Polish Gamedev Salary Report

community survey results, May 2023

Version 1.3 (15 July 2023)

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Methodology

The report is based on an online survey, asking for salaries before taxes and social security, and for their context: the company's area of operation, and the experience, specialization, gender and type of contract of the employee.

The survey was taking responses from May 1 to 31 and was available on Facebook, LinkedIn, Polish gamedev groups, and forums, advertised by the author during the Digital Dragons conference in Cracow, and spread through personal connections of the surveyed.

The survey gathered 1067 responses. According to **The game industry of Poland — report 2023** the Polish gamedev industry employs about 15,000 people, so the survey encompassed about 7% of the researched population.

Gross vs. Net Salary

The survey gathered data about salaries before taxes and social security contributions, which means for Contract of Employment (UoP), Contract for specific work (UoD), and Contract of Mandate (UZ), the gross salary stated in the contract. For B2B it means the net amount on the invoice before VAT is applied.

To compare the salaries presented in the report with your salary, remember to deduct taxes and social contributions that apply in your particular case.

Median, 20th, and 80th percentile

To best present the structure of salaries, this report uses three values:

- Median – half of the salaries fall below this value and half above this value
- 20th percentile – only 20% salaries fall below this value (and 80% above)
- 80th percentile – 80% salaries fall below this value (and only 20% above)

So, if I earn a median value, half of Polish game developers earn less than me and half earn more than me. If I earn the 20th percentile value, four out of five Polish game developers earn more than me, and one out of five less than me. If I earn the 80th percentile value, only one out of five Polish game developers earns more than me, and four out of five less than me.

Known issues

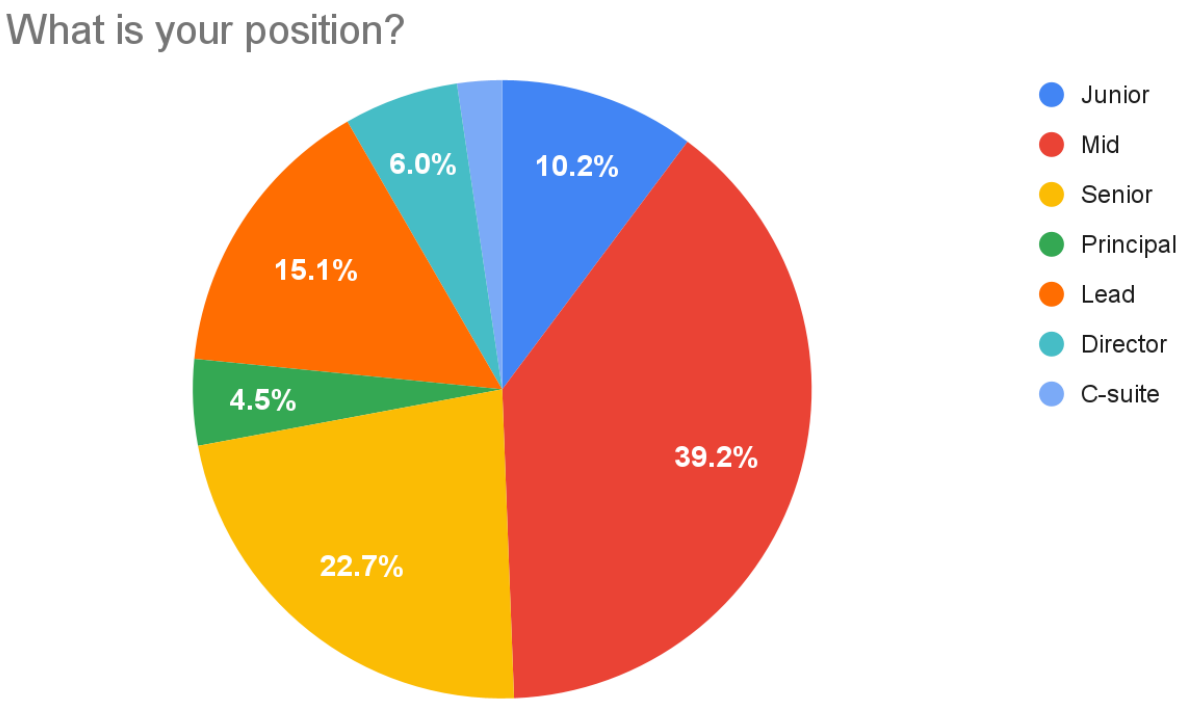
It must be noted that the sample is not random—the group of people who answered the survey may not be fully representative of the whole population. We also have no way of confirming the input data, so the survey presents *declared* salaries rather than verified ones.

Context: Employee

Following your feedback to the last year's survey we separated the "senior" level to better represent the reality. We also added a question about the time in the industry.

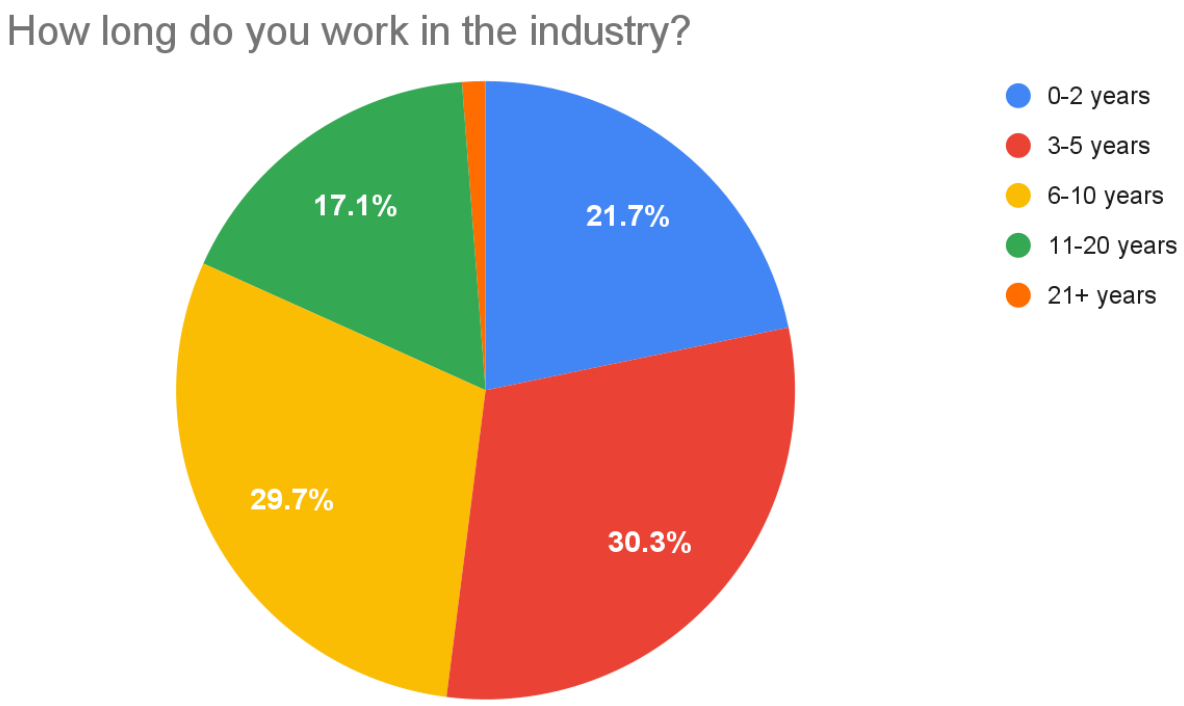
Seniority

39% of the surveyed declared themselves as mid-level, 23% as seniors, 15% as leads, and only 10% as juniors.



Experience

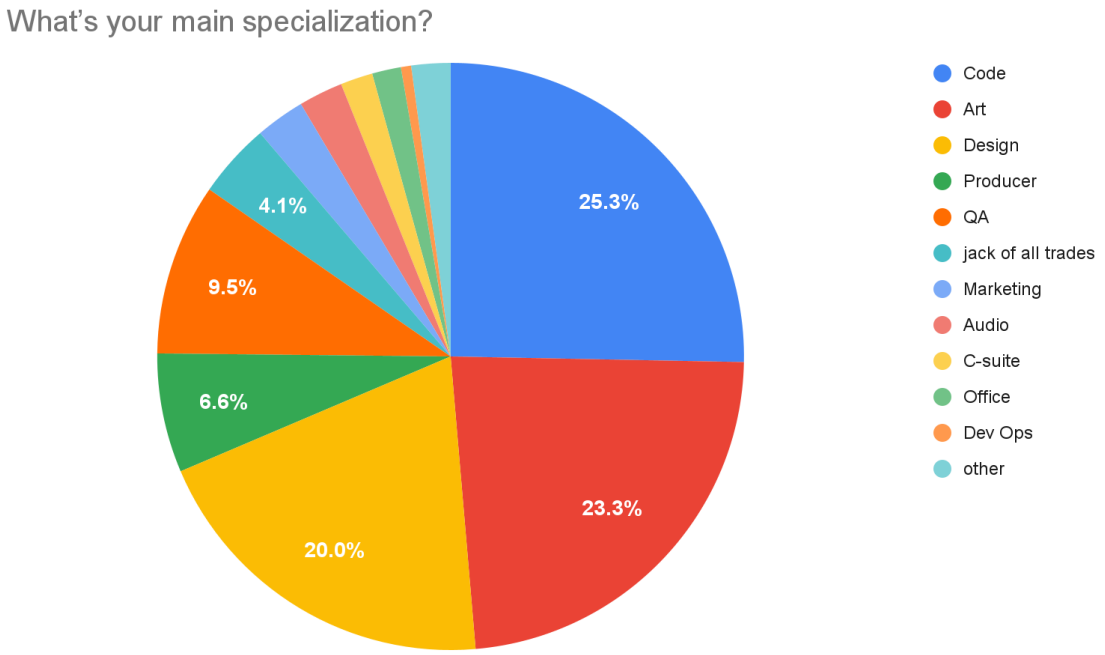
22% of the surveyed worked in the industry for less than 2 years, 30% declared 3 to 5 years, and only 1% worked in gamedev longer than 20 years



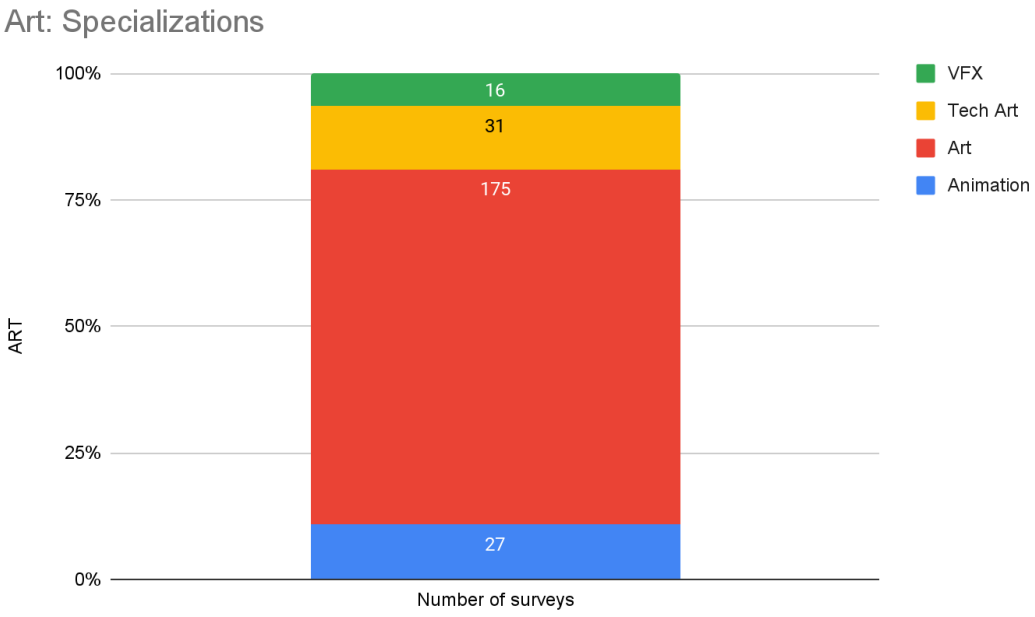
It is worth noting that there are two times more people working less than 2 years than those taking junior positions. This may mean that Polish gamedev companies tend to employ for mid-level positions, or that they promote juniors very quickly.

Specialization

Among the surveyed, the biggest group were Programmers (25%), Artists (23%) and Designers (20%).

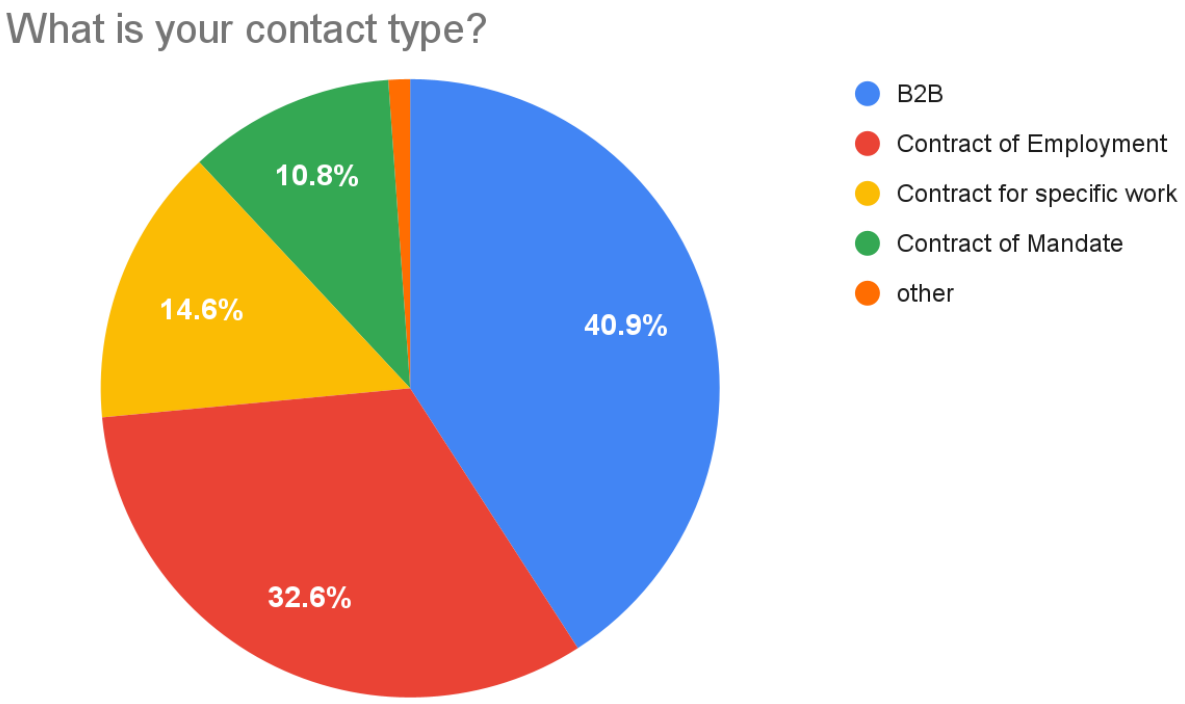


Following your feedback, the question was more detailed. In particular, Art has been separated into Animation, Tech Art, and VFX.



