



Extreme Competition

Peter Fingar
Executive Partner
Greystone Group

pfingar@acm.org

Latest book:
Business Process Management: the
Next Wave: Harnessing Complexity
with Intelligent Agents
Meghan-Kiffer Press
<http://www.mkpress.com/aoBPM>

Playing the BPM Gamification Game



Oh my! Here we go again.





IAN BOGOST - VIDEOGAME THEORY, CRITIC
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BLOG

GAMIFICATION IS BULLSHIT
 My position statement at the Wharton Gamification Symposium

“In his short treatise [On Bullshit](#), the moral philosopher Harry Frankfurt gives us a useful theory of bullshit. We normally think of bullshit as a synonym—albeit a somewhat vulgar one—for lies or deceit. But Frankfurt argues that bullshit has nothing to do with truth.

“Rather, bullshit is used to conceal, to impress or to coerce. Unlike liars, bullshitters have no use for the truth. All that matters to them is hiding their

ignorance or bringing about their own benefit.

“Gamification is bullshit.

“I’m not being flip or glib or provocative. I’m speaking philosophically.

“More specifically, gamification is marketing bullshit, invented by consultants as a means to capture the wild, coveted beast that is videogames and to domesticate it for use in the grey, hopeless wasteland of big business, where bullshit already reigns anyway.

“Bullshitters are many things, but they are not stupid. The rhetorical power of the word “gamification” is enormous, and it does precisely what the bullshitters want: it takes games—a mysterious, magical, powerful medium that has captured the attention of millions of people—and it makes them accessible in the context of contemporary business.

“Gamification is reassuring. It gives Vice Presidents and Brand Managers comfort: they’re doing everything right, and they can do even better by adding “a games strategy” to their existing products, slathering on “gaminess” like aioli on ciabatta at the consultant’s indulgent sales lunch.

“Gamification is easy. It offers simple, repeatable approaches in which benefit, honor, and aesthetics are less important than facility. For the consultants and the startups, that means selling the same bullshit in book, workshop, platform, or API form over and over again, at limited incremental cost. It ticks a box. Social media strategy? Check. Games strategy? Check.”¹

Just an eye-blink ago we were introduced to Gartner’s Nexus of Forces (Social, Mobile, Analytics, Big Data and Cloud) and the impact of such on BPM. But wait. Now along comes another biggie *hype-ification*, “gamification!” Will BPM ever be the same?

According to a recent Gartner Research Report it is estimated that by 2015, more than 50 percent of organizations that manage innovation processes will gamify those processes. By 2014, Gartner predicts that over 70 percent of Global 2000 organizations will have at least one “gamified” application, and that “gamification is positioned to become a significant trend in the next five years.” M2 Research reports that gamification will be a \$2.8B industry by 2016.

Gartner’s Brian Burke wrote, “Gamification is near the peak of Gartner Hype Cycles and like most new trends and technologies, the initial hype surrounding the trend creates unrealistic expectations for success and many poor implementations follow. Like any new trend, gamification will move through the hype cycle from the peak of inflated expectations into the trough of disillusionment.”²

First, let’s do a quick take on this buzzword/fad. In 2010 a Google search for the term “gamification” turned up 500 hits. Today it’s 4,790,000! And, like the term BPM, most people don’t know what it means or claim their own definitions as they “make stuff up.”

Let’s turn to IBM’s Phaedra Boinodiris, author of the forthcoming book, [Serious Games for Business: Play to Win](#):

“A battle is waging between serious games true-believers and a concept known as Gamification. Gamification is when one uses game design techniques in something that is otherwise not a game in order to drive user behavior. There are many game design techniques that are used by game designers that tap into innate desires of people. According to Stanford University, these innate desires include Reward, Status, Achievement, Self-Expression, Competition and Altruism.

Websites and other applications have begun to integrate point systems in any number of activities in order to drive loyalty. Unfortunately for most, their efforts usually stop there.”

In short, it's really all about engagement, *honest-to-goodness* engagement.

According to award winning CIO, Michael Hugos, in his book, *Enterprise Games*, “Gamification can be understood in terms of the four defining traits of a game (goals, rules, feedback systems, and voluntary participation). The goal is typically to get people interested and engaged with a company product or promotional campaign. The rules are typically designed to reward people the more they participate, as defined by Web site visits, comments, or purchases of products. Feedback systems are where current gamification applications focus most of their attention. Through the use of techniques such as points, leaderboards, badges, and levels, gamification creates a feedback system that responds to peoples' actions and encourages them to further actions. When people perform a desired action, they are awarded points or badges. These rewards are designed to encourage more activity. Leaderboards are used to highlight people with the most points and badges and to let them see how they compare with others. This is designed to bring out peoples' competitive instincts and keep them involved. And as people acquire points and badges, they are promoted to higher and higher levels. This is designed to appeal to peoples' desire to gain prestige.”

