I have spoken a great deal about looking carefully at the needs of a project and exploring what the real issue is that you are trying to solve. The aim has been to get you to consider the Why of a solution more than that What or the How!

I wanted to give you one more way to consider this question, I just can't stress how important it is for the gamification industry as a whole for us to get better at answering it!

When you are doing your research, you will discover and analyze the needs of the client, and you will discover and analyze the needs of the users. During this process, you will be looking to understand what each side of the solution is looking for.

## Let's Get Digging

For example, look at a training program in a large corporate environment. What are the clients needs and motives?

At a superficial level, they may just want something shiny, that will make people go "Ooo and Ahhh"

But if you keep digging you may discover more. Imagine each bullet below represents the answers for each round of investigation.

1. We want a fun experience for our end users
2. We really want them to enjoy doing what is sadly mandatory training
3. Currently, no one is doing it, and we think that is because it is boring
4. We will fail an important inspection if we don't get more people doing it
5. We can't afford to do face to face training.

As you go deeper, you may start to find that really the desire to create an engaging online version of training is to save money and pass inspections. However, they need people to engage so want o use gamification as a hook. There is nothing wrong with that, but it helps to understand the true underlying motives.

Take FitBit for example. On the face of it, it looks like an altruistic device that helps you get fit… However,r if you really look at it, it is a business that needs to make money. If they truly wanted to change your behaviour, after a few months you would not need to use the wrist band. However, the number of people who say "Damn, I didn't charge my FitBit so all that walking I did today was pointless" is staggering. The FitBit is a wonderful example of OverJustification effect. The step counter is more important than the exercises. Of course,

they don't want to change that as if the intervention they created worked fully, you would never need to buy another FitBit! But that is ok, they need to pay their bills just like all of us!

However, back to our example of a training program. we now understand more about the true needs and motives of the company, what about the needs of the user. This time we need to ask them why they are not currently doing the training.

1. I didn't know it existed
2. It is really dull
3. I don't have time
4. I didn't know it was relevant to me
5. I don't like online training, I would rather do face to face

All of these are answers I have heard and are all important to understand. The most important one is often the statement about Face To Face training. [Studies have shown](#) that the majority of employees prefer face to face training for various reasons. However, we know that budget will not allow for this. There are a couple of reasons mentioned that are communication driven. "Didn't know it existed or was relevant" are both issues that a company needs to handle via better communication with employees.

Do we as gamification designers are left with two areas we can help with in this example. It is dull and I don't have time.

## User Research

This is where we need to start real user research. As we are considering gamification, it is good to find out what sort of games or activities the users enjoy. This can help to build a picture around themes and ideas that may work in the final solution. If the majority seem to like Candy Crush style games, creating a solution with deep RPG mechanics may not work well!

Find out what their experience of online training has been up until this point and what they liked and disliked. Find out what their sense of humor is, what their company culture feels like from the shop floor.

To create a good experience for them, you have understood them.

You also need to speak with people involved in designing and delivering existing training, to

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understand from them what they do and how they do it. What has worked, what has failed, Howe they think. Afterall, you will be working with them to create the solution!

You have to really get under the skin of the people, walk in their shoes a little. If you don't do this, you won't be able to create a solution that fits their needs and their desires.

## Compromise

Once you have a deep understanding of the user needs and the client needs, you need to compromise. You have to find that "sweet spot" between them both. You are not going to be able to completely satisfy every need from everyone, or at least very rarely. So you have to find a point where the client is getting something they are happy with, but the user gets something that you know will actually work. Even if the true goal of a project is to save money, the solution still needs to leave the end user feeling that they have gained something from using it. If they don't it just won't work. This is when users are left with a very nasty taste in their mouths over the whole affair.

## The Solution Sweet Spot

Client Needs

Solution

User Needs
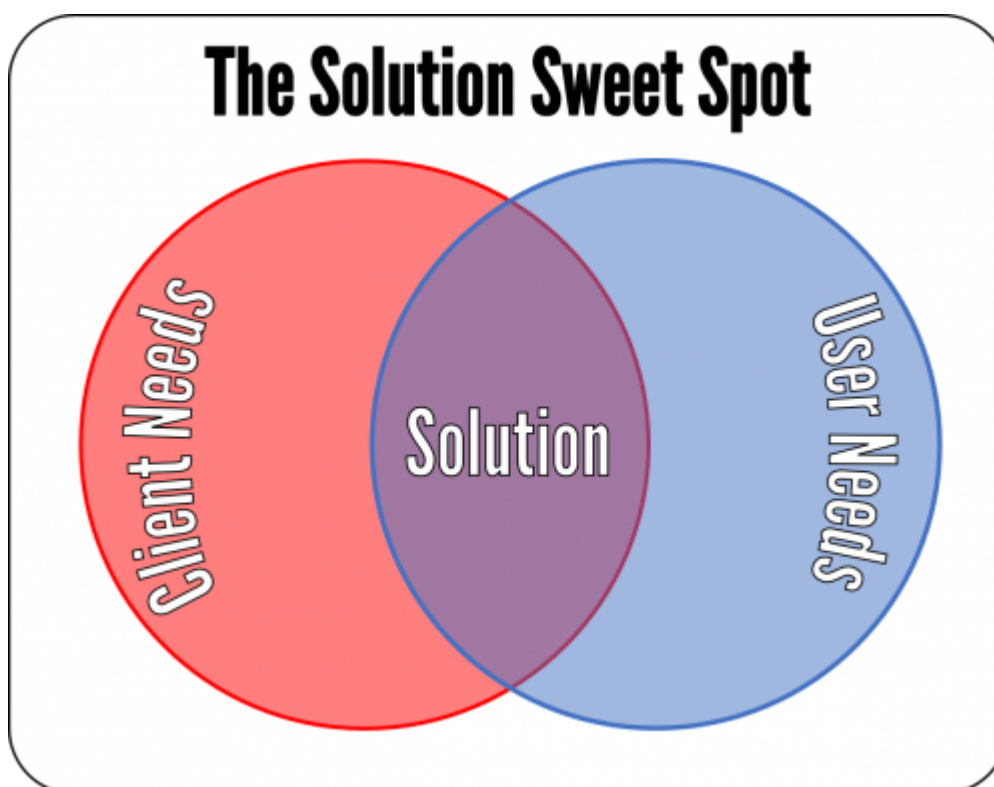
Your solution has to achieve a planned goal that both feel is mutually beneficial!