Contract Type

The most popular form of employment is a B2B contract (41%), then a Contract of Employment (33%), a Contract for specific work (15%), and a Contract of Mandate (11%). The rest is royalties, appointment to the management board, dividends, and combined contracts (ex. ¼ time Employment + Specific work contract)

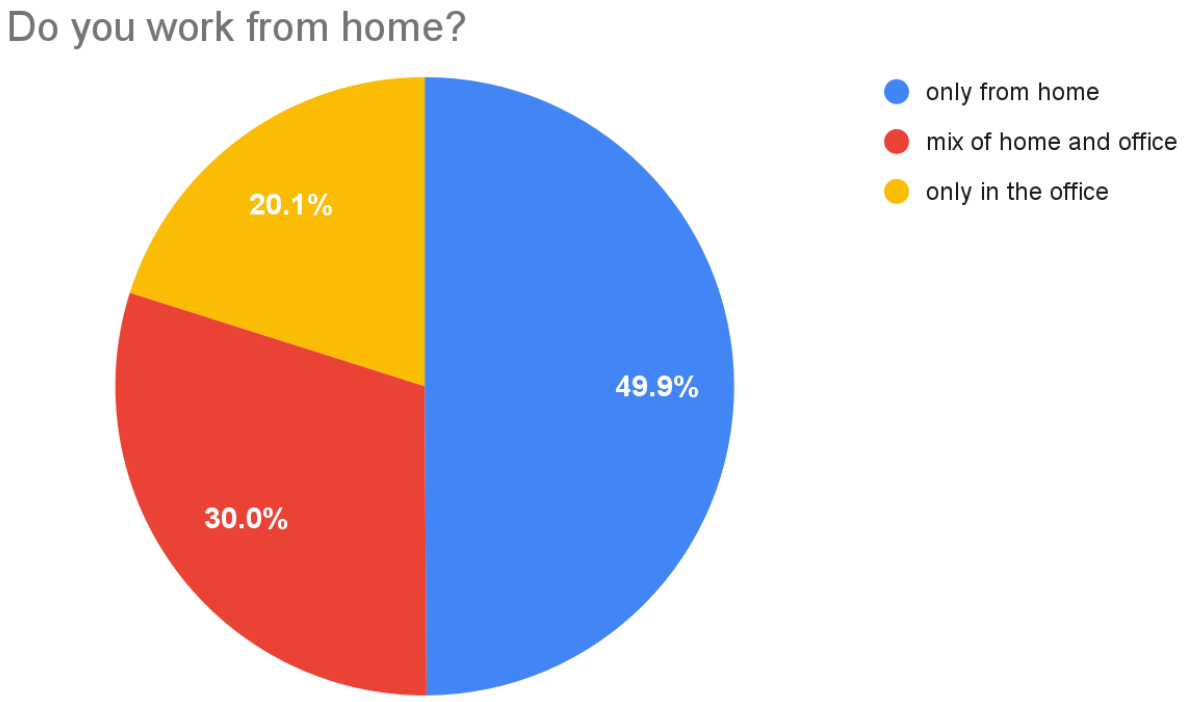


In comparison to 2022 the share of Contracts of Mandate increased slightly (3%) while the share of Contracts for specific work lowered. There were no other noticeable changes.

Among those **not** employed on the Contract of Employment, almost 85% have access to some equivalent of paid vacations—usually based on a “gentlemen’s agreement” with the employer. The other ways to compensate for the CoE benefits are bigger invoices that compensate for 25 days of vacation or quarterly “bonuses” that compensate for “unpaid” vacation days and/or sick leave.

Remote Work

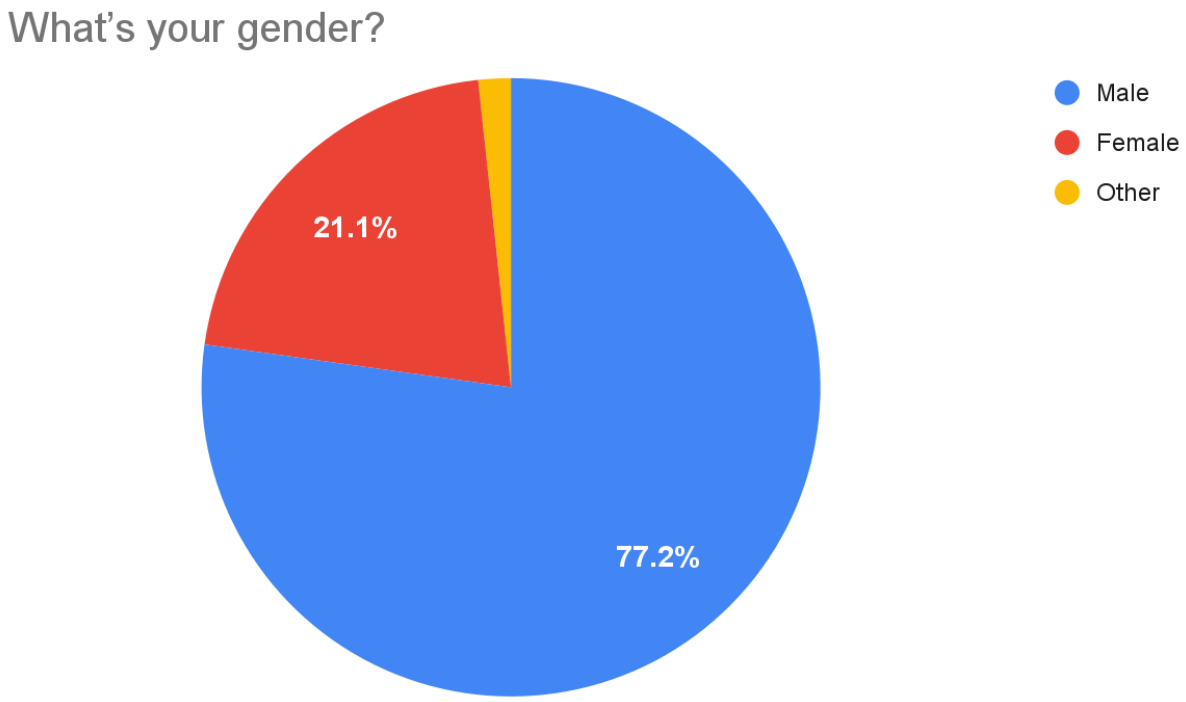
Almost half of the surveyed declare that they work from home, 20% in the office, and 30% a mix of the two.



Our Work from Home survey from October 2022 showed almost the same results – the differences in the results are less than 5%.

Gender

77% of the surveyed identified as male, 21% as female, and 2% chose other options.



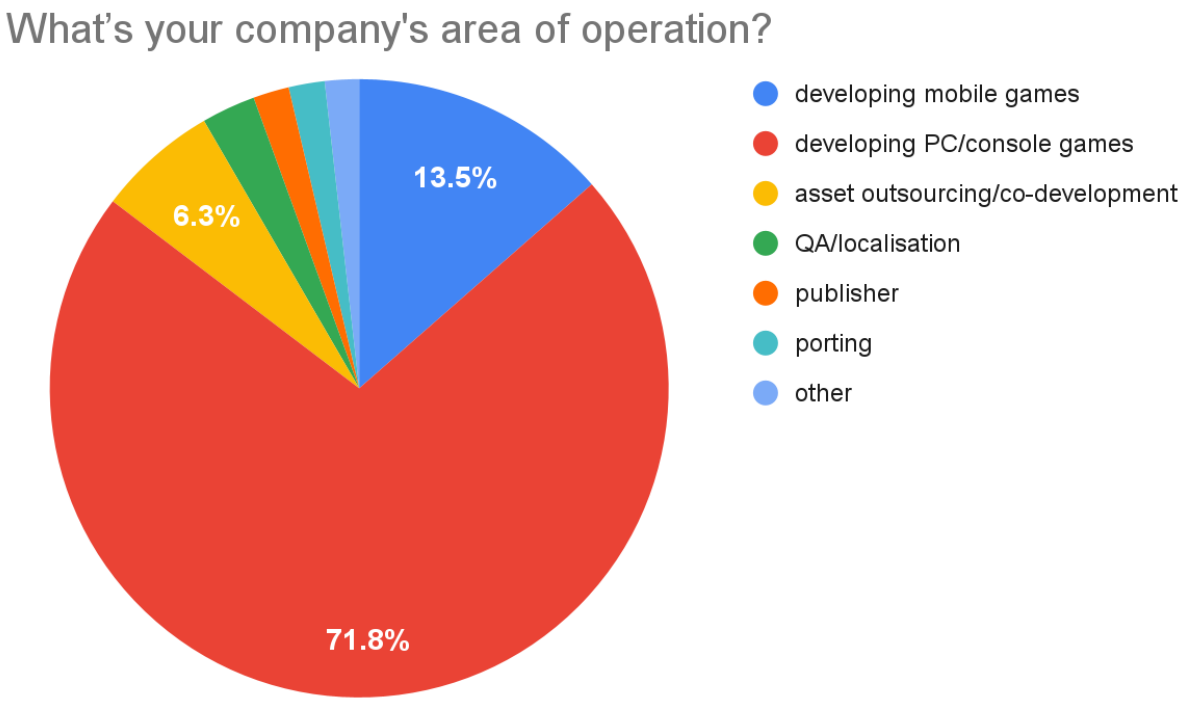
[The game industry of Poland — report 2023] states that 24% of Polish gamedev employees are women. Compared to our last year's survey the share of women among the surveyed rose by 5%, which lets us hope that the results better reflect the realities of the industry.

Context: Employer

Following your feedback, we asked more questions about your employers.

Area of Operation

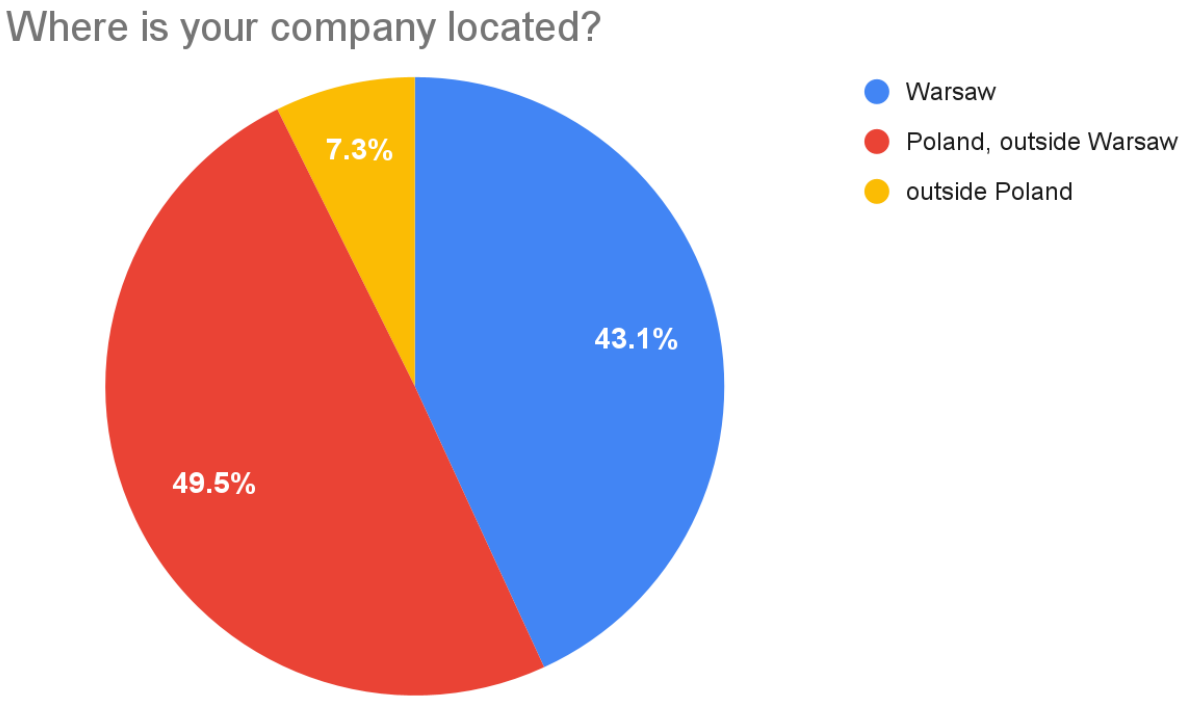
More than 71% of the surveyed declared working for companies developing games for PC and consoles, 13% for companies developing mobile games, 6% in companies doing co-development and asset outsourcing, 3% in QA and localization, and less than 2% worked for publishers, porting houses and others (VR, blockchain, tools, casino games, etc.).



