

## Don't Mention Gamification

I was challenged recently to talk about gamification without mentioning games or gamification! The reason is that many people have not got time to dive too deep into the meanings and on its own, gamification as a word is confusing, to say the least. So, I took to YouTube and had a go!

My thoughts revolved around two core concepts; Focused Feedback and Attainable, Maintainable Goals.

## Focused Feedback

Feedback is essential for [engagement](#) in anything we do, whether it is related to our job, social life or hobbies. Without feedback, we don't know where we, how we are doing or where we are going. Not having feedback is like driving without seeing the road or a map!

Good feedback focuses specifically on the needs of the user and is [Relevant, In-Time and Meaningful](#). I have explained this in previous posts, but the core is that feedback does not need to be immediate, but does need to provide value to the user at a time that lets the user act on it. Feedback comes in many shapes and sizes, from physical rewards to verbal pats on the back to progress bars. However, the main *types* to consider are notification of success, failure and general progress.

The crux is, you are keeping the user informed to enable them to take responsibility for what they do next and how they do it.

## Attainable, Maintainable Goals

Goals are hugely important to us as we try to achieve the things we want to achieve, but it is important to understand how to set them! There are many methods out there, I particularly like [SMART goals](#). However, a simple way to look at your goals are "Are they attainable and are they maintainable?"

### **Attainable**

If your goal is too big or set too far into the future, it can be very hard to prioritise it. Years ago, I discovered a concept called Construal Level Theory. It basically states that the further

away an event is, the harder it is for us to give it a priority because it is abstract, whereas close up events are more concrete.

So, when creating goals you should have in mind the overall goal, but also smaller more attainable goals. If you have a year long plan, break it down into months, weeks and days.

## **Maintainable**

You need to balance how small the goals are between your ability to keep achieving / maintaining them and how practical they are as a way to achieve the overall goal. If you make them too small, it becomes hard to do enough of them to achieve the main goal. Too big, and they become unattainable again. This leads to becoming demoralised.

A good example is my wife. She is currently writing a book and set herself a daily word count she had to achieve, to get to her end of year goal. However, life got in the way, as it does, and the goals become unmaintainable and unattainable! She got very demoralised always falling short of each daily or monthly goals. Every day she was unable to write, the end goal got exponentially further away. Her solution, lower the daily word count a bit, without significantly changing the potential delivery date of the end goal. This left her with a much more attainable set of goals, that she could not only

Her solution, lower the daily word count a bit, without significantly changing the potential delivery date of the end goal. This left her with a much more attainable set of goals, that she could not only achieve but overachieve on from time to time. You can see below her 2016 word count vs 2017. Up until February 2017, the daily count was 250 words. In march, she changed it to 150!

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
1																	
2		Target	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December		Finish Point	3252
3																Starting Point	3138
4		1	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			134
16		14	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
17		15	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
18		16	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
19		17	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
20		18	150	0	2811	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
21		19	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
22		20	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
23		21	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
24		22	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
25		23	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
26		24	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
27		25	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
28		26	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
29		27	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
30		28	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
31		29	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
32		30	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
33		31	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
34																Near to Date	
35		<b>Total</b>	4650	0	2811	8344	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			11155
36																	
37		<b>Monthly Target</b>	4850	4200	4850	4300	4850	4950	4850	4850	4850	4850	4000	4850			55000

## 2017 Word Count Targets

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	Monthly Writing Target vs Actual												Finish Point
2	Target	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December			Starting Point
3	1	250		858	106	0	530	0	0	1126	0		
4	2	250		0	0	0	0	249	0	0	0		
21	19	250		1538	171	675	0	0	0	0	0		
22	20	250		0	1580	0	427	1146	0	0	0		
23	21	250		539	1184	0	154	0	0	0	0		
24	22	250		0	256	978	260	90	0	403	0		
25	23	250	216	314	0	591	679	1445	0	0	377		
26	24	250	0	1030	313	193	0	383	0	0	0		
27	25	250	702	942	0	0	415	0	0	0	0		
28	26	250	0	0	0	0	706	0	0	0	0		
29	27	250	0	1053	700	634	831	0	0	0	0		
30	28	250	0	174	0	0	0	306	0	0	0		
31	29	250	2191	192	70	0	0	144	0	0	522		
32	30	250	0	223	0	0	0	0	0	0	149		
33	31	250		220		1011	0		0				
34													Year To Date
35	Total	7750	3109	14153	11656	10167	5231	6802	1236	5821	1466		59641
36													
37	Monthly Target		2250	7750	7750	7750	7750	7750	7750	7750	7750		64250
38													
39	Over/Under		859	6403	3906	2417	-2519	-948	-6514	-1929	-6284		-4609

## 2016 Word Count Targets

The end result is a much happier and more motivated writer!

## Adding them Together

When you mix feedback into your goal strategy, you suddenly have a very powerful motivational tool. You can set feedback for each stage of each goal, positive notes to say well done for hitting a weekly goal, gentle chastisements for missing them. Bigger rewards (like a team meal) for hitting more significant milestones. Daily updates on a progress chart to show you and your team where you are compared to where you need to be.

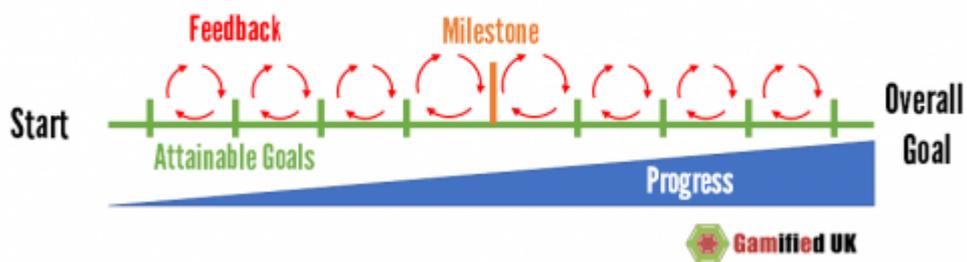
## Conclusion

Ok, so now I will use the word gamification again...

Gamification purists will not like this as it does not contain concepts such as narrative, competition, collaboration etc. However, for the Non-Gamification Muggles out there, this should be a clear starting point to understanding why we get so excited about the potential for gamification. Simple changes can have a massive impact on [motivation](#), engagement and productivity!

I'll leave you with a summarising model - I like models...

### Focused Feedback and Attainable, Maintainable Goals



Focused Feedback and Goals

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Also published on [Medium](#).

Please wait...