



Creating a Balanced System for All User HEXAD Types: An Evolving Perspective

Description

Designing a system that works for everyone isn't a simple task. It's more like trying to build a jigsaw puzzle while the pieces keep changing shape. But that's exactly what makes it interesting, isn't it? The **Hexad Framework** gives us a good start by identifying six key user types—**Players**, **Achievers**, **Socialisers**, **Free Spirits**, **Philanthropists**, and **Disruptors**. Each has its quirks and motivations, but these aren't fixed in stone. People grow, and their motivations evolve.

This isn't about creating a system that forces users into static categories. It's about recognising that motivations shift over time and building something that adapts and supports that evolution.

Understanding the Pathways

Every user starts with a dominant motivation. It's what draws them into the system in the first place. But that's just the beginning. Over time, users move through phases, driven by new needs, goals, or just curiosity.

1. **Players** might start with extrinsic rewards like badges and points but often grow into **Achievers**, **Philanthropists**, or even **Disruptors**, looking for mastery, connection, or impact.
 2. **Achievers** begin with a focus on personal success but may shift toward helping others (**Philanthropy**), building communities (**Socialising**), or challenging the status quo (**Disruptors**).
 3. **Socialisers** often deepen their relationships and become **Philanthropists** or seek creative independence as **Free Spirits**, occasionally questioning norms as **Disruptors**.
 4. **Free Spirits** start with autonomy but often find joy in mastery, collaboration, or even reshaping the system.
 5. **Philanthropists** focus on helping others but may develop personal goals or challenge inefficiencies, transforming into **Achievers** or **Disruptors**.
 6. **Disruptors** start by breaking things (hopefully for good reasons) but may shift to collaboration, creativity, or mastery.
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The key takeaway? People don't stay where they start, so neither should your system.

Designing for Balance and Evolution

Here's how to create a system that doesn't just engage users but grows with them.

1. Start With Phase-Based Engagement

Design for the now but plan for the future. Activities should cater to users' initial motivations while introducing opportunities for evolution:

- A **Player** might start with rewards but eventually encounter mastery challenges (**Achievers**) or collaborative opportunities (**Socialisers**).
- **Free Spirits** could have the freedom to explore but later unlock pathways for deeper engagement, like crafting or mentoring.

2. Layered Mechanics

Intrinsic motivators—**Relatedness, Autonomy, Mastery, and Purpose** (RAMP)—should form the backbone of your system. Add extrinsic rewards thoughtfully, as bait for **Players**, but always guide them toward more meaningful engagement.

3. Balance the Tensions

The Hexad isn't just six user types sitting politely in their corners. It's a dynamic mix of motivations, overlaps, and occasional collisions:

- **Philanthropists** and **Disruptors** can be at odds. The former nurture, the latter break. Channel **Disruptors'** energy into improving the system rather than tearing it down.
- **Achievers** might get frustrated with the chatty **Socialisers**, while **Socialisers** find **Achievers'** single-mindedness boring. Give each their own space to shine.
- **Players** love structured autonomy (rules and rewards), while **Free Spirits** loathe it. Offer guided pathways for **Players** and open-ended freedom for **Free Spirits**.

4. Support the Transitions

Transitions don't just happen. Your system needs to facilitate them:

- Include **Challenges** for **Achievers** and **Disruptors**.
- Add **Collaborative tools** for **Socialisers** and **Philanthropists**.
- Provide **Creative freedom** for **Free Spirits** to explore new roles.

5. Diverse Opportunities

Each type and phase should find meaningful opportunities:

- **Mentorship programs** for Achievers and Philanthropists to guide others.
- **Creative toolkits** for Free Spirits and Disruptors to innovate.
- **Leaderboards** that keep Players happy while nudging them toward mastery.

6. Iterate. Iterate Again.

Feedback loops aren't just for the users; they're for you. Track user behaviour, listen to their feedback, and tweak the system. Design isn't static—your system shouldn't be either.

A Final Note on Balance

Balance isn't about pleasing everyone all the time. It's about creating a system where each user type can thrive without stepping on each other's toes. By understanding pathways and managing tensions, you're not just building a system that works today—you're creating one that evolves alongside your users.

Motivation is fluid. Build for the present, but design for the journey. That's where the real magic happens.

Appendix: User Evolution Pathways in the Hexad Framework

This appendix maps the evolution pathways of each user type in the Gamification Hexad Framework. It provides a comprehensive view of how users' motivations evolve across three distinct phases, allowing for the design of systems that adapt and grow with users.