Location

To answer your questions about the difference between salaries in Warsaw vs. the rest of the country, we added a question about the company's location.

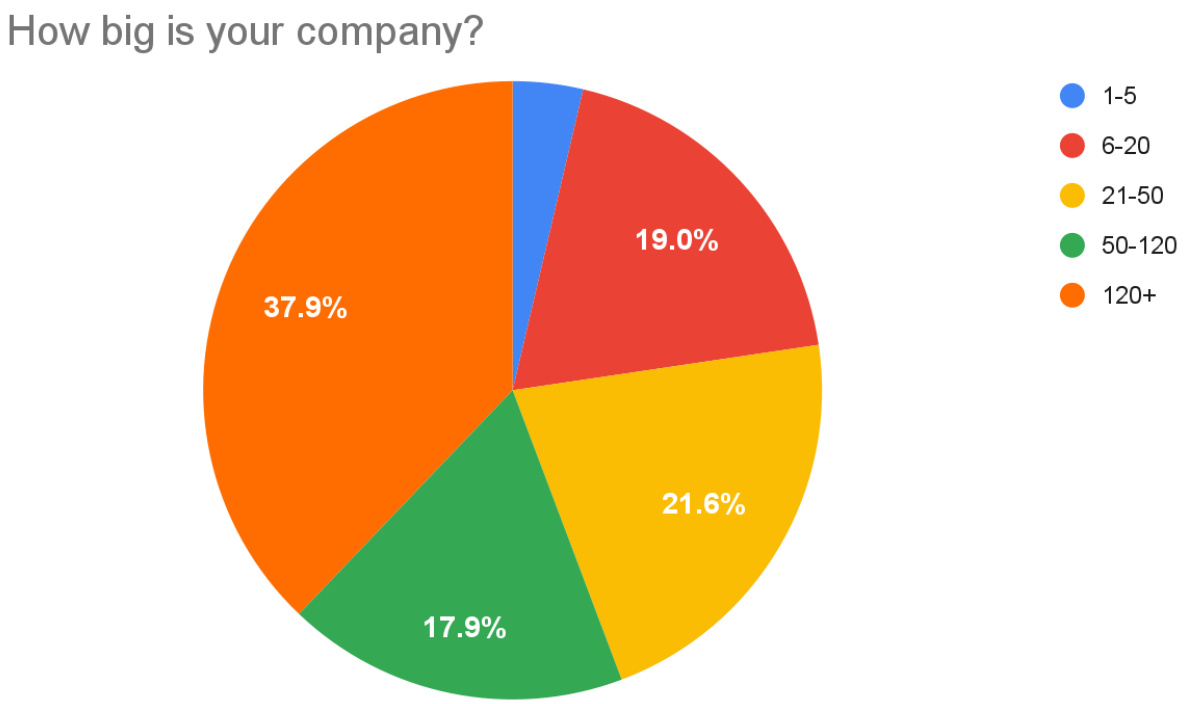
Half of the surveyed declared that their employer is located outside Warsaw, 43% in Warsaw, and 7% declared they worked for foreign companies.



To keep the answers anonymous, we decided not to ask about other big cities (Kraków, Wrocław, Katowice).

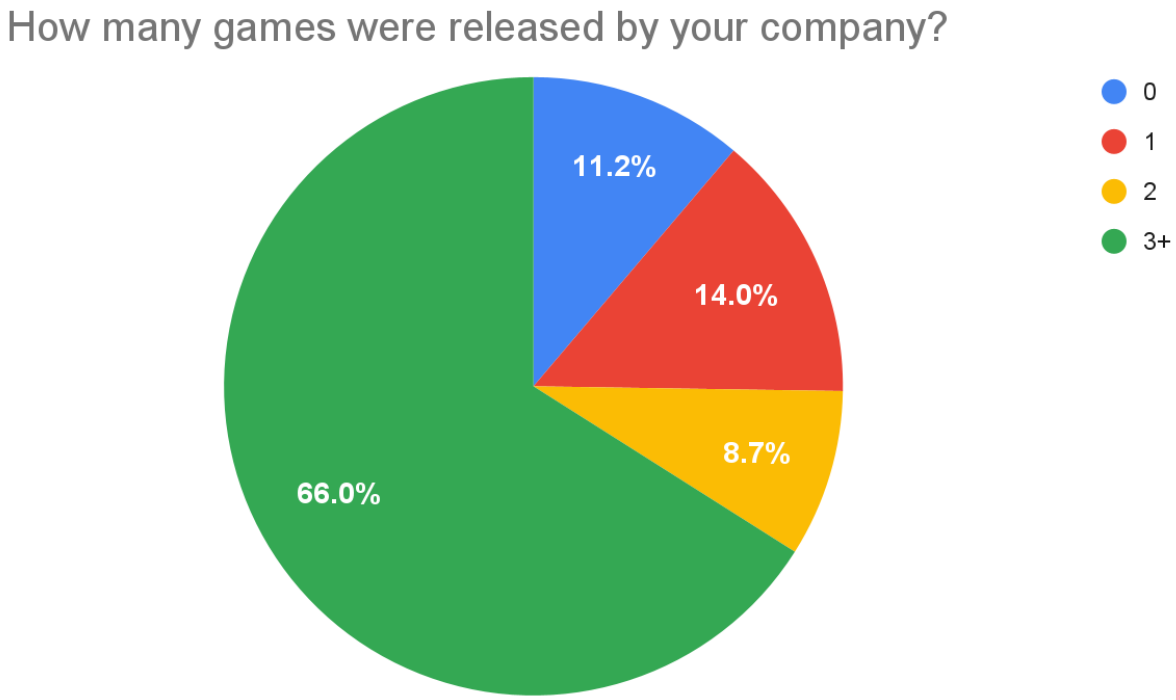
Size

48% of the surveyed worked in companies employing over 120 people, and 4% in companies employing 1-5 people.



Released Games

Most of the surveyed (66%) declared working for companies that released 3 or more games, while 11% worked for companies that were yet to release their first game.

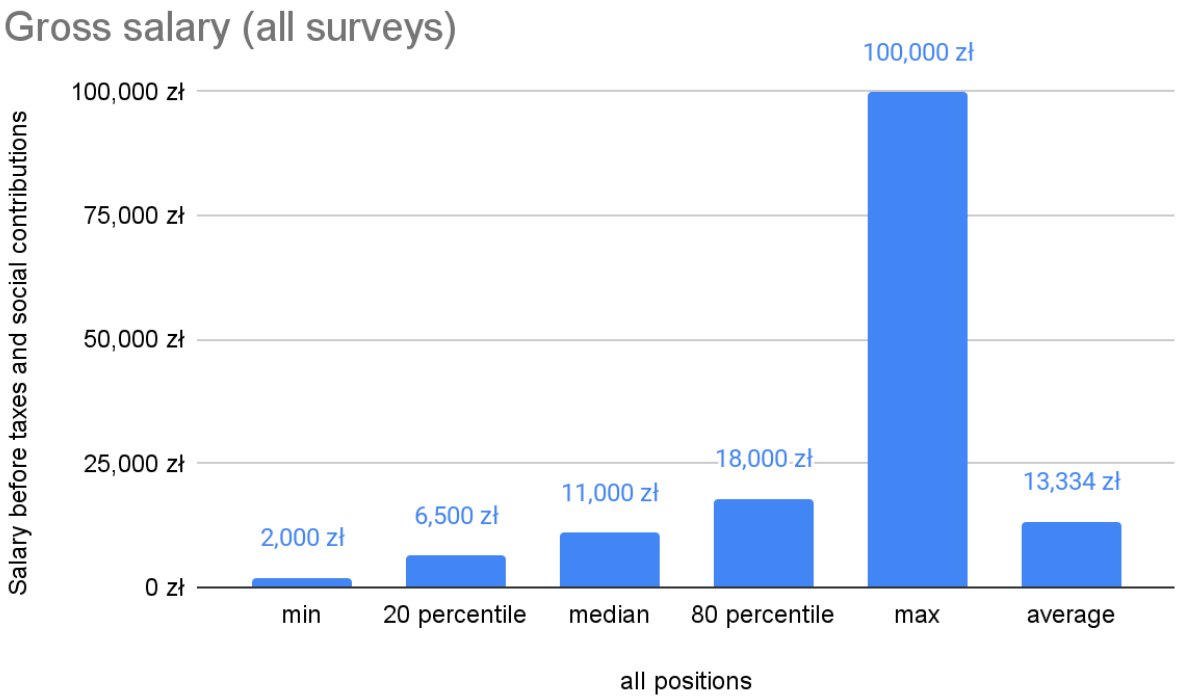


The question asked for games developed by the company, that were released to the market, no matter who the formal publisher was.

Salaries

The first step was to remove the extreme values that may distort the data (such as 103k PLN/month or free internships). We were left with 1064 surveys. Then, the data were normalized to account for part-time employment (94% of the surveyed declared working full-time).

The average declared monthly gross salary was 13.3k PLN. Half of the surveyed earned less than 11k per month, one in five earned less than 6.5k, and one in five earned more than 18k. The lowest declared salary amounted to 2k, while the highest to 100k monthly.



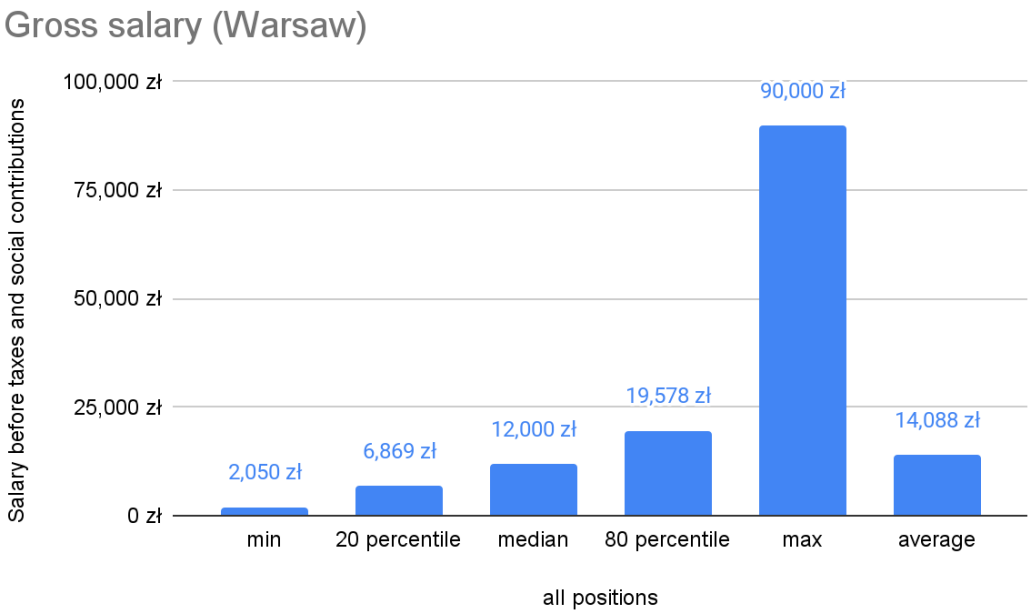
Compared to last year, the median of declared salaries increased by 19% (from 9.2k to 11k), while the inflation year to year amounted to 13% (GUS, May 2023) — and the increase of food prices in the same time interval amounted to 18.9%.

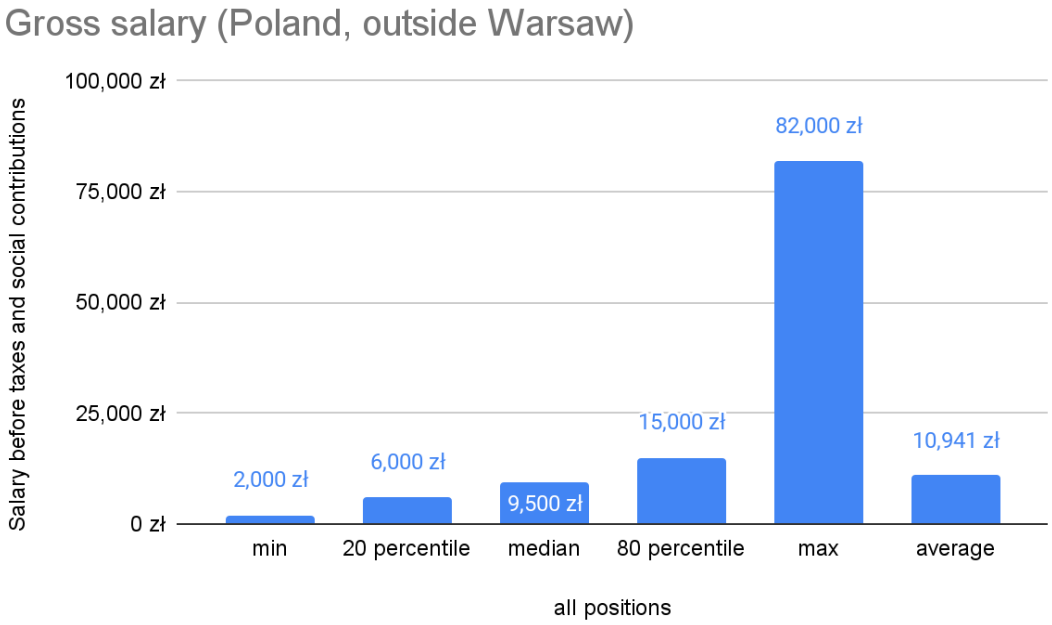
The average gross salary in Poland in May 2023, according to GUS amounts to 7430.65 PLN. The average salary in gamedev amounts to 179% of the average salary in Poland.

We collected no data about overtime.

