

CRANKLES CASE STUDY

HOW LUXARK STRENGTHENED A STYLIZED GAME WORLD WITHOUT TAKING CREATIVE CONTROL FROM THE STUDIO

No visual reset | No unsupported claims | No loss of studio control

Client: Wayward Cats Studios | **Project:** Crankles

Luxark support: 3D character work, 2D animation, workflow reinforcement

30%

source-reported production-time
reduction

2D + 3D

connected specialist support

STUDIO-LED

creative direction and approval

Source note: The 30% reduction and qualitative outcomes are attributed to the original Luxark Crankles project page.

Benchmark estimates: Excluded from project actuals.

1. THE PROJECT AND THE PRODUCTION NEED

Crankles is a whimsical, character-led game whose value depends on charm, readability, visual cohesion, and a distinct creative identity.

As production complexity increased, Wayward Cats Studios needed more 3D character and 2D animation support without forcing a visual reset or handing creative leadership to an outside team.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT	DOCUMENTED DETAIL
Studio	Wayward Cats Studios
Project	Crankles
Primary need	Maintain production momentum while strengthening character quality and 2D presentation.
Luxark support	3D modeling / character support, 2D animation support, workflow reinforcement.
Named contributors	Jay Sharma (3D) and Annie Hanson (2D animation).
Verified metric	30% production-time reduction reported on the source page.

The core risk

Outside support had to strengthen the existing world and presentation without diluting the project's tone, creating disconnected work, or taking decision authority away from the studio.

2. WHAT LUXARK SUPPORTED

SUPPORT LANE	DOCUMENTED FOCUS
3D character support	Character identity, readable silhouettes, alignment with the whimsical aesthetic, and models suited to continued iteration.
2D animation and presentation	Title-screen and presentation motion, fluidity, emotional communication, and storytelling clarity.
Crossdisciplinary coordination	Closer connection between 3D character work, 2D motion, presentation, and the game's outward-facing identity.
Workflow reinforcement	Targeted support designed to help the team maintain momentum as complexity increased.

Why this is worldbuilding proof

The value was not simply more art capacity. The work had to preserve the project's personality across character form, motion, presentation, and production flow.

3. HOW STUDIO CONTROL IS PROTECTED

Luxark's current studio-facing model keeps the project-defining decisions with the client while Luxark reinforces the specialist production layer.

WAYWARD CATS RETAINS	LUXARK SUPPORTS
Project identity and visual tone	Specialist matching aligned to the established aesthetic
Creative and technical direction	Role-specific 2D and 3D production support
Production priorities	Coordination around the current milestone
Scope-change approval	Clear change routing before extra work
Direct contributor collaboration	Communication health and issue visibility
Final asset approval	Revision and continuity support

Your world remains yours. Your team keeps direction, priorities, scope approval, and final approval.

Control note: The original source frames Luxark as targeted support that helped preserve project identity. The table above reflects Luxark's current operating standard, not a recreated historical contract.

4. HOW THE CASE ANSWERS STUDIO FEARS

STUDIO FEAR	CASE-STUDY ANSWER
"External artists will dilute our style."	The work was selected and framed around the existing whimsical identity rather than a generic outsourced look.
"2D and 3D will feel disconnected."	The source highlights crossdisciplinary collaboration between 2D and 3D contributors.
"We will lose creative control."	The studio retains identity, direction, priorities, scope approval, direct collaboration, and final approval.
"The fee or scope may change later."	Luxark's current standard is written confirmation of model, fee/rate, trigger, scope, responsibilities, and change approval.
"Are the results real?"	The 30% figure is attributed to the original source page; benchmark estimates are not presented as Crankles actuals.

Trust standard

No visual reset. No hidden limitations. No unsupported metric. No surprise commercial change.

5. VERIFIED IMPACT

2D + 3D

connected production support

COHESION

character, motion, and presentation

- Reduced production drag in high-visibility art tasks.
- Strengthened character identity and 2D presentation quality.
- Supported a more cohesive visual identity across character work and motion.
- Improved collaboration and player-facing readability according to the original project page.
- Added outward-facing showcase value for how the game could be presented and discussed.

6. STUDIO VALUE: LOWER COST AND RAISE PERFORMANCE

The case is most persuasive when it shows not only what Luxark did, but how the engagement reduced the studio's burden and improved the studio's result.

Studio cost reduced

STUDIO BURDEN	LUXARK CONTROL
Production drag	Targeted 3D and 2D support helps relieve high-visibility production pressure without requiring a full outside team.
Cross-discipline coordination	Character work, animation, and presentation are connected around one project identity rather than managed as isolated suppliers.
Style mismatch and revision risk	The engagement is framed around the established whimsical visual language, readability, and studio direction.
Internal leadership time	Luxark supports fit, communication, and continuity while the studio keeps creative decisions and final approval.

Studio performance raised

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE	HOW THE ENGAGEMENT SUPPORTS IT
Production momentum	The original project page reports a 30% reduction in production time through streamlined workflows.
Character identity	3D support reinforced readable form, visual personality, and continued iteration.
Animation and presentation	2D support strengthened motion, emotional communication, and outward-facing polish.
Visual cohesion	2D and 3D contributors were connected around the same world and presentation goals.