In his book *Drive*, Dan Pink dissects scientific studies that show how monetary incentives will often work contrary to how businesses want them to. When a task involves anything beyond purely mechanical skill, incentivizing higher performance actually produces worse results.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6XAPnuFjJc>

Pink argues that human motivation is largely *intrinsic*, and argues against old models of motivation driven by rewards and fear of punishment, dominated by *extrinsic* factors such as money. When it comes to motivation, there's a gap between what science knows and what business does. Our current business operating system—which is built around external, carrot-and-stick motivators—doesn't work and often does harm. We need an upgrade. And the science shows the way. This new approach has three essential elements: 1. Autonomy -- the desire to direct our own lives. 2. Mastery -- the urge to get better and better at something that matters. 3. Purpose -- the yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves. *Passion*, anyone?

Pink calls this technique "Motivation 2.0" (it replaced "Motivation 1.0," the ancient human drive to merely survive). Motivation 2.0 is based on two ideas: Rewarding an activity will get you more of it, and punishing an activity will get you less of it. Think of these motivators as "if-thens" -- if you make more widgets and make them faster, then you'll get a raise. Motivation 2.0 centers on what Pink calls "Type X" behavior, where people are incentivized mostly by external rewards. But Pink maintains that Motivation 2.0 often not only isn't effective in today's working world, it can lead to bad business behavior or worse. It's time for a "full-scale upgrade" to Motivation 3.0: *intrinsic* rewards that play to the inherent satisfaction of the activity.

Go a little deeper into the psychology with Drs. Tom Chatfield and Edward Castronova:



7 Ways Games Engage the Brain <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=404ESZ8pmkg>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KyamsZXXF2w>

Knowledge work is inherently "lumpy," as Salesforce.com Chief Scientist JP Rangaswami described it in a session at ReadWriteWeb's 2Way Summit. In other words, rather than being steady and consistent as it was on assembly lines, modern work has peaks and valleys of intensity and workers are more easily able to shift gears between tasks. All too often, the gaps are filled with what Rangaswami called "this 20th century mechanism called meetings." Instead, they could be filled in part by the conventions borrowed from games. While badges and leaderboards can be effective tools in the modern workplace, Rangaswami warned against "putting the lipstick of gamification on the pig of work." That is, if the work is not inherently [intrinsically] rewarding, you're not going to be able to fix that by adding a layer of game mechanics on top of it.ⁱⁱⁱ

Serious Games for Business

What's all this got to do with BPM? Simply put, accelerated learning and process improvement and innovation. Just check out the following examples from the new book, [Business Process Management: The Next Wave](#):

Gamification: The ultimate in interactive and dynamic business direction would be combining human resources, machine resources, multiple roles, multiple organizational units, and multiple partners in social interactions in a massively multiple online (MMO) gaming fashion to reach desired outcomes in either a "training simulator" mode or in an actionable real-time mode. Watch the following examples:





bit.ly/12M5ptm

INNOV8 2.0 BPM Gameplay: Well over 1,000 schools worldwide are using *INNOV8* to teach the basics of BPM.



bit.ly/1bamZzE

SCM Globe: Supply Chain Simulation and Design

And don't forget the most important business process of all, the *innovation process* (see [Business Innovation in the Cloud](#)), "innovate or die." For example, check out the crowdsourcing innovation game site at *Scientific American's* Open Innovation Pavilion: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/openinnovation> --Solve Challenges and Get Rewarded.

Don't put gamification lipstick on BPM.
 Don't conflate BPM and video games.
 Combine the most relevant constructs of both
 ... and let the BPM games begin.

And don't stop here. Google "BPM"+"gamification" and let the BPTrends discussion know what You find most relevant among the 2,460,000. Your reward will be *intrinsic*.

ⁱ http://www.bogost.com/blog/gamification_is_bullshit.shtml

ⁱⁱ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/gartnergroup/2013/01/21/the-gamification-of-business/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://readwrite.com/2011/06/17/gamification-future-of-work-salesforce-rangswami#awesm=~oicrDHQEY5GZtJ>

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