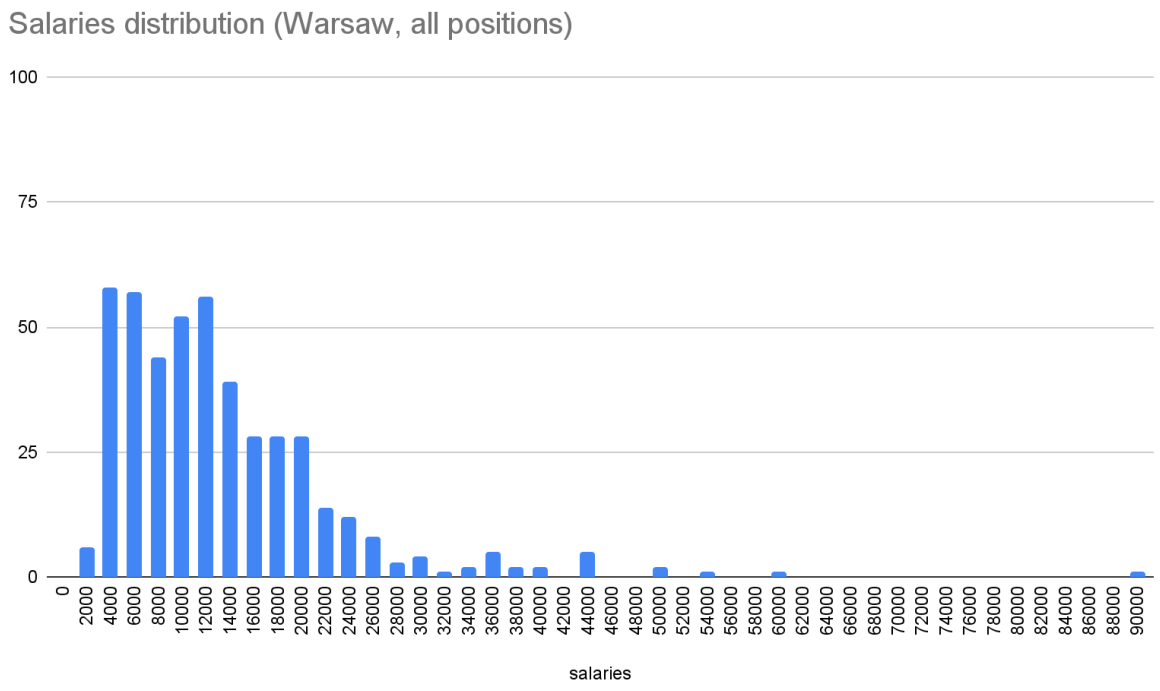
Location

The median salary in Warsaw is 12k, while outside Warsaw it amounts to 9.5k. Salaries in Warsaw are 26% higher than in the rest of Poland (the costs of living are also higher).

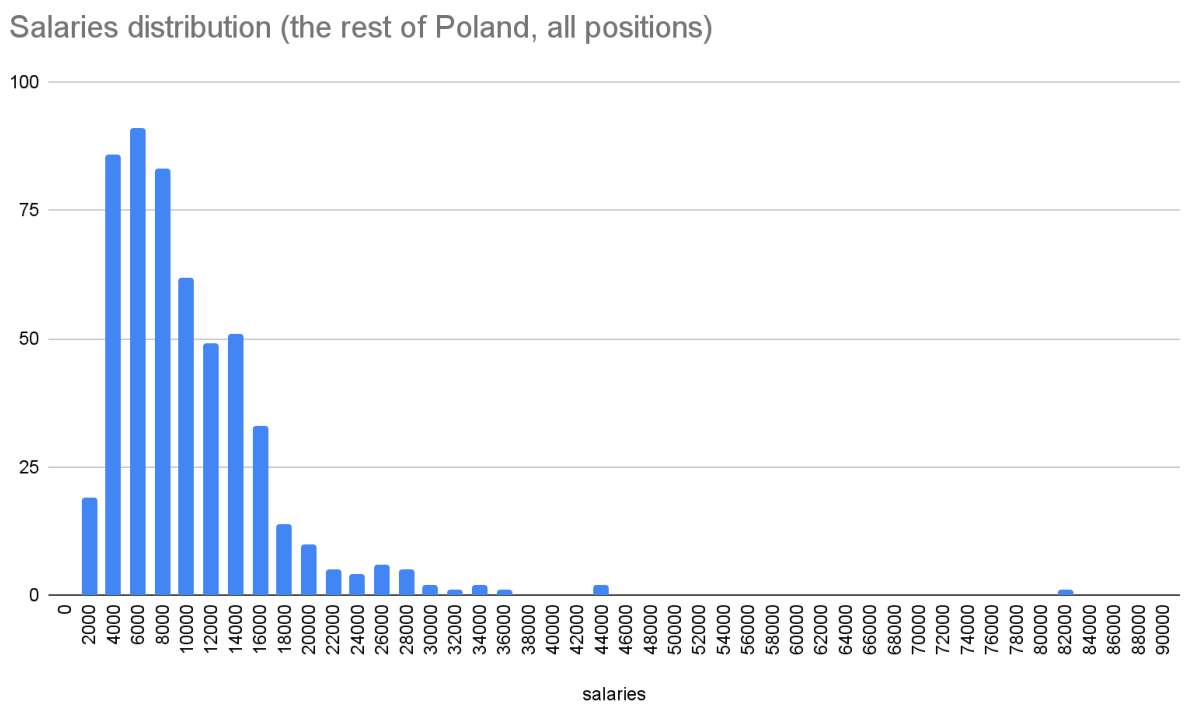




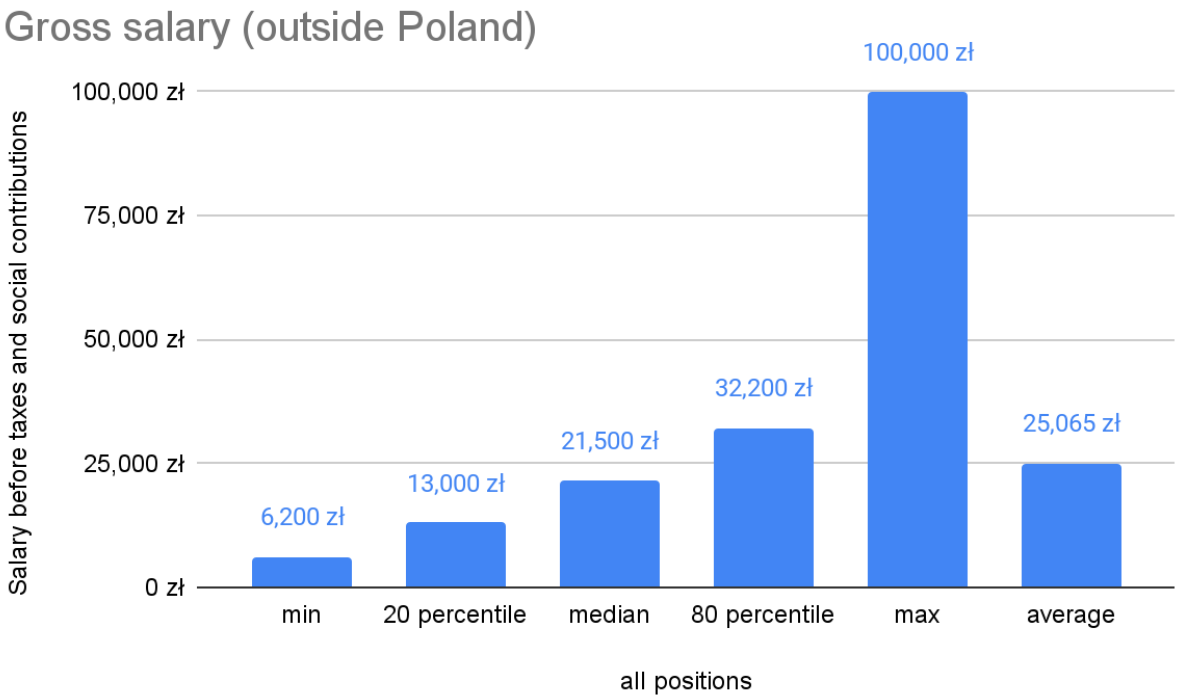
In Warsaw, most of the surveys fall between 4k and 13.9k. The range between 16k and 21.9k is also well represented.



Outside Warsaw, most surveys fall between 4k and 9.9k, the successive ranges are less and less represented, and the last well-represented is the range between 16k and 17.9k.



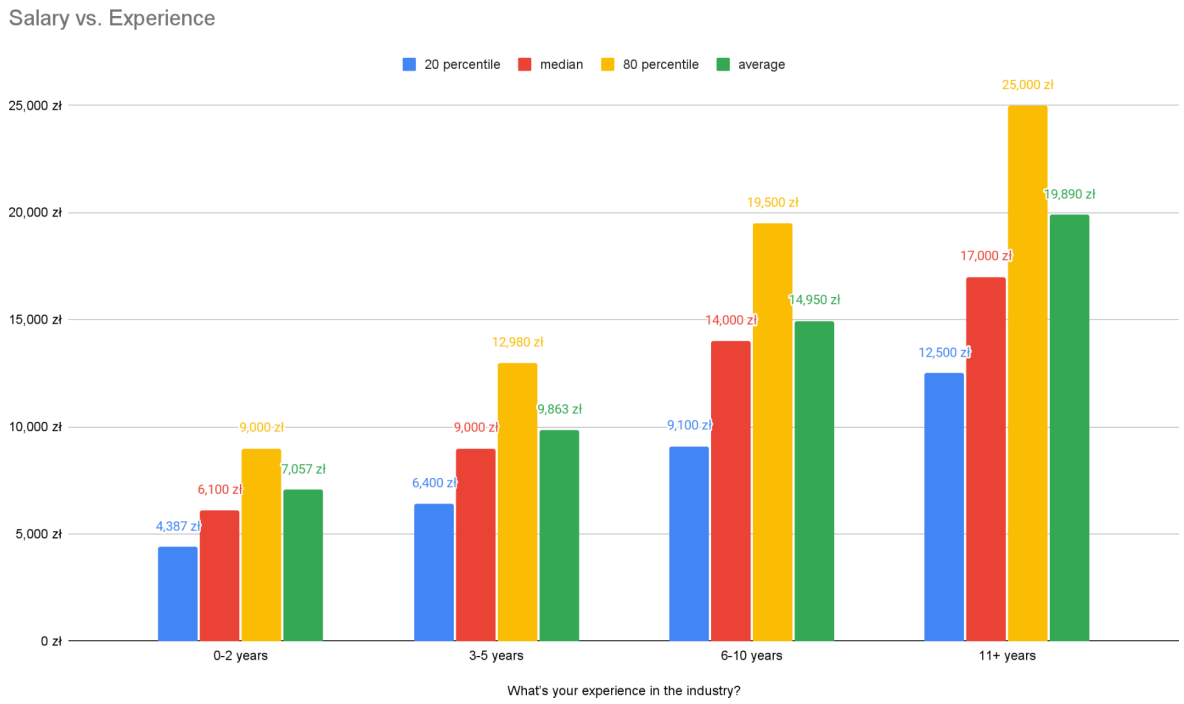
The median of declared salaries for employees outside Poland is 21.5k. Disclaimer: there were only 78 such surveys, so the data can be not representative.



Accounting for the significant difference between declared salaries in Poland and outside Poland, the rest of the analysis is based only on Polish salaries (986 surveys).

Experience

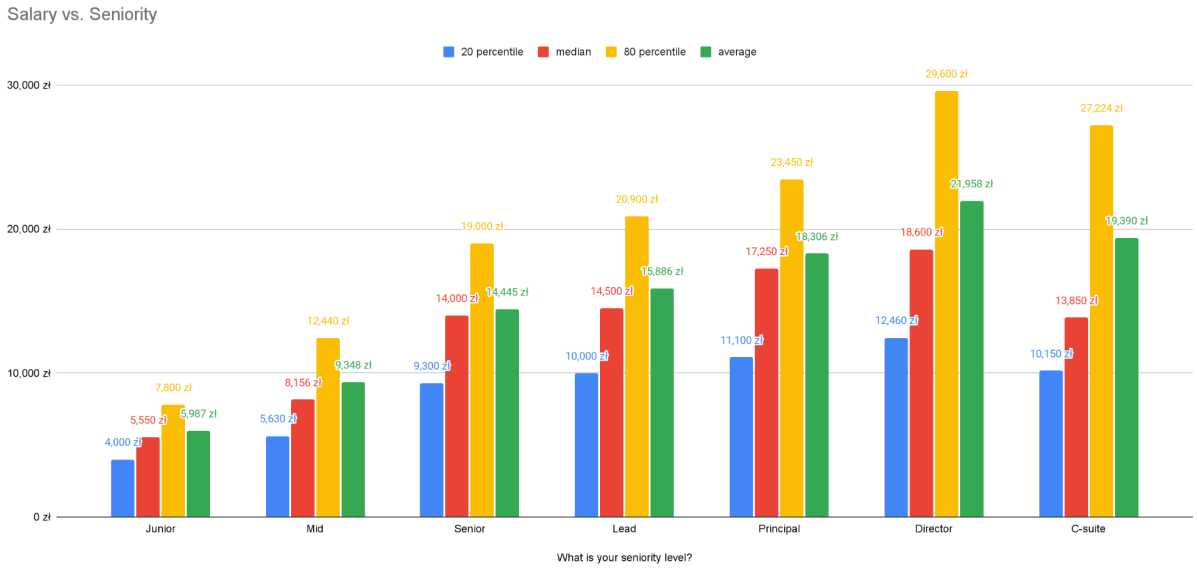
Half of employees with less than 2 years of experience earn less than 6.1k, half of those with 3 to 5 years of experience earn less than 9k, and for ranges 6 to 10, and 11+, the median salary is respectively 14k and 17k.



There were too few surveys for the range 20+, so the data was merged into the 11+ range.

Seniority

When we look at seniority levels, the median salaries are as follows: 5.5k for juniors, 8.2k for mids, 14k for seniors, 14.5k for leads, 17.2k for principals, 18.6k for directors, and 13.9k for c-suite.

