

Bribes, Incentives, Bonuses, Awards and Rewards in Gamification

Description

Recently there has been some conversation in the Gamification Hub and other areas about the difference between things like bribes, incentives and so on.

It is actually an interesting and very relevant question in gamification circles as they all get mentioned from time to time, so I thought I would tackle it a little here.

First, let's look at the standard definitions (from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/>).

- **Bribe:**
 - *Dishonestly persuade (someone) to act in one's favour by a gift of money or other inducement.*
- **Incentive:**
 - *A thing that motivates or encourages someone to do something*
 - *A payment or concession to stimulate greater output or investment.*
- **Bonus:**
 - *A sum of money added to a person's wages as a reward for good performance.*
- **Award:**
 - *Give or order the giving of (something) as an official payment, compensation, or prize to (someone).*
- **Reward:**
 - *A thing given in recognition of service, effort, or achievement*

The first thing that strikes me is how similar *bribe* and *incentive* are in meaning. The only real difference is the intent of the person who is offering up the "something" to persuade the receiver to do an activity.

A *bonus* is pretty clear cut. It is given as a reward for good performance. There is no intent attached to that other than "hit your target, get more". How this is used or interpreted by the giver and receiver is probably a longest conversation!

Awards and *rewards* are interesting to me here though. On the face of it they seem very similar.

However if you look at the wording, awards are given by those who have some form of official capacity. If you follow that line of thought, they are also something that would be given after the event and would not always be expect. You would be *awarded* the Medal of Valour, not rewarded.

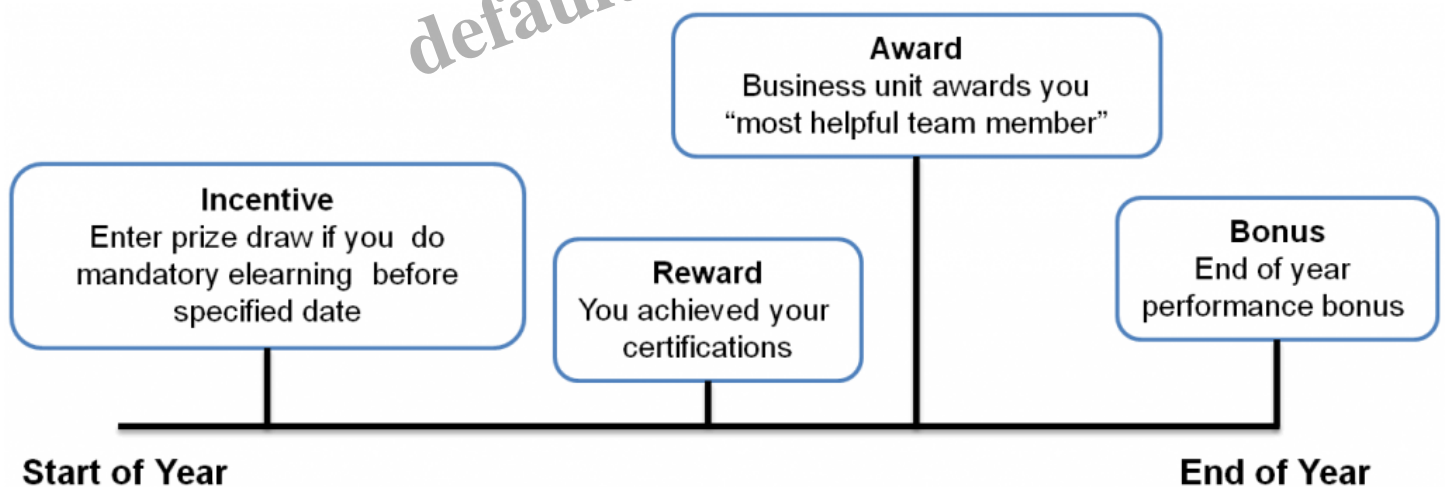
Rewards are things that you work towards. It is likely that you know they are available and how to (for the most part) get them. You would get a reward for achieving 100% attendance at school for instance.

Rewards and Incentives are also linked here. If you know there is a reward for 100% attendance, it is an incentive to achieve 100% attendance. The same could be said for bonuses. If you know there is a bonus, then it becomes an incentive.

If we look at it from a gamification perspective, we are interested in incentives, rewards, awards and possibly bonuses.

- **Incentives** are there to encourage behaviours that are deemed favourable.
- **Rewards** can be both an incentive and recognition of progress or achievement during the users journey
- **Awards** are given at the end of the journey or at key points during the journey to recognise significant achievements
- **Bonuses** are both incentives and rewards that are dependant on achievement and displaying preferred behaviours over a set period of time. They are definitely not guaranteed.

In picture format, this might look a bit like this:



Category

1. Gamification

Tags

1. award
2. bonus
3. bribe
4. incentives

5. reward

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