



Target Gamification – My Top 9 Gamification Elements

Description

There are some questions I am asked more than others. Today I want to give a slightly longer answer to one of them than usual! The question? “What is your favourite gamification element?”

My usual answer fluctuates between [feedback](#) (which covers anything from verbal to full online economies) or [progress](#), which I have written about in the past. Recently though I realised that this was just not enough of an answer anymore.

The truth is, I have no one favourite element, every solution requires something a little bit different. However, there is a sort of process that I go through when designing a solution or strategy. It starts with my core or target (see – it ties in with the title!!). Then I have a few things that help to support that core, then finally something that embraces it all. Let’s start with an image.



Target Gamification

The Target

At the centre of all my solutions, I try to make sure there are three things.

1. Some form of feedback (often linked to progress)
2. A way to measure and display progress
3. A challenge

When linked with a system to measure and display progress, feedback becomes core to any gamified system. Without it, how does anyone know what is going on?? I remember talking to a dev team who were building a gamified platform. They couldn't understand how a leaderboard, points, badges and a progress bar were "fun". I explained that what they were building was not meant to be fun, it was the foundation for everything else that would be created going forward.

I also include challenge at this stage. [Roman Rackwitz](#) once said, “if I ain’t learning, it ain’t fun.” I couldn’t agree more. For me, the core of learning is having a challenge to overcome. It may be “reduce waste” or “learn about the bribery code”, but it is still a challenge and I still have to learn something to be able to complete it – or at least I should have too. After all, if I don’t have to learn anything, why should I spend time doing it – I already know it!

(User Types: Player, Achiever)

Competition and Collaboration

Once the core is defined and solid, I look to integrating elements of competition and collaboration. I have seen good results from team-based competition between departments for instance. This creates a nice balance of collaboration (the teammates work together to succeed) and a little bit of well-meaning competition. I to never, ever, set individuals against each other – this can be so detrimental to the system and the company!

Another key to the this is to make sure that even though there is some level of competition when the event is over, anything developed in the teams is shared with everyone. This way you still break down any potential silos that the competition may have created.

(User Types: Player, Socialiser, Achiever, Philanthropist)

Rewards and Exploration

Used responsibly, virtual and physical rewards can help to motivate certain behaviours, especially early on in the onboarding phase. As I have said hundreds of times before, rewards need to be meaningful! If a user does not feel they have worked to earn them, they will have no meaning to them at all.

Exploration is something that I try to include for those less interested in the rewards a system can give them, but rather the surprises or freedom it can offer them. Rather than linear tracks, offer branching choices. Include little easter eggs for the adventurous players and hidden bonuses.

(User Types: Player, Free Spirit, Achiever)

Narrative and Theme

Once all the other layers are handled, I like to try and wrap it all up in some form of theme and if possible a narrative or story. Creating a theme and a narrative can be tough, as it is easy to create something that is patronising or childish. You have to work with the client to build something that is complementary to their culture. I find it just holds all the other layers together nicely and elevates a simple system into something much more engaging.

Conclusion

The image I have used is not meant to show a priority or some sort of order to how you use the elements or concepts. It is more about building layers that support the core of the system, all of which complement each other.

I hope some of you find that useful, writing it down has certainly helped me a little!

Category

1. Gamification

Tags

1. autonomy
2. collaboration
3. competition
4. Gamification
5. progress
6. rewards

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