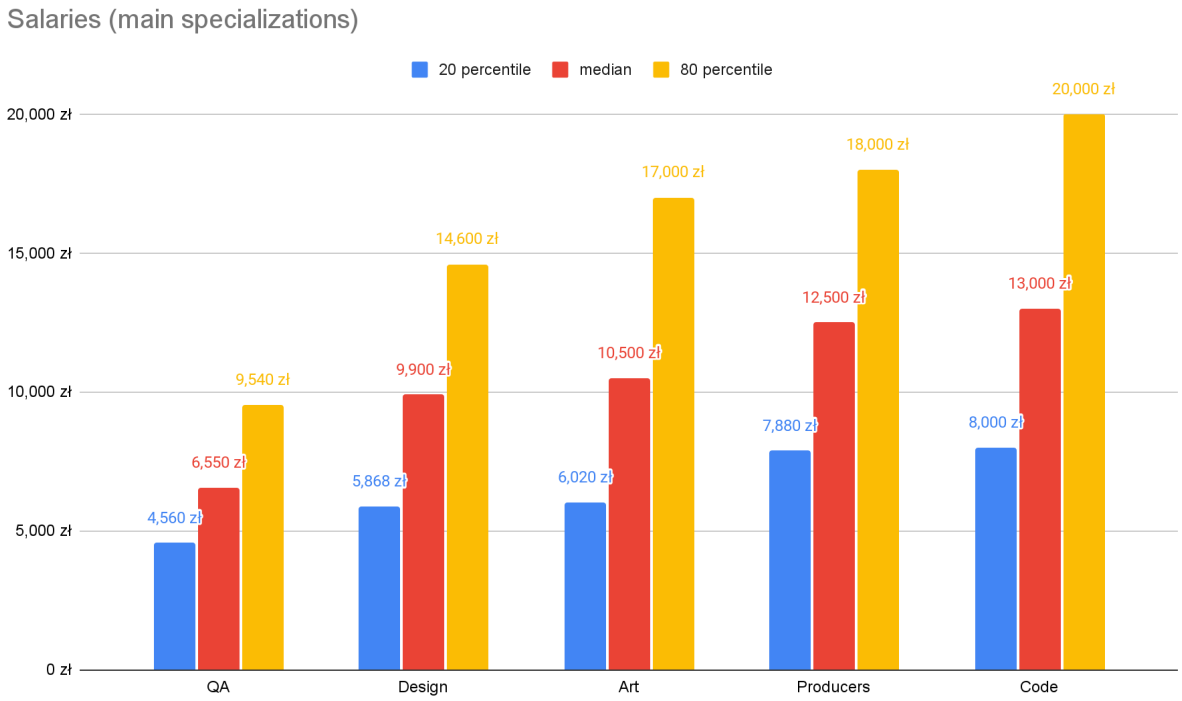


The fact that C-suite employees earn on average less than directors can be caused by data from the owners of small indie game studios.

Specialization

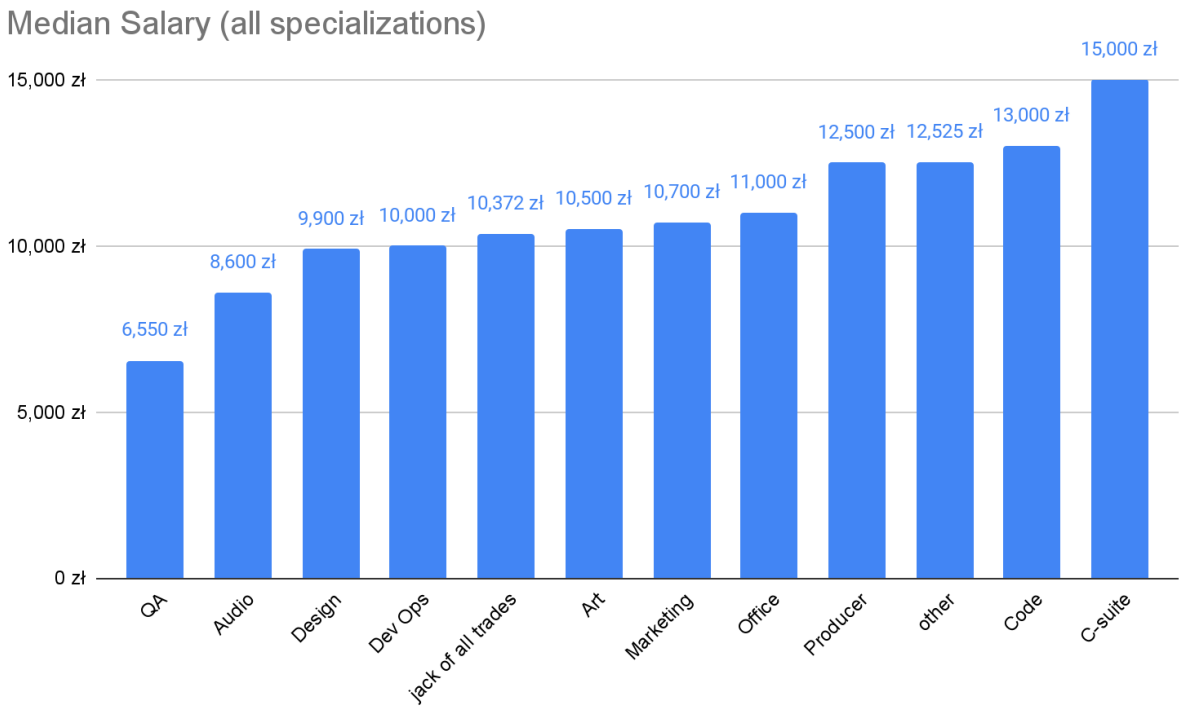
The collected data suggest that Programmers earn the most: half of them more than 13k, then Producers (half earn more than 12.5k), Artists (half earn more than 10.5k), and Design (half earn more than 9.9k). The QA earn the least (only half earn more than 6.5k).

The higher the salaries, the more visible the differences between specializations. One of five Programmers earns more than 20k, while four out of five in QA earn less than 9.5k.



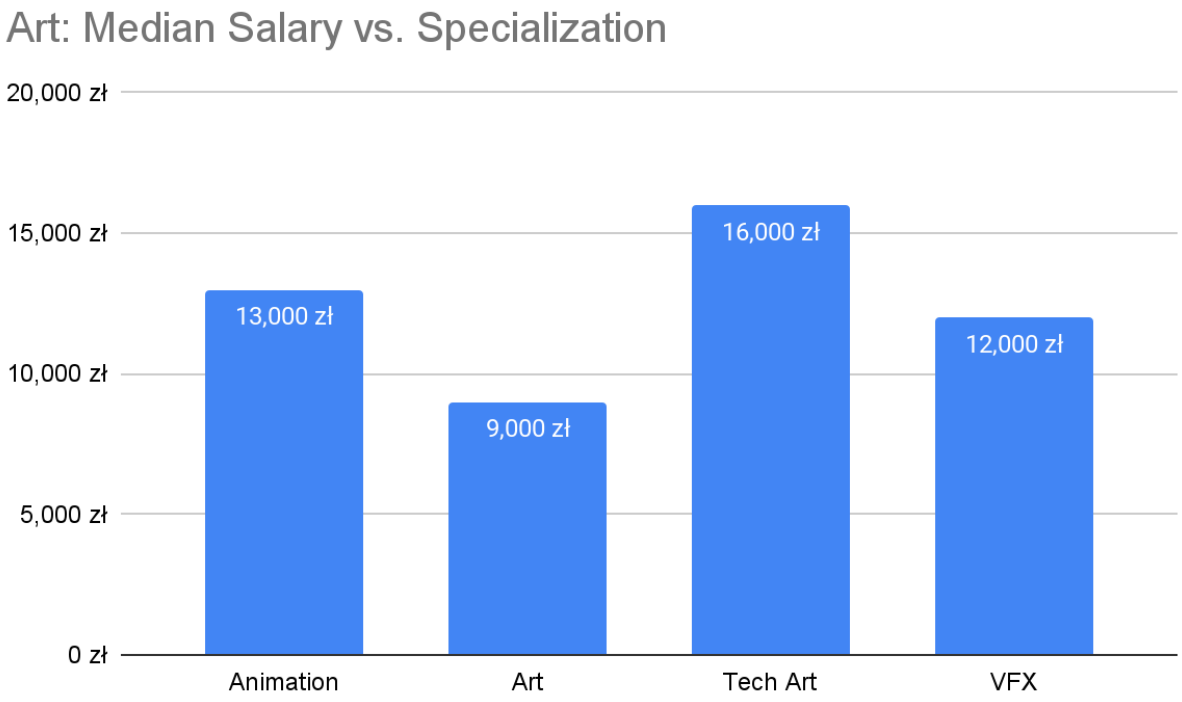
The chart shows only specializations with 50 or more surveys. Art includes Animation, VFX, and Tech Art.

When we take a look at the full data, the QA employees still earn the least, and only the C-suite earn more than the Programmers.



Please, take the chart with a grain of salt, as some of the data groups are very small (just 6 surveys from Dev Ops, or 26 from Audio), and the picture can be somewhat distorted.

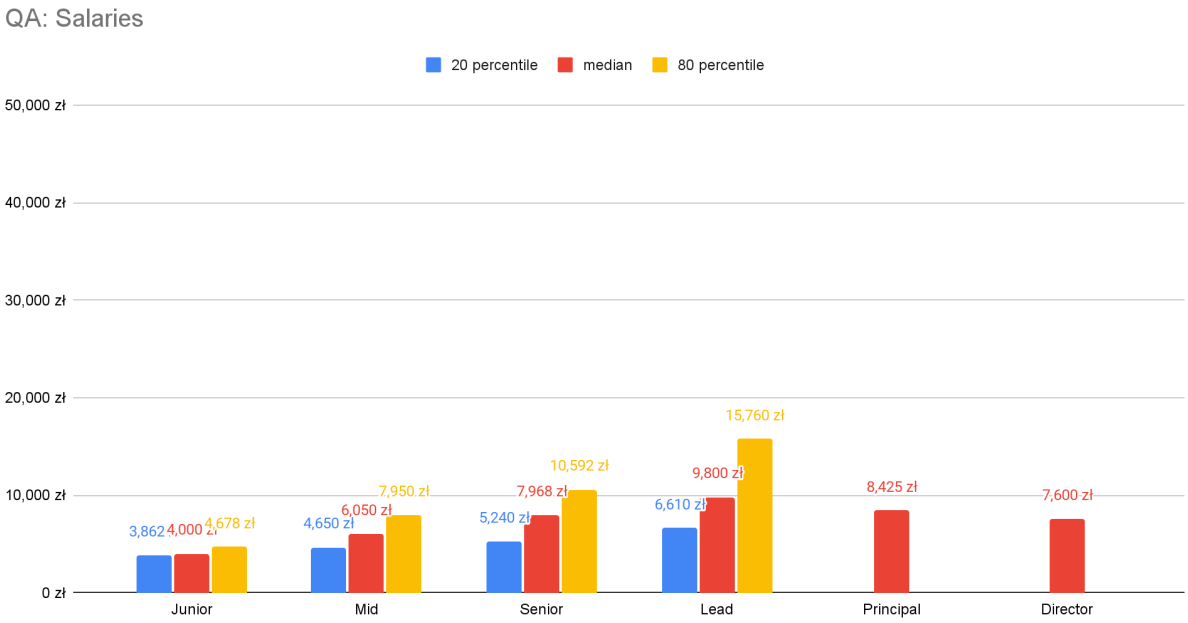
You asked us last year to take a more detailed look at the art departments. The data suggest that Technical Artists earn the most (median salary 16k), then Animators (13k) and VFX specialists (12k). The median salary for the rest of the Artists is 9k.

