

Sports Geek Nation AMA with Chris Derrick

Chris Derrick is the Chief Executive Officer of ORDER, an esports team competing at the OPL League of Legends.

Chris has a wide experience working in media, entertainment and sports. He has worked with several tech, entertainment and media companies to build and develop their digital strategies and marketing campaigns to leverage branding.

Chris also worked for Cricket Australia, where he was responsible for the production of its digital broadcast assets on TV, live scores, fantasy and mobile. He eventually became Cricket Australia's Digital Rights Manager responsible for strategy, execution and management of CA's digital media rights across online, mobile and IPTV.

After several years in the digital department of different organisations, Chris found his way in the Australian Football League to handle its esports projects. This paved the way to Chris getting into the esports industry.

Connect with Chris Derrick on Twitter [@iamchrisderrick](#), [LinkedIn](#) and Slack [@Chris Derrick](#)

Find out more about ORDER at [order.army](#)

Here's the full transcript:

Links to names will link you into Slack community, if you are not a member [please sign up here](#).

Q. [seancallanan](#): I'll kick things off [@Chris Derrick](#) what is the best advice you can give to sports executives looking to enter esports either in a role with an esports organisation (like you've done at ORDER) or in an esports role in a sports organisation (like you did at AFL)?

A. [Chris Derrick](#): Thanks Sean. I'll answer that as two questions as it's slightly different. Sports execs looking to join an esports team should make sure you've really taken the time to understand what esports is and what the opportunities/challenges are. Esports is an umbrella term and there are so many games, publishers, leagues, tournaments etc and there is not a lot of standardisation so it takes time to understand it. If been looking at it for about 2.5 years for Southern Cross Austereo before actually getting into it and I'm still learning everyday.

Sports execs looking to get into esports at a traditional sport org (or trying to convince their management) need to consider two things:

1. What value will you add to the ecosystem? What's your entry point (eg buying a team, doing sales for an existing team/league, helping with governance) and what games/titles are you going to focus on?
2. Esports is still very early stage, particularly in Australia. Central rights and sponsorships need to mature. So don't think this is a short game with quick profits. It's a long term value creation model but the great thing is there a lot of collaboration between existing and new what's entrants to grow the value.

Q. [Tod Caflisch](#): @Chris Derrick what would be your top 3 recommendations for professional sports teams looking to start esports teams?

A. Chris Derrick: @Tod Caflisch the first would be the same points made above but to be considered from a team point of view. How is that team going to add value and in what part of esports do you play?

The second comes down to the team's objectives in esports. Common objectives (in my experience) include commercial/revenue by attaining new assets for monetisation (primarily through sponsorship) our audience growth by reaching and attracting a new audience that the team does not currently reach. There is also the long term objective of equity creation as the esports team and esports in general grows. Any traditional/professional team looking at esports needs to be clear on it's objectives.

Third, you have to be all in. Specifically, you need to resource the esports business properly. Esports teams are businesses the same way as professional sports teams are with operations, logistics, marketing, content, digital, social, high performance, etc etc etc. How realistic is it that your current resources can/will take on these duties for the esports team or are you going to need dedicated resources for the esports team. I think a lot of people get this part wrong.

Q. [awray](#): @Chris Derrick the Order crowdfunding campaign was a unique experience to Aus Esports, were there any key learnings and do you think we could see this happening more often?

A. Chris Derrick: @awray hey Andrew, the key learning was/is that there is significant interest and appetite for investors of all sizes to get involved. We had over 200 people invest, ranging from \$100 to over \$30,000. People believe in esports and it's growth and want to be part of it.

Will it happen more often? Good question... I think of it does it will be with smaller teams.

Q. [joliegee](#): @Chris Derrick how was the transition from being in a sports organisation like AFL to esports? were there any challenges?

A. Chris Derrick: @joliegee the transition for the most part was not too difficult because I was doing esports for the AFL. There was (and is) a learning curve around the intricacies of each game and team.

The difference (and therefore the challenge) is that traditional sports are well known and accepted by marketers while we still have so much education to do with esports... But we're all collectively making progress and we'll get there!

What is Sports Geek Nation?

Been forwarded this from a colleague? That's great we love seeing our members get credit for sharing their knowledge. Sports Geek Nation is a curated sports business community in Slack and Facebook which will help you learn from the very best in the world. Sports Geek Nation was founded by Sean Callanan in 2015 (as #SportsBiz Slack), it connects sports executives who work in digital, data and technology.

Sports Geek Nation has members from (in alphabetical order) Australia, Canada, Denmark, India, Lithuania, New Zealand, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States working in sports such as basketball, football, ice hockey, baseball, AFL, horse racing, golf, rugby league, netball and more.

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