Alex Dao Joins EA to Build Out the Gaming Giant’s Ad Business

Former Snap executive Alex Dao has joined Electronic Arts in a new role that will unite the gaming brand’s creative advertising and sponsorship capabilities. He is tasked with building EA’s brand partnerships without disrupting the gaming giant’s global user experience.

He is tasked with building EA’s brand partnerships that simultaneously don’t annoy the gaming giant’s global user base.

Dao previously held roles in sales, account management, and business development at Yahoo, Criteo, and Amazon before arriving at Snap in 2019. While at Snap, he rose to managing director of global agencies and sales partnerships in 2023 and expanded the platform’s agency partner program earlier this year.

In a statement, Juliet Niczewicz, senior director of corporate communications at EA, said Dao “brings a wealth of experience in building and partnering with agencies and brands … With [him] joining the team, EA is driving the opportunity for brands to show up in ways that are meaningful, contextually relevant, and creatively powerful.”

Dao’s hiring is part of a broader shift in EA’s ad business. CEO Andrew Wilson announced plans to establish an ad network during last year’s earnings call. As companies seek advertising revenue, they face challenges such as a lack of standardized measurement, competition with e-commerce giants,

and costly infrastructure investment.

To EA’s advantage, the company has years of first-party data from its “player graph,” an ID set aggregating play history and preferences used by developers and marketers. Still, adding ads carries risk, as gamers often view them as disruptive to the gaming experience.

Dao’s role seems to be gamer-centric when it comes to brands’ presence in games. Signaling his philosophy on authenticity and engagement, Dao offered advice to brands in a June 2024 issue of Ipsos’ What the Future. “[O]ptimizing toward happiness and not just pure growth numbers and engagement metrics and likes is the future because people care about connections and happiness,” he said.

Separately, EA recently switched up its agency roster for its own advertising spend. In March, EA selected GroupM as its media agency of record, ousting incumbent T&Pm after a six-month review as the company revamps its global media-buying strategy.

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