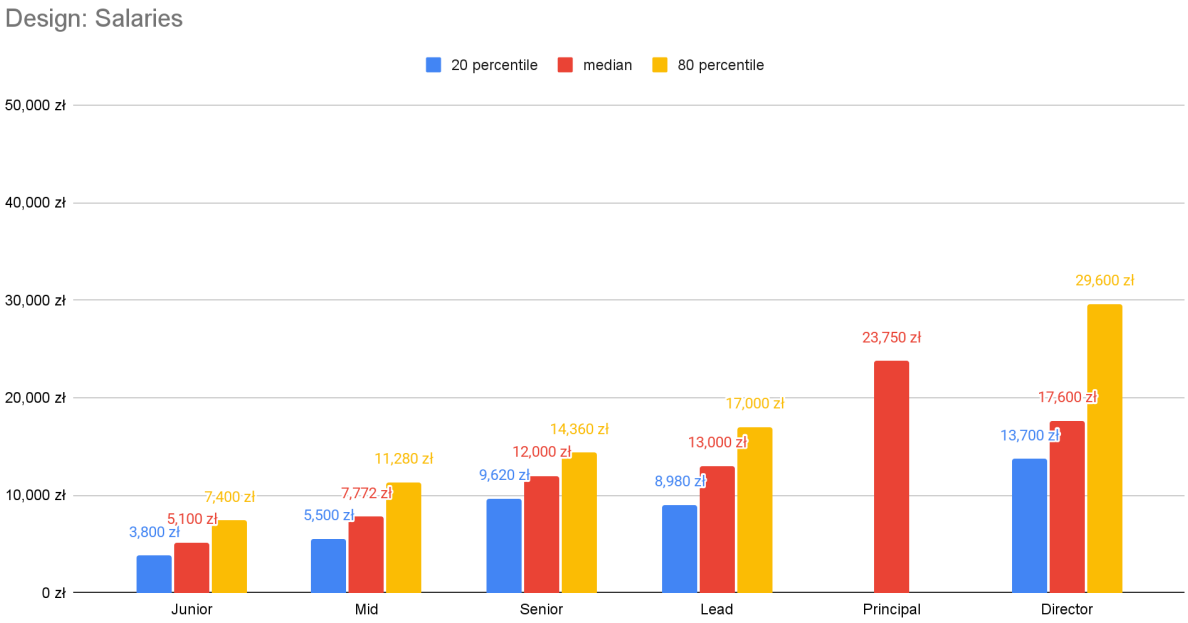


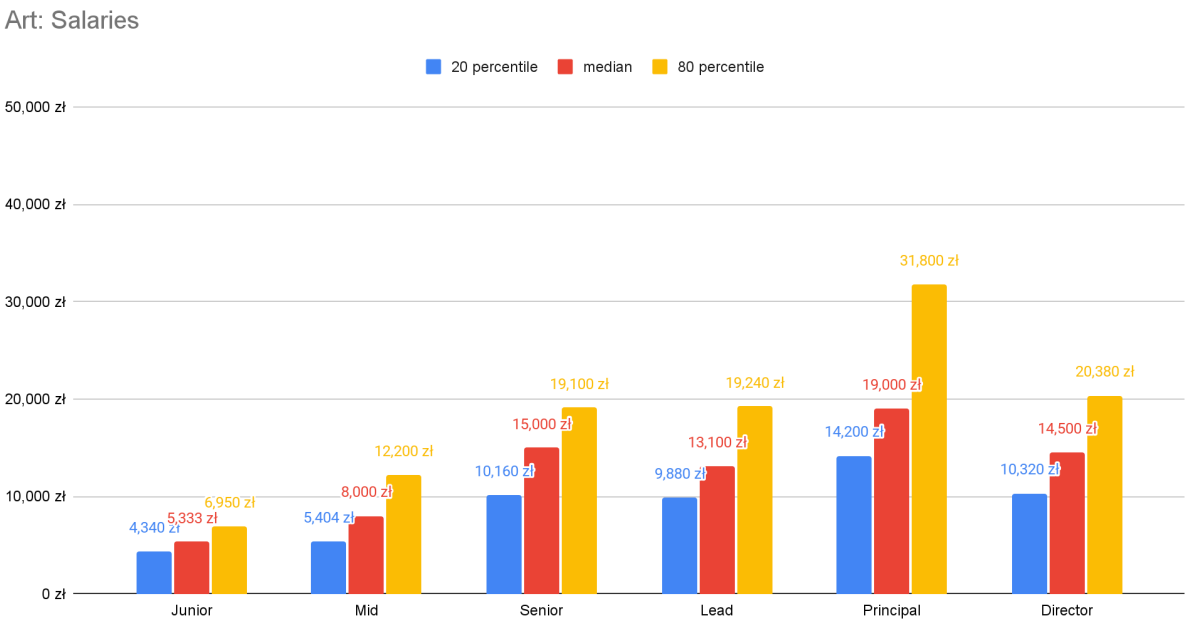
Please, take the chart with a grain of salt, as some of the data groups are very small (just 16 surveys from VFX, or 27 from Animatiors), and the picture can be somewhat distorted.

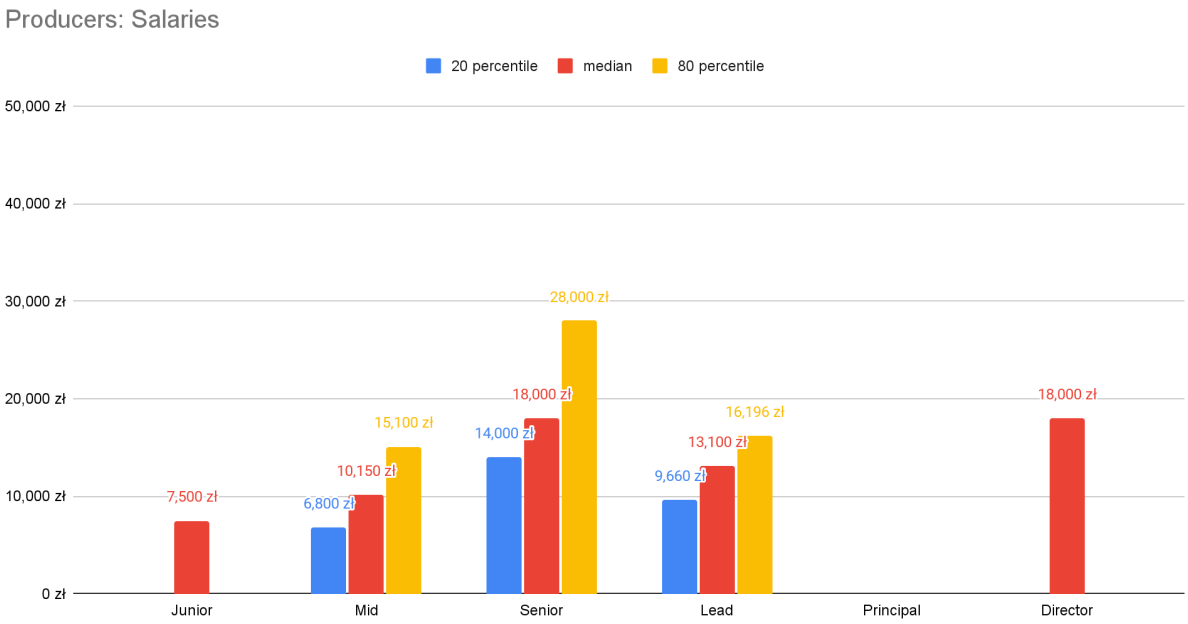
Seniority and Specialization

Disclaimer: for ranges with less than 10 surveys received we show only the median salary. Please take such data with a grain of salt.

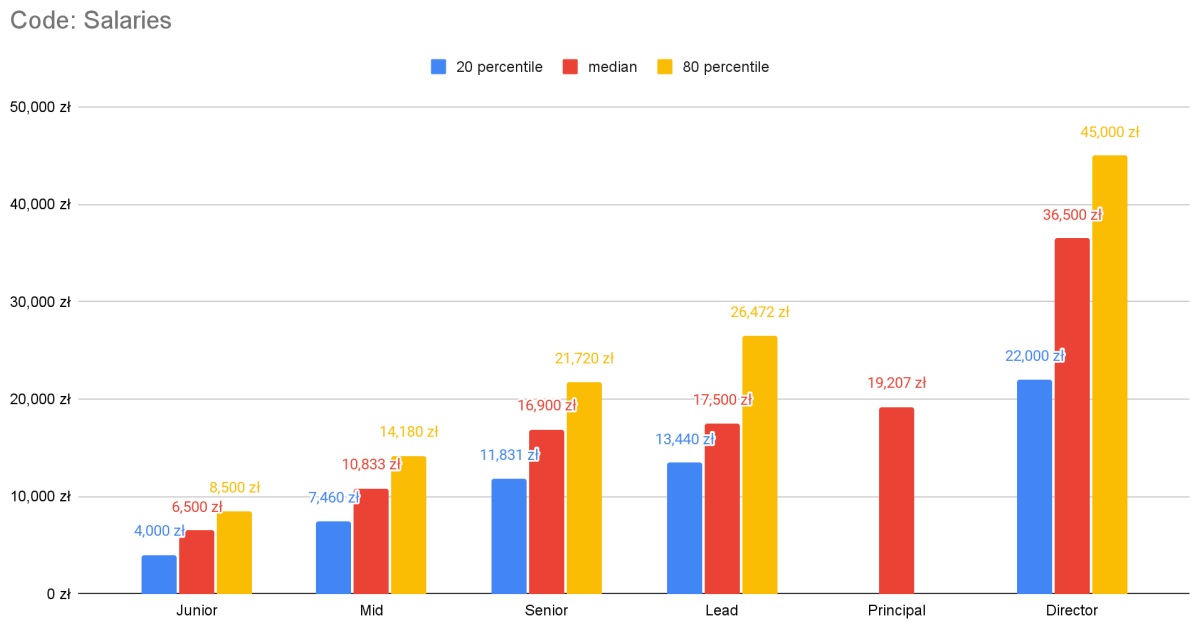








It’s worth noting that almost half of the Procudcers’ surveys come from the relatively best-paying companies with 120+ employees, while other specializations are more evenly distributed among companies of all sizes.



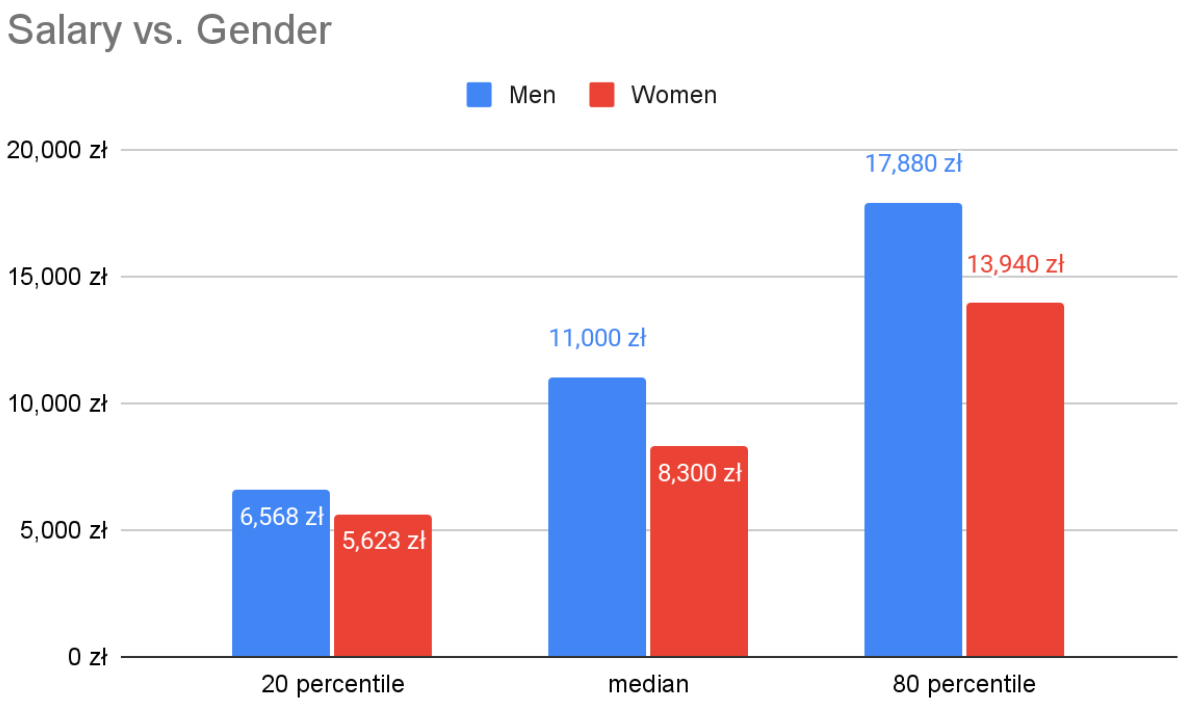
When we take a look at the above data, the pay gap between specializations becomes even more visible. The median salary of QA Leads (9.8k) is lower than the median of Mid-level Programmers (10.8k), Senior Artists (15k) or Senior Designers (12k).

This is the more striking, as—just like it was with the Producers—half of QA surveys come from companies with 120+ employees, which as a rule pay more. Yet, QA salaries are the lowest of all specializations.

The data, and conversations with employees of many Polish companies, suggest that QA is considered to be an entry-level specialization—both by the employees and the employers. After gaining experience QA employees requalify to be designers, programmers, producers, etc. instead of staying and increasing the department's expertise and efficiency.

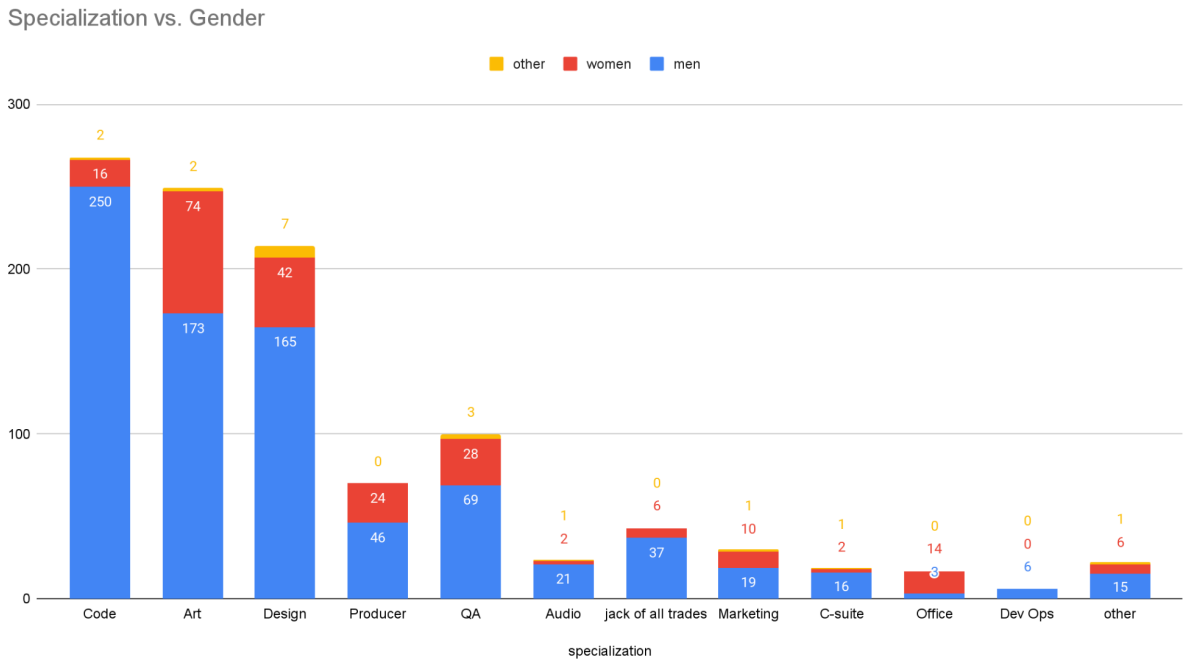
Gender

The overall data show that the median salary of women in the Polish gamedev accounts for 75% of the median salary of men. Half of men earn more than 11k while half of women earn more than 8.3k (and half earn less than that).