Player Evolution Pathways

1. **Player ? Achiever ? Philanthropist**
 - **Phase 1 (Player):** Engages with extrinsic rewards such as points and badges.
 - **Phase 2 (Achiever):** Focuses on mastery through challenges and personal goals.
 - **Phase 3 (Philanthropist):** Contributes to the community by mentoring and helping others.
2. **Player ? Socialiser ? Philanthropist**
 - **Phase 1 (Player):** Drawn by incentives and rewards.
 - **Phase 2 (Socialiser):** Participates in teamwork and collaboration.
 - **Phase 3 (Philanthropist):** Develops a drive to support and uplift others.
3. **Player ? Free Spirit ? Disruptor**
 - **Phase 1 (Player):** Motivated by rewards to begin participation.
 - **Phase 2 (Free Spirit):** Seeks autonomy and exploration.
 - **Phase 3 (Disruptor):** Challenges norms to innovate or improve the system.
4. **Player ? Achiever ? Disruptor**
 - **Phase 1 (Player):** Starts with extrinsic incentives.

- **Phase 2 (Achiever):** Pursues mastery through skill-building.
 - **Phase 3 (Disruptor):** Critiques and modifies inefficiencies within the system.
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Achiever Evolution Pathways

1. Achiever ? Philanthropist ? Socialiser

- **Phase 1 (Achiever):** Pursues personal mastery and goals.
- **Phase 2 (Philanthropist):** Begins helping and mentoring others.
- **Phase 3 (Socialiser):** Builds community through collaboration.

2. Achiever ? Disruptor ? Free Spirit

- **Phase 1 (Achiever):** Motivated by skill mastery.
- **Phase 2 (Disruptor):** Seeks to address and reform inefficiencies.
- **Phase 3 (Free Spirit):** Explores autonomy and creative freedom.

3. Achiever ? Free Spirit ? Disruptor

- **Phase 1 (Achiever):** Focuses on goal-oriented mastery.
- **Phase 2 (Free Spirit):** Enjoys exploration and autonomy.
- **Phase 3 (Disruptor):** Seeks to challenge and reshape systems.

4. Achiever ? Player ? Socialiser

- **Phase 1 (Achiever):** Engages with mastery-driven tasks.
 - **Phase 2 (Player):** Re-engages with extrinsic rewards.
 - **Phase 3 (Socialiser):** Embraces social collaboration and teamwork.
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Socialiser Evolution Pathways

1. Socialiser ? Philanthropist ? Achiever

- **Phase 1 (Socialiser):** Focused on connections and collaboration.
- **Phase 2 (Philanthropist):** Transitions to mentoring and helping others.
- **Phase 3 (Achiever):** Pursues personal mastery and goal achievement.

2. Socialiser ? Free Spirit ? Disruptor

- **Phase 1 (Socialiser):** Engages socially with others.
- **Phase 2 (Free Spirit):** Finds joy in autonomy and exploration.
- **Phase 3 (Disruptor):** Challenges norms and seeks systemic change.

3. Socialiser ? Achiever ? Player

- **Phase 1 (Socialiser):** Prioritises social interaction.
 - **Phase 2 (Achiever):** Focuses on personal goals and mastery.
 - **Phase 3 (Player):** Shifts to enjoying extrinsic rewards.
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Free Spirit Evolution Pathways

1. Free Spirit ? Socialiser ? Philanthropist

- **Phase 1 (Free Spirit):** Motivated by autonomy and creativity.
 - **Phase 2 (Socialiser):** Builds relationships through shared discovery.
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- **Phase 3 (Philanthropist):** Focuses on helping others.
2. **Free Spirit ? Achiever ? Disruptor**
 - **Phase 1 (Free Spirit):** Begins with autonomy and exploration.
 - **Phase 2 (Achiever):** Shifts toward mastery and goal achievement.
 - **Phase 3 (Disruptor):** Evolves into challenging norms and driving innovation.
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Philanthropist Evolution Pathways

1. **Philanthropist ? Socialiser ? Achiever**
 - **Phase 1 (Philanthropist):** Driven by helping others and altruism.
 - **Phase 2 (Socialiser):** Builds a community around altruistic goals.
 - **Phase 3 (Achiever):** Develops personal goals and mastery.
 2. **Philanthropist ? Free Spirit ? Disruptor**
 - **Phase 1 (Philanthropist):** Focuses on altruistic actions.
 - **Phase 2 (Free Spirit):** Seeks autonomy and creative exploration.
 - **Phase 3 (Disruptor):** Evolves into questioning or reforming the system.
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Disruptor Evolution Pathways

1. **Disruptor ? Free Spirit ? Achiever**
 - **Phase 1 (Disruptor):** Begins by questioning and challenging systems.
 - **Phase 2 (Free Spirit):** Seeks autonomy and personal exploration.
 - **Phase 3 (Achiever):** Refocuses on mastery and personal goals.
2. **Disruptor ? Socialiser ? Philanthropist**
 - **Phase 1 (Disruptor):** Pushes boundaries and seeks innovation.
 - **Phase 2 (Socialiser):** Engages collaboratively with others.
 - **Phase 3 (Philanthropist):** Shifts to mentoring and community building.

Category

1. Gamification

Tags

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2. motivation
3. user types

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