



When to use gamification and when not

Gamification can be a powerful tool to change people's behavior but used in a wrong context can produce wrong actions or less productivity. The goals of gamification are to achieve higher levels of engagement, change behaviors and stimulate innovation (Salcu, A. V., & Acatrinei, C. 2013).

Gamification to use

According to Werbach (2016), there are three main types of categories where gamification can add value: in an **external environment**, in an **internal environment**, and in **behavior changing**. The external gamifications applied outside the organization or company like marketing, sales, and customer engagement. The internal gamification refers to the applications of gamification to employees, or people within the company. Gamification can provide the motivation for HR, productivity enhancement, or crowdsourcing. Behavior change gamification is applied when an individual needs motivation to do something he/she appreciates the value of like health, wellness, sustainability or personal finance. Motivation through gamification may have a social impact in this respect, because it is something people want to do. (Salcu, A. V., & Acatrinei, C. 2013, Werbach 2016.)

Gamification main goal is to increase people's happiness while boosting their motivation towards a goal. When this is not achieved the gamification should not be used.

Motivation

What makes a person to take part of a gamification? What might be their motivation? Motivation means you are moved to do something. It's what makes you do something versus something else or do something versus just sitting around doing nothing. One may say: "Well I did that because I felt I like it." or "I did that because someone told me to." People have different motivations to do things. These motivations can be intrinsic and extrinsic. (Werbach 2016.)

Intrinsic motivation means that you do the thing for its own sake. You do it not because of any external stimuli whatsoever, you do it because you want to, because you find the thing rewarding, engaging, enjoyable, fun, exciting, just for doing the thing. (Werbach 2016.)

Extrinsic motivation means that you're doing something for some reason other than the thing itself. Might be money, fame or fortune, someone asked you to do it and you value that person. The person may be a family member or your boss. The point is, whatever the reason is you're doing the thing, it's about the reward not about the thing itself. (Werbach 2016.)

Extrinsic rewards are status, access, power and stuff - SAPS.

- Status - a position in relation to other players, place in the leaderboard
- Access - to information, people, objects ... that other players don't have or only few of them
- Power - over other players, objects, information, moderation over the other players
- Stuff - things that players get that only few others get or no others get. (Enterprise gamification 2013.)



Self-determination theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a macro theory of human motivation and personality that concerns people's inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs. It is concerned with the motivation behind choices people make without external influence and interference. SDT focuses on the degree to which an individual's behavior is self-motivated and self-determined. (Self-determination theory 2017.)

Under SDT there are three characteristics of intrinsic motivation. Three factors, that when they are present, suggest that an activity will be worthwhile to people, in and of itself: competence, autonomy, relatedness (Figure 1.).

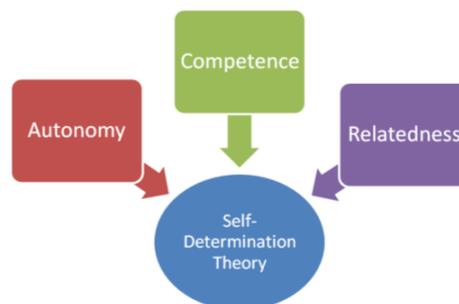


Figure 1. Self-determination theory

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<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=11946408>)

Competence is to do with the person's sense of ability. Their sense that they are accomplishing something, solving problems, surmounting obstacles. They are achieving something within the activity. What a person is doing is in the scope of his/her ability, no such tasks that he/she cannot ever do. (Werbach 2016.)

Autonomy is the person feels like they're in control. I'm the one making the choices, it's not someone else telling me to do this. It's me doing it by my own free choice. I have chosen to take part of this game. (Werbach 2016.)

Relatedness means something like your activity is connected to something beyond yourself. That could be some sense of meaning or purpose or I am doing this because I'm using less energy, and that's good for the planet or I'm doing this because it will help my company, and I believe in my company, and want to be a good team player in the organization or I'm doing this with friends, social interaction is an element of relatedness, which we see a great deal, with regard to games. (Werbach 2016.)

Situations that gamification should not be used

In the following paragraphs there are some examples of the situations not to use gamification.

One of the main factors to apply gamification is the existence of a certain purpose, an activity that is started because of a reason and its finish line is a clear goal. This means that if no clear goal to accomplish this task is involved, there is not that much gamification can do. This is the case when we are doing things just for the sake of it, without a meaningful reason. Playing football for fun with some friends, having a picnic on a sunny day or checking out stuff on the internet to get some information are good examples for it. (Manrique 2013.)



Another reason not to apply gamification is the "enough motivation" factor. In example, taking a relative to the hospital, doing an exam or explaining the business current situation to our stakeholders are things that need to be done, and due to their seriousness they need to be quick and effective without any delaying steps in the middle. These kind of activities does not a motivational boost via gamification in order to perform them in an optimal way. (Manrique 2013.)

Gamification must always be a tool to promote ethical behaviors and it must not be used in any other way. When gamification is causing great harm, or it is not promoting happiness or motivation in a good way, it should not be used. (Manrique 2013.)

Implementing point systems, badges, and leaderboards onto any work process does not balance competition and collaboration. This kind of system does not create meaning and fun in employees' lives. (Eyal & Luman, no year.)

Being part of gamification is not voluntary. Games by their nature are voluntary. When a company insists its employees play along, it stops being a game and is a form of coercion. (Eyal & Luman, no year.)

When people's jobs, promotions, and raises are based on a game, the temptation to cheat or take advantage of loopholes in the system can be hard to resist. Even worse, efforts to increase internal competition could provoke employees to actively sabotage each other or make unethical choices rather than work together for the good of the company as they attempt to hit specific goals. (Eyal & Luman, no year.)

Workers may get tired of badges, leaderboards, and challenges designed to keep them motivated in jobs that they otherwise wouldn't want to do. Enterprise gamification might offer short-term productivity gains rather than long-term benefits. (Eyal & Luman, no year.)

Sources

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