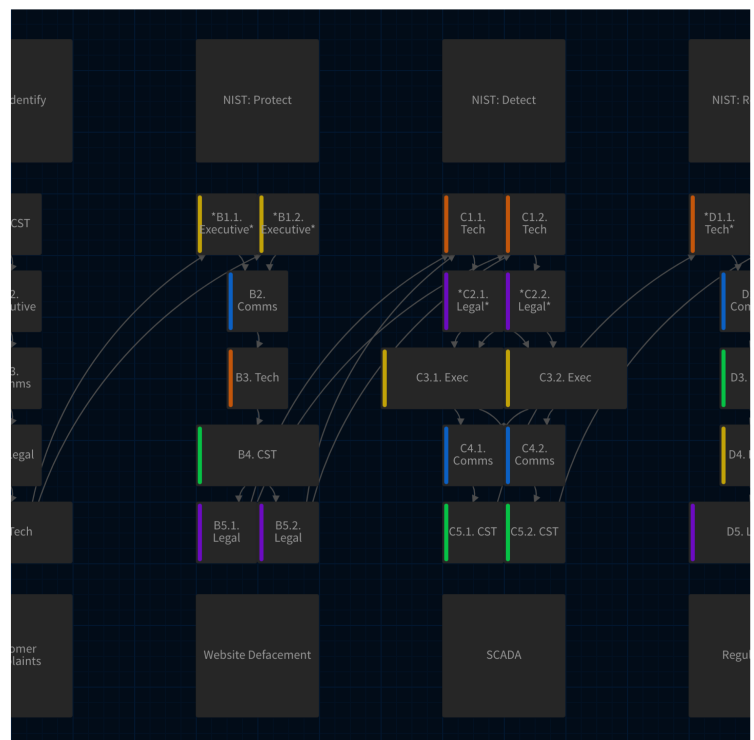
References

Joe Croker
Crisis Product Manager

Rob has consistently shown himself to be highly driven, innovative and creative in his work, and I have found Rob to be at his best when challenged with broad and complex problems.

A genuine team player, he is flexible in his approach to tasks; confident in his own style and abilities but always willing to accommodate others in order to achieve the best outcomes possible. This is highlighted in his successful relationships not only with colleagues, but with other departments such as sales and CST, but also with clients.

He is willing and able to take ownership not just for his own work, but for the entire product where required, remaining knowledgeable and curious about developments and strategic direction. Rob is very capable of conducting his own research, utilising all the resources available to him and condensing these findings into usable insights.

This combination of qualities provides great reassurance to me personally, that whatever the task, project or request, Rob will not only find a way to deliver, but will also have ensured that was the best approach available. A genuine pleasure to work with; he brings an energy and positivity to the workplace and is a consistent source of inspiration and motivation.

Debbie Tunstall
*Account Director
- Public Sector*

Rob has always been a willing participant when I have asked if he will support a demo. He firstly is very prompt in his response to the request which make my life so much easier, but also makes himself available to fit in with the customer timeframes.

Rob is intuitive to the customer needs and requests, and runs the demo in a seamless manner. He knows exactly what to do. His enthusiastic demos are absolutely where they need to be – he understands the customer (in my case, public sector), and knows instinctively how to talk to them in a manner they respond well to. He is very giving with his time and really does energetically throw himself in. I am always keen to get Rob on a call.

Rob is punctual, presentable, follows the brief, is clear in his explanations and thoughts and is also extremely polite and friendly.

References

Stuart Laidlaw
Senior Director
- Global Alliances

Rob help support the Federal Reserve Bank opportunity throughout 2020. The FRB opportunity follows a formal RFP process and as such the customer often requested information or clarification with very little notice.

The FRB also required a formal demo (i.e. brand new scenario) to be designed, built and delivered in under a month. Rob was instrumental during these phases of the RFP, working closely with IBM to build and deliver a quality demo. As one of the early crisis sim opportunities, there were many challenges and iterations of the scenario - Rob had to show agility and drive to get the job done.

Rob joined the important FRB customer call with IBM (about 30 people on the call) answering technical CCS questions and helping IBM navigate the platform.

Rob works well with customers and partners, and has demonstrated excellent consultative and technical skills.

Harry Poster
Strategic Account Manager

Working with Rob has been a pleasure. He has a natural ability to bring great energy to customer discussions and get a customer excited in what we are working on. You can easily see the passion he has for Immersive and the Crisis Sim mission in the way he goes about presenting the solution.

While Rob is technically from the content team, he has an exceptional ability to demonstrate our solutions and hold interactive discussions with customers about how they can take advantage of our capabilities. If I didn't know better, I would think Rob is a full blown SE, and not someone working on the back end.

It takes a unique person to have the ability to speak in deep technical terms, while also being a great presenter and communicator. I've gone out of my way to bring Rob specifically into important customer discussions and will continue to do so (as long as I don't drive him crazy) into the future.

References

Kevin Yaconiello
Enterprise Sales

In short, Rob has been tremendous to work with. Three things that really stick out when working with Rob are his; work ethic, amazing w/ clients and immense knowledge.

Work Ethic - I had the pleasure to work with Rob on a very large project with the Federal Reserve Bank and IBM. This was a very demanding client with very demanding time frames. At no point through the whole cycle did Rob even come close to complaining about the crazy deadlines of the project. In fact, he actually did the exact opposite and worked feverishly to complete everything for the deadlines. Which included working on trains while he had days off. It was extremely refreshing and truly impressive work.

Amazing w/ Clients - Rob also displays tremendous confidence and charisma while chatting with clients. This is very unique in my times with "technical" folks/non sales engineers. After seeing how Rob handles himself on calls, I would jump at the opportunity to bring Rob onto more client calls! He has great energy, effectiveness and charisma!

Immense Knowledge - This goes without saying, but Rob is extremely bright and understands the ins and outs of IL. At no point did Rob waver or struggle with a technical request/question. Furthermore, his immense knowledge comes across in a tremendous consultative approach which eases the minds of clients.

Kudos to Rob for all of his amazing work and I am happy to be able to call Rob with any questions or client calls that I have!

Examples

For more examples of my work, please go to:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders
/1fq7du9XOcc1kPxO40kwZvIj9pXhSzBjv?usp=sharing