

METROGAMES TO LAYOFF (AND POSSIBLY CLOSE)



When you log onto a site such as Facebook and begin to play your favorite social game, whether it is the monstrously popular Farmville, Words with Friends or a lesser known game, you will find that you're thinking about the games (or about how much you hate the ads that come along with the games) and you probably do not give a second thought to the fact that these games are created by someone. They are maintained by someone and the companies that create them can employ a fair number of people. They can also lay them off too. In this case the company in question is MetroGames and you probably know them as the maker of games such as Coco Girl, Tea4Friends, Typing Maniac and Pixel Ranger. Well today, the game maker is beginning to cut staff. The reason behind the cut is simple, the company does not have the cash to keep going at the current rate. There was talk of a recent bid to buy the company by a more profitable company, which has not been named, but that deal has fallen through and in order to try and stay in business MetroGames has to cut back on its staff. The talks of layoffs at MetroGames began when an email was sent to news outlets, by a person who claimed to be employed by MetroGames, telling them that the company was getting ready to layoff and layoff soon. The email also said that the company was facing closure. It alleged that the company's CEO, Damián Harburguer, and its COO, Julián Lisenberg, were playing a bit of dirty pool by asking the employees to quit in private, while asking them to stay on in public. The company faced some serious payroll issues in the month of December, when it was unable to pay both the wages and bonuses owed to staffers. While the company has not publicly admitted to any of this behavior they have confirmed to a reporter for Inside Social Games (<http://www.insidesocialgames.com/2011/12/28/coco-girl-developer-metrogames-hit-with-layoffs/>) that they are going to be laying off after unsuccessful efforts to sell the company. Damián Harburguer emailed them the following information statement, "We informed our staff of our financial condition last week. A significant number of really talented employees have left the company and we will be forced to make additional reductions very soon. We regret that this happened during the Holiday season, but we did not want to take drastic action while any chance remained that a deal would be successful. We are doing everything we can to help our former employees find new positions with other companies in Buenos Aires and elsewhere." This does not give us any clue as to whether or not the company is closing up shop, but it is worth keeping an eye on in the future. Currently the company is able to boast about enjoys 5.5 million monthly active users in its games, according to data from the AppData traffic tracking service. The games the company makes are available on both Facebook and for a variety of iDevices, such as the iPad, iPhone and the iPod Touch.

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