Linked activity chain

Creative identity → defined 3D/2D need → style and contribution fit → studio-led review → cohesive production support and presentation

The advantage comes from the linked path qualification, fit, control, communication, review, and outcome capture - rather than from a case-study PDF by itself.

7. EVIDENCE STANDARD AND THE NEXT PROOF LAYER

This document separates project evidence from Luxark operating standards so the studio can see what happened, what is attributed, and what must still be confirmed for a new engagement.

EVIDENCE LEVEL	WHAT IS SUPPORTED
Verified project facts	• Wayward Cats Studios and the Crankles project are identified in the source case study. • Luxark support included 3D character work, 2D animation, and workflow reinforcement. • Jay Sharma is identified for 3D support and Annie Hanson for 2D animation support.
Source-attributed outcome	The original Luxark Crankles project page reports a 30% reduction in production time and describes stronger collaboration, visual quality, and player-facing readability.
Luxark current operating standard	The control map, role-intent classification, focused-shortlist rule, known-limitations disclosure, and written commercial process are Luxark current operating standards.
Not claimed	The 30% result is not presented as independently audited, universal, or guaranteed for another client. Benchmark task counts and turnaround estimates are excluded from project actuals.

What a live submission still needs to prove

- **Candidate Fit Brief:** exact 2D/3D contribution, style relevance, tools, current availability, engagement preference, and limitations.
- **Working-Style Match:** feedback cadence, autonomy, communication rhythm, time-zone overlap, and cross-disciplinary collaboration.
- **Role-specific portfolio evidence:** character, environment, concept, animation, UI, or presentation work matched to the studio need.

The complete trust sequence

Email makes the promise. The case study shows the behavior. The Candidate Fit Brief proves the person. The proposal locks the fee, scope, ownership, approval, and continuity terms.

Case-study use guardrail

Use this case primarily for stylized character work, 2D animation, visual development, and worldbuilding. Use it for environment, UI, key art, or other disciplines only when paired with exact role-specific samples and fit evidence.

8. BEST-FIT LUXARK NICHES

BEST USE	HOW THIS PROOF SHOULD BE POSITIONED
3D Character / Creature Art	Style fit, identity, readable form, and production support.
2D Character / Concept / Visual Development	World identity, tone, presentation, and narrative clarity.
2D or Character Animation	Motion that communicates personality and strengthens presentation.
Environment / Prop Art	Use as adjacent worldbuilding proof, pair with exact environment or prop evidence.
UI / Key Art / Steam Presentation	Use for public-facing cohesion and presentation polish; pair with role-specific samples.
Stylized indie / AA teams	Strongest fit for cozy, narrative, dark fantasy, character-led, and worldbuilding-heavy games.

9. THREE STAKEHOLDERS. THREE TYPES OF TRUST

The same case study may be forwarded from an artist lead to Talent Acquisition and then to an executive. Each person needs a different risk answered, while the underlying project facts stay consistent.

CONNECTION LEVEL	QUIET FEAR	WHAT THIS CASE AND LUXARK PROCESS ANSWER
Senior Artist / Lead	Will this specialist create more work, weaken my authority, or take my job?	The source frames Luxark as targeted support inside the existing Crankles aesthetic. Wayward Cats remained the project owner. Luxark's current supplemental model keeps style direction, priorities, reviews, and final approval with the internal lead while external contributors handle defined production needs.
Recruiter / Talent Acquisition	Will Luxark duplicate, bypass, flood, misrepresent, or create ownership and fee problems?	Named contributors and disciplines are presented accurately. Luxark's current process adds small, role-specific submissions, duplicate checking, approved role language, known-limitations disclosure, and written commercial terms.
Executive / Founder	Will this cost too much, reduce control, create administration, or fail to protect the milestone?	The original project page reports a 30% reduction in production time while describing stronger collaboration, visual quality, and readability. The claim is attributed to the source rather than presented as a universal guarantee.

The quiet artist-level question: "Will this person take my job?"

Luxark should never promise that a role is non-replacement without confirming the studio's actual intent. Before outreach or presentation, the need should be classified as supplemental capacity, a newly created specialist function, or a replacement search.

When the engagement is supplemental

The internal lead retains: Creative vision; visual language; art direction; production priorities; scope changes; review standards; final asset approval.

The external specialist receives a defined scope: Defined 3D character, 2D animation, visual-development, worldbuilding, presentation, or related production tasks.

Any change to scope, authority, reporting lines, or engagement purpose requires studio approval.

The purpose is to remove production pressure, preserve the internal lead's visibility and credit, and prevent a temporary support role from quietly expanding without approval.

Three trust gates

Technical trust earns the lead's support. Process trust earns the recruiter's cooperation. Commercial trust earns executive approval.

10. ENGAGEMENT PATHS AND NEXT STEP

PATH	HOW IT WORKS
Direct specialist placement	The studio hires and directs the specialist; Luxark sources and vets.
Embedded specialist	One artist joins the existing workflow temporarily while the studio directs daily work.
Scoped art / polish sprint	A defined character, animation, world, UI, or presentation need is completed against approved scope.
Hybrid path	Start with a smaller engagement, then convert or expand only through written approval.

Need stronger art without losing the soul of the game? Start with the identity, the bottleneck, and the milestone.