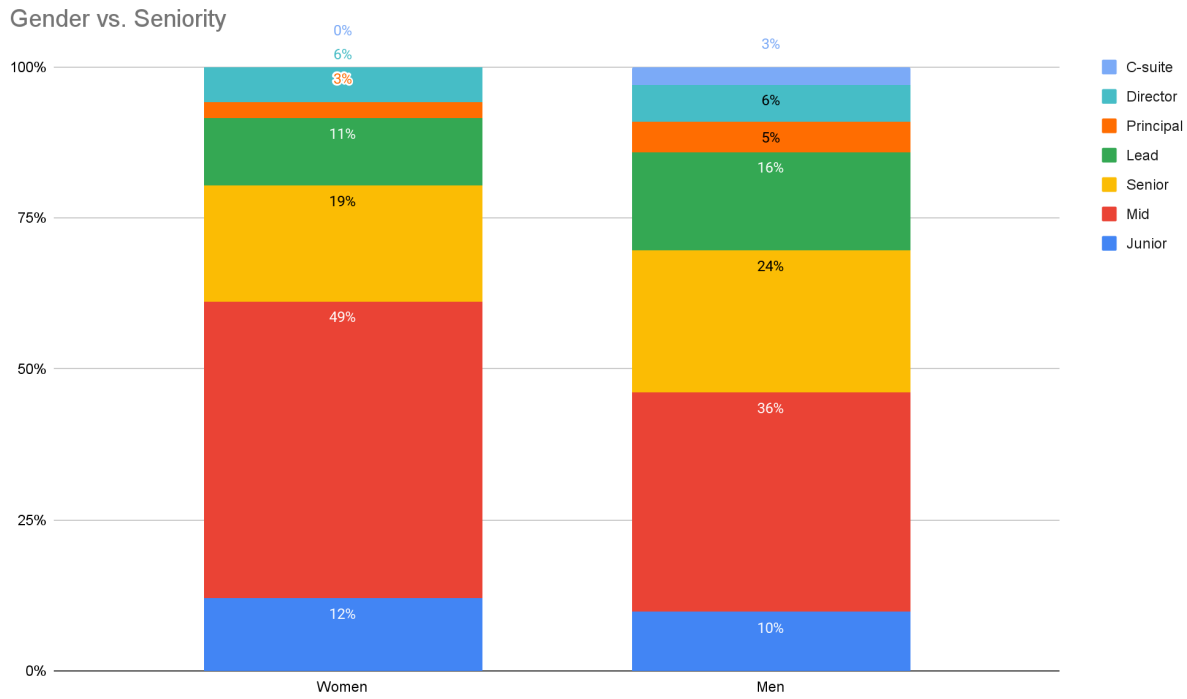


This could be caused by a different spread of specializations and seniorities between both genders. We analyze this thesis in the next few pages.

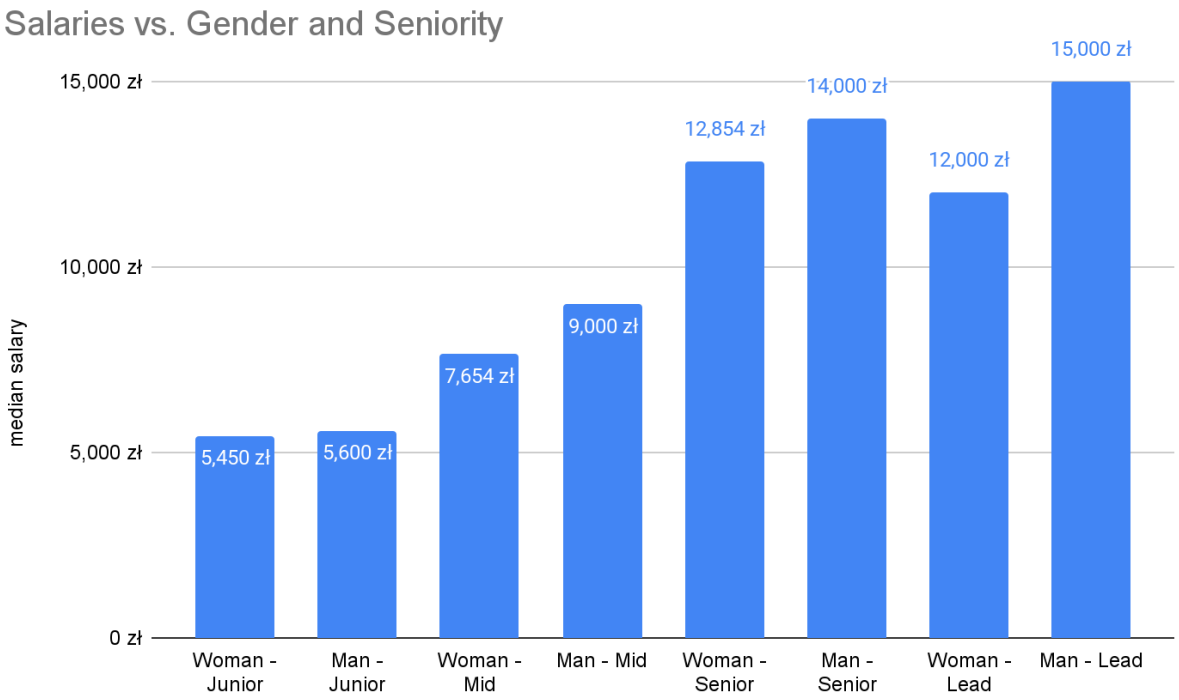
Looking at more detailed data, we can notice that relatively more women work in art and as producers and relatively fewer as programmers (who earn the most).



There are relatively more juniors and mids among women, and fewer seniors and leads.

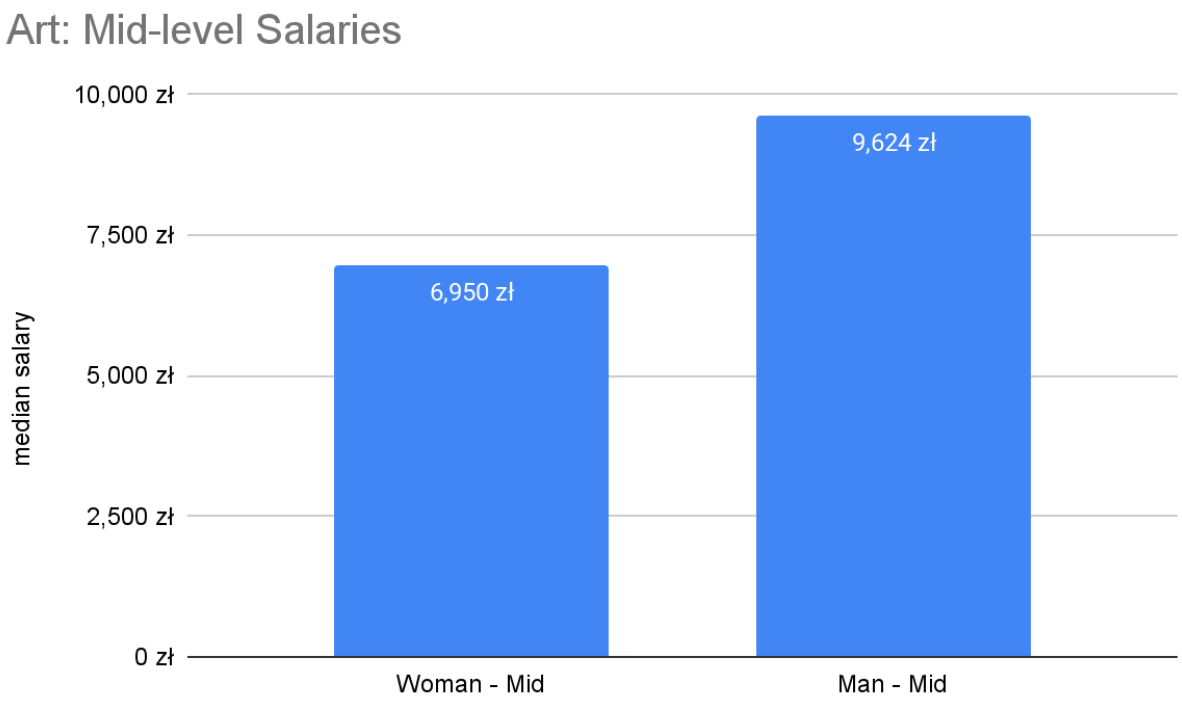


When we look at salaries by gender and seniority, we can notice that the pay gap is lower. Mid-level woman earns, on average, 85% of a mid-level man, while a woman lead earns 80% of a man lead's salary.



We received no surveys from C-suite women while receiving 24 surveys from C-suite men, which also influences the overall pay gap.

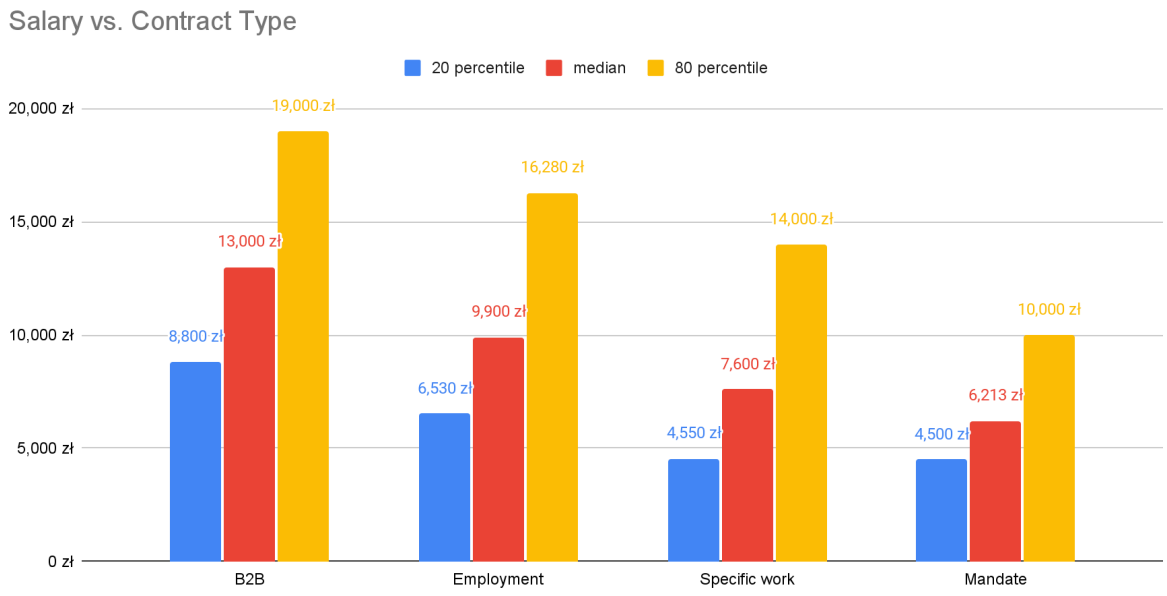
When looking closer at the data, we identified a group that seemed the best to compare the gender pay gap: mid-level artists. For this group, we received 44 surveys from women and 50 surveys from men. When we compared the median salary in this group, we noticed that the women earned 72% of what the men did.



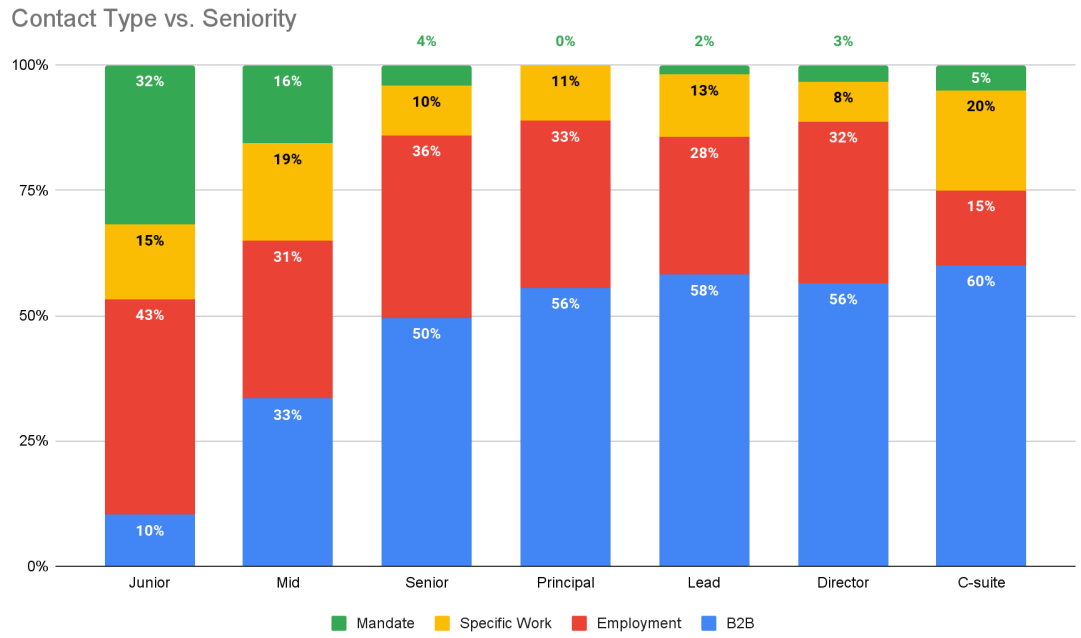
One of the possible interpretations of the gathered data is the conclusion, that women in the Polish gamedev are just paid less than men.

Contract Type

The data suggest that employees on B2B contracts earn the most (median 13k). Median for CoE (UoP) is 9.9k, and for CoM (UoD) is 7.6k. Employees on CoSW (UZ) earn the least, with a median of 6.2k.

