

COMPANY

PitStop Productions

LOCATION

UK

SOFTWARE

Autodesk MAYA

Keeping the show on the road



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Adam 'Ace' Kaczmarek,
Technical Director
PenelopeVFX, division of PitStop Productions

How Cadline has helped PitStop Productions put its Autodesk subscriptions in order

Founded in 1996 and headquartered in Sheffield in South Yorkshire, PitStop Productions is a one stop creative services company operating worldwide across a wide range of media and entertainment industries. For many years, PitStop Productions has been using Autodesk Maya®, the 3D modelling, simulation and rendering solution, for visual effects and animation work. It uses Maya to help create marketing videos and short animations for leading gaming companies to help promote the launch of Triple-A games.

Recent years have seen some significant changes in how licences are provided for Autodesk software. Perpetual licences have gone to be replaced by subscriptions. PitStop Productions first engaged with leading Autodesk reseller, Cadline, during the two to three-year transition period between the two approaches. It was looking for guidance and an explanation of how the new approach to licensing worked.

Cadline was able to draw on its expertise around the solutions and strategy of Autodesk to provide this, explaining to PitStop Productions not only how subscriptions worked but also their many benefits: from cloud-based services to previous version rights; and from global travel and home use rights to additional support. PitStop Productions was quick to switch to the new approach, taking out an annual subscription to Autodesk Maya. It soon started to reap the rewards, in terms of enhanced versatility, flexibility and scalability. Being able to scale up and down depending on demand was especially key to PitStop Productions, making subscription-based licences from Autodesk particularly attractive to it.

However, it still faced one challenge – the need to review the licences annually and make a decision around their renewal. As Adam *Kaczmarek*, Technical Director, PitStop Productions explained: “When you are constantly busy, and working to tight deadlines, it is tempting to put off administrative work until tomorrow and concentrate on the urgent needs of the core business. But we knew that Autodesk Maya was delivered as part of an annual subscription, and that needs to happen on a regular date every year. If we were to forget about the renewal and have nobody to remind us, we might well end up without the licence for a week or two, trying to sort it out ourselves, which would be frustrating and disruptive to our ongoing work.”

Finding a way forward

Cadline was able to immediately build trust with PitStop Productions on this issue, both because of its knowledge of and expertise with the Autodesk software and its licensing but also because of its flexible approach. It is in the nature of PitStop Productions’ work for demand to be unpredictable. “Projects with tight deadlines can emerge at short notice, said Kaczmarek. “Sometimes a project can be almost signed off and done and then something might fall through. Cadline explained to us this is where the flexibility of subscriptions-based licensing really comes into its own. You can scale up (or down) as and when you need to.”

Complementing this, Cadline has never been pushy or aggressive when selling subscriptions to PitStop Productions. Depending on their workload, PitStop have sometimes not needed their annual renewal and Cadline has respected that, something which has helped to build trust between the two companies. Cadline has however, always maintained contact and ensured that when the subscription was close to running out, it provided PitStop with all the latest information on product updates and pricing to enable its customer to make an informed and fully considered decision on renewal.

When PitStop has opted to renew its Maya licence, which has been on most occasions since it started to work with the software, Cadline has managed all the paperwork around the renewal, helping to remove the administrative burden from its customer.

Gauging the benefits

The quality of the work Cadline has carried out for PitStop Productions has helped to build trust between the two organisations. PitStop knows it will always get honest, transparent advice from Cadline. It knows that Cadline will listen, take on board its feedback and not push software renewals when PitStop does not have sufficient work to justify it.

The great benefit for PitStop has been the enhanced peace of mind that working with Cadline on the Autodesk subscription renewals has given them. According to Kaczmarek: “For us the main benefit of working with Cadline has been how easy it now is to keep track of all the renewal dates, ensure we are getting the best possible price for the software. We no longer need to worry about when licences will run out, or whether we will have enough time to progress with the payment to make sure they stay valid. Cadline just makes sure all that happens behind the scenes, so we never have to worry about it and can concentrate fully on the job of delivering the best possible service to our customers.”

The level of engagement provided by Cadline is exactly right also: neither too much, nor too little. As Kaczmarek explained: “We get a ‘heads-up’ email from Cadline a few months before the renewal is due, together with details

of the latest prices followed by another prompt a little closer to the date, reminding us of the cost at that stage.

“We appreciate Cadline’s light touch in this respect,” he explained. “We get a huge number of emails throughout the day from other sources and if we were to receive multiple emails from Cadline all the time, prompting us about the renewal, it would quickly become annoying and frustrating. It is great that they get straight to the point and we can quickly get everything sorted” he continued “If we have any queries though, Cadline are always responsive, we know we can rely on them.”



PitStop Productions has also come to increasingly appreciate the benefits of the subscriptions-based approach to Autodesk licences over time. It works with multiple partners and customers around the world. The flexibility of a subscriptions approach makes it easier to collaborate with these stakeholders, especially given that many are either still working from home or using a hybrid working model.

PitStop can also reassign licences whenever it wants to. That’s a big benefit for a company like PitStop that collaborates with a large number of companies globally because once one user has signed off for the day in the UK, the licence can be reassigned to another in Australia as and when required.

“We’re very happy with the Autodesk subscriptions,” said Kaczmarek. “If we ever needed any more licences in the future, we would know where to go to. Cadline is very much our go-to Autodesk reseller, and we can’t see that changing anytime soon.”