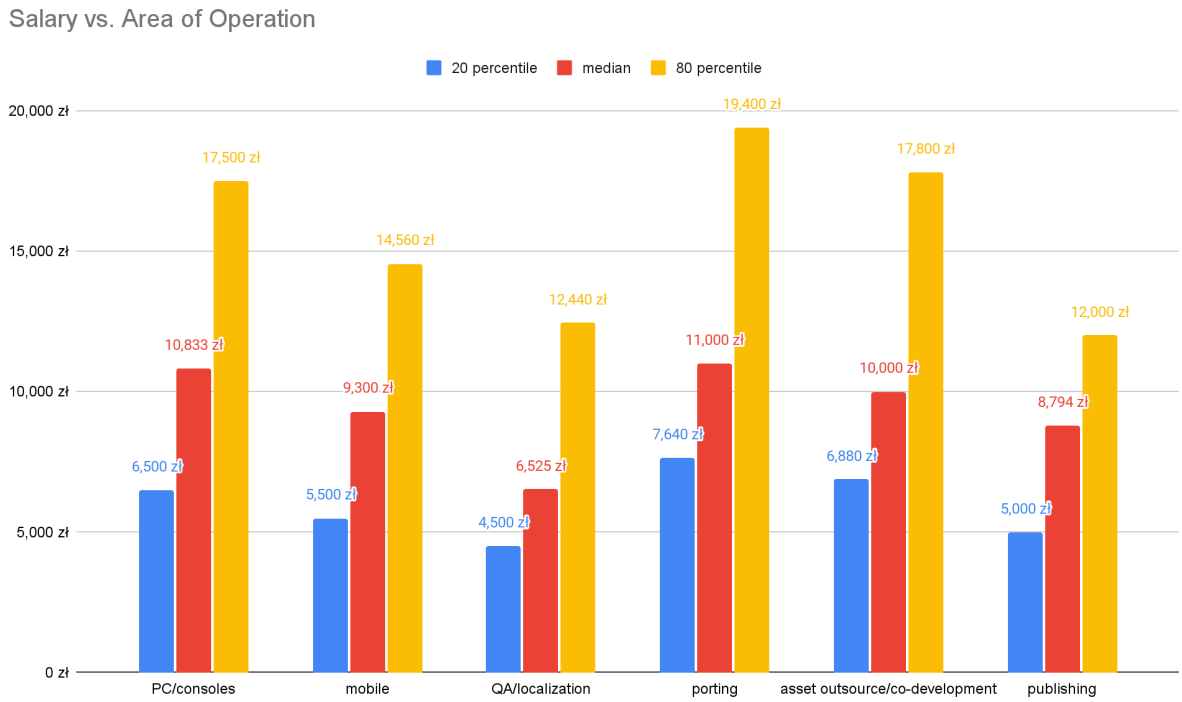


When we look at the seniority data, we can notice that the higher the seniority, the more employees switch from Contract of Employment to B2B.



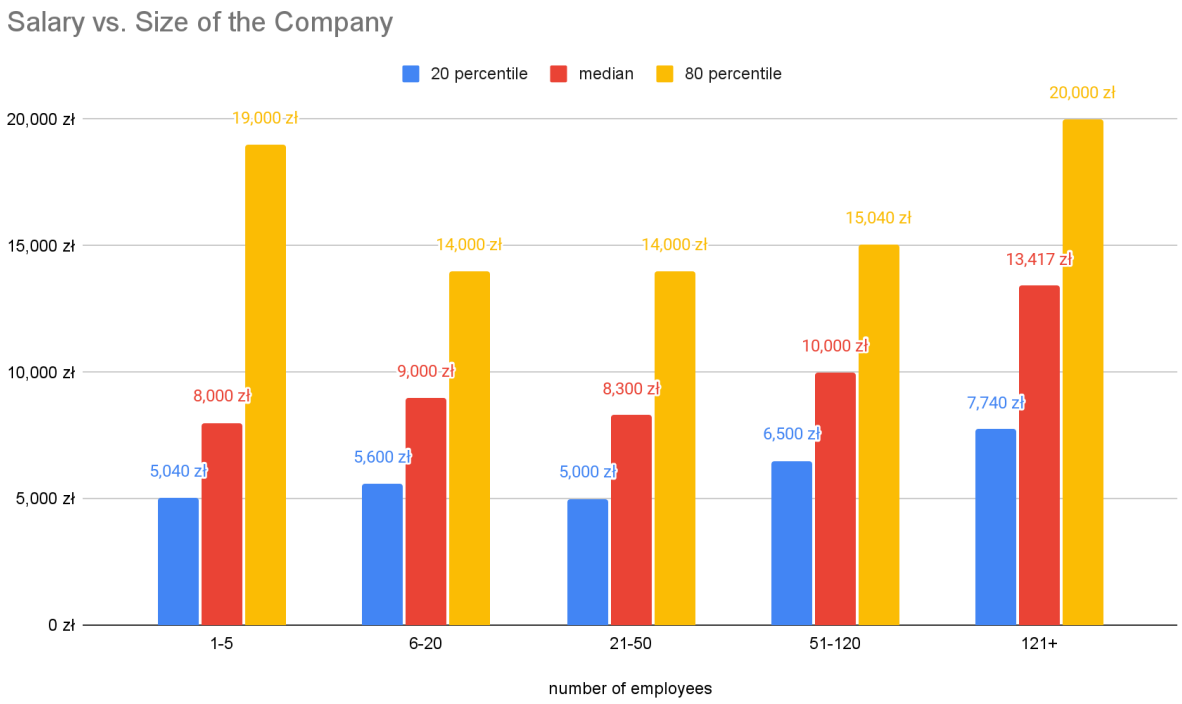
Area of Operation

The data suggests that most types of companies pay comparable salaries, with a median of about 10k, except for QA/localization companies, with a median of 6.5k.



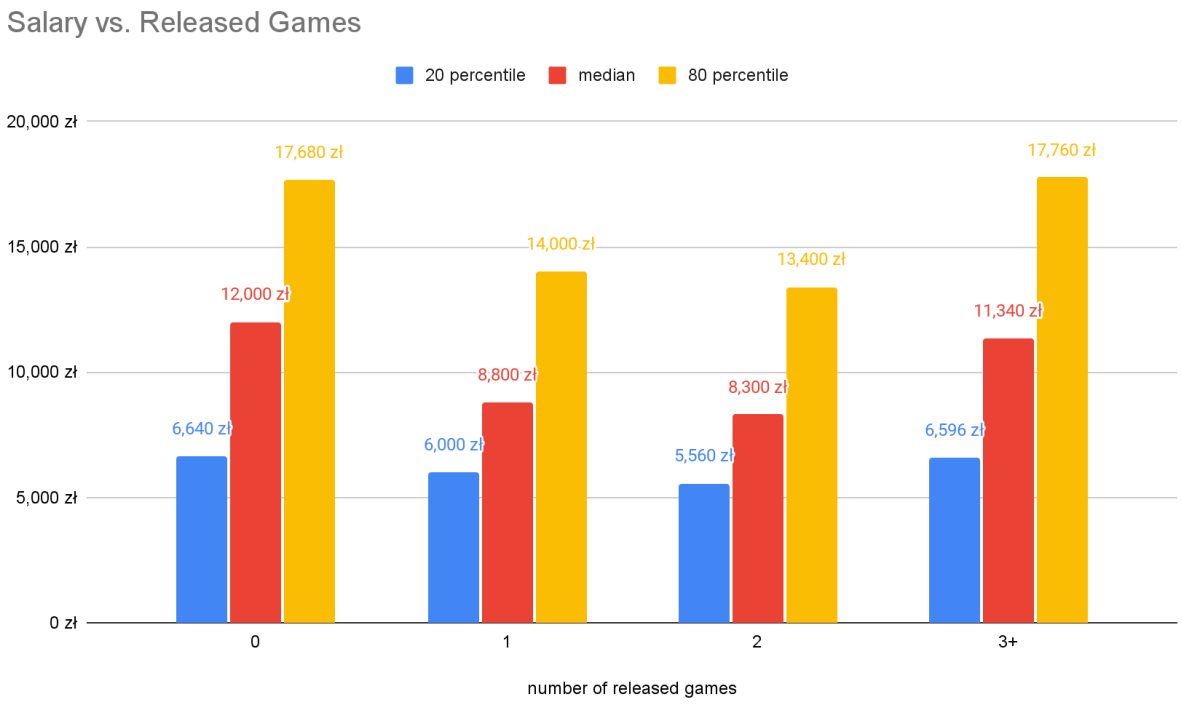
Size of the Company

The data shows that companies with up to 50 employees offer similar salaries, with a median of about 8.5k. Companies with 51-120 employees offer a median salary of 10k, and the biggest companies with over 120 employees pay the best, with a median salary of 13.4k.



Released Games

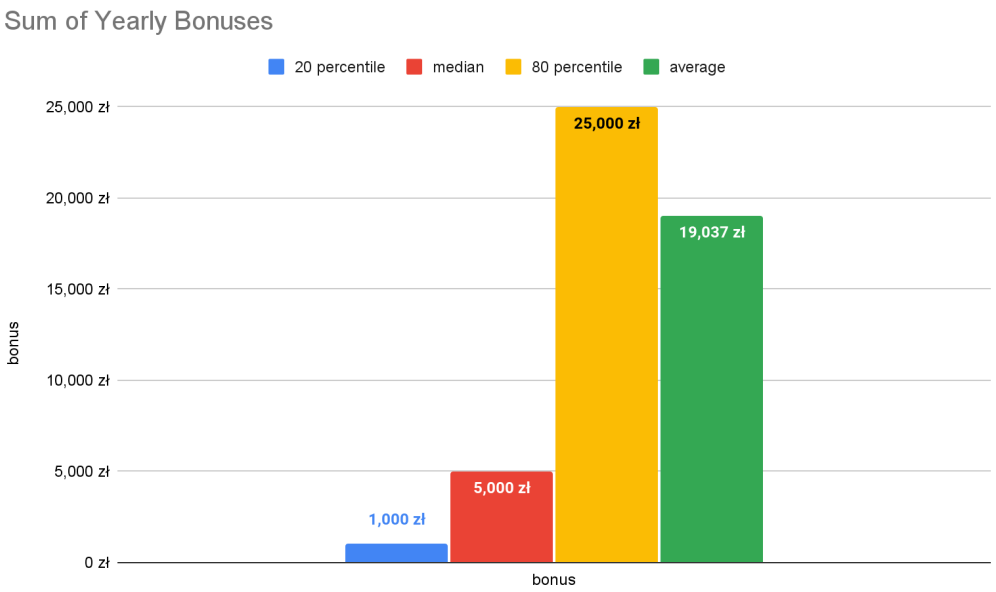
The data shows that you can count on the highest salaries in companies that released three or more games (median 11.3k) or released no games yet (median 12k). Companies that released one or two games offer a median salary of about 8.5k.

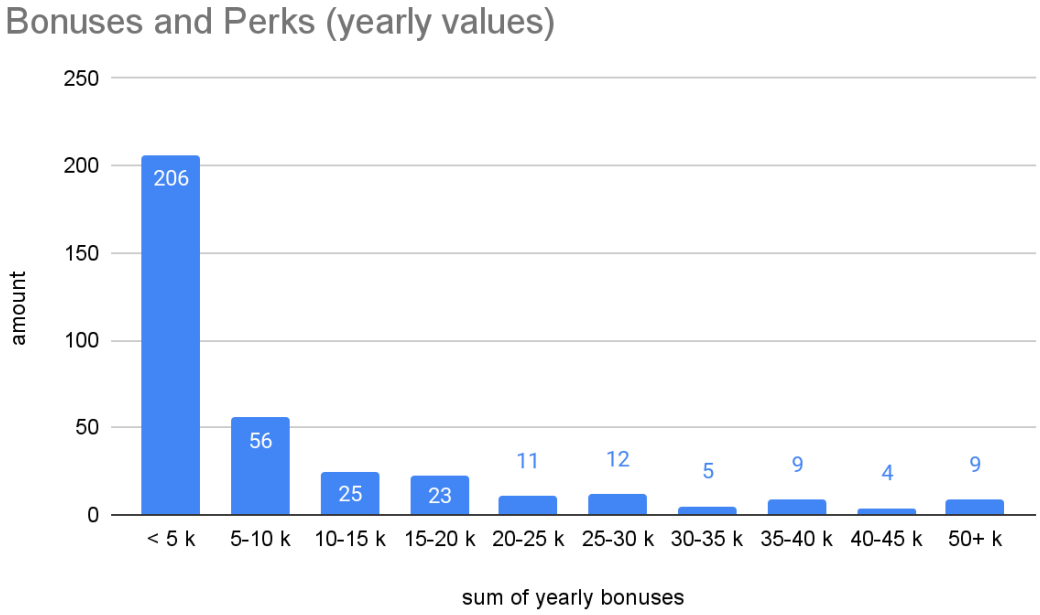


One possible explanation is that companies already established on the market and financially stable can afford to pay higher salaries, and start-up companies try to match or exceed the figures to convince experienced employees to join them.

Bonuses

Almost 38% of the surveyed declared that they received in the last year a bonus. One in five among them received less than 1k per year, a half less than 5k a year, and one in five more than 25k a year.





Apart from monetary bonuses the surveyed declared such perks as a stock option program, cafeteria stamps, health insurance, multisport, or a four-day work week.

Summary and Further Steps

The first edition of the survey was well received and so this year's edition has been improved based on industry-wide feedback and discussion. We are planning to iterate on the specialization breakdown, to even better reflect the realities of the Polish gamedev, while maintaining a data set suitable for in-depth analysis.

We also plan to tackle new issues, such as overtime, maternity and paternity leave, and non-monetary perks and bonuses.

If you have any questions or feedback, please contact us at artur@ganszyniec.com.

Do you want to be up to date with our surveys? Sign up for our mailing list.