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"In every job that must be done, there is an element of fun!" – Mary Poppins

With the Millennial Generation entering the corporate world, traditional models of engaging them no longer work. Neither a higher salary nor bonus are sufficient. This generation is not "coin–operated." Instead, Millennials are looking for meaning in their work. They want to learn, get feedback, and socialize as well as have fun with their co–workers. Video games are doing exactly that and if companies are not able to offer such experiences, they won't be able to hire and engage new generations.

Key words: gamification (*grywalizacja/gamifikacja*), Millennials (*pokolenie Milenium*), employee happiness (*pracownicze szczęście*), competency score (*poziom kompetencji*)

Mary Poppins knew that there is more to a job than just boredom and misery. While work is often repetitive, so are many tasks that players have to perform in games. Just think of *Angry Birds*. What else other than repeating the same exercise—sliding a finger from right to left on the screen—does this game ask us to do? But despite this repetition, the game is fun. Can we make work more game–like and add more fun?

Gamification—the use of game design elements in a non–game context—aims at doing just this. Gamification is not about making games, however. It is about changing behaviors, engaging people, creating habits, or solving problems in a gameful way. Videogames are extremely good at accomplishing this.

Gamification uses experiences taken from videogames by applying behavioral sciences and motivation theories and applies them to work. This way work becomes less boring as well as more motivating and interesting. Engaging employees through gamification is not just some new buzz, but crucial in lifting companies to successive levels of productivity as well as customer and employee satisfaction.

Employee engagement has been monitored by the Gallup Institute for several decades in dozens of countries by periodically asking hundreds of thousands of employees a couple of questions about their engagement levels. The results are pretty sobering. Fifty–two percent of U.S. employees are disengaged, 18 percent actively disengaged, while only 30 percent are engaged. For Poland the figures are even worse. Only 17 percent of all employees are engaged, 68 percent not engaged, and a mere 15 percent actively disengaged.[1]

Such levels of disengagement cost us all a lot of money. Gallup estimates that several hundred billions of dollars are lost every year due to low employee engagement. We all suffer from this when we encounter disengaged call center agents or sales people.

Recent years have seen a wave of examples in which companies have used gamification to increase engagement levels. Human Resources are at the forefront of applying gamification to work. From recruiting, onboarding, career development, performance measurement, and training, HR teams help motivate employees and managers during the whole lifecycle and thus make them happier.

Happy employees are twice as productive, stay five times longer in their jobs, are six times more energized, and take ten times less sick leave. Happier workers also help their colleagues 33 percent more than their least happy colleagues. They raise issues that affect performance 46 percent more often, they achieve their goals 31 percent more often, and are 36 percent more motivated.[2]

Another reason to consider gamification is something that HR practitioners may have been already grappling with—the millennial generation is entering the workforce in large numbers. Videogames are a part of their lives. By the time they enter their twenties, they have played 10,000+ hours of videogames. This not only means they are experts, but they are also familiar with game design elements and game language. Moreover, they expect the experience that games provide. This means immediate feedback, the opportunity to learn, and a safe way to take risks and fail. These expectations can create challenges for their managers, who may label millennials as high maintenance employees. But if you cannot give them this experience, then they will leave. Worse, you may not even get millennials into your workforce, because an engaging experience starts with the recruitment process.

How are companies using gamification? Take Formaposte, the French postal service, as an example. Formaposte uses the *Jeu Facteur Academy* game[3] to let players

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1   Map: The Sad State of Global Workplace Engagement, https://hbr.org/2013/10/map-the-sad-state-of-global-workplace-engagement/.
2   Ways to Be Happy and Productive at Work, http://blogs.wsj.com/source/2012/11/25/five-ways-to-be-happy-and-productive-at-work/?mod=e2tw/.
3   http://formaposte-iledefrance.fr/jeu-facteur-academy/.

experience a week in the life of a new postal carrier. Starting with getting up in the morning and getting ready for the day, sitting in the classroom and learning the basics about postal work, and finally doing some postal work, the game covers all aspects that a new recruit can expect. There is also a moral element in the game. It nudges the candidate to make the right selections, including taking a shower and brushing his or her teeth before going to work as well as being polite to superiors and customers.

The motivation behind Formaposte using such a game as a recruitment tool was the high dropout rate for new hirees. A quarter of the total number dropped out after the trial period. Through this game the company hoped to manage the expectations of candidates and instead of having them go through costly training programs, let them experience the routine through the game and only get the motivated candidates to apply. The results met their expectations: the number of dropouts fell from 25 percent down to 8 percent. Moreover, the candidates were better informed and had better questions for their trainers.

HCL, the global IT service company,[4] with offices in 31 countries and 90,000 employees worldwide, struggled with exactly the same problem. The company was looking for an online platform that could engage new hirees between the day of the offer and the day of joining, promote Day One readiness through online pre–boarding, reduce the pre–joining churn, and better predict hiring needs.

Gamification company *MindTickle* allowed HCL to create online learning communities for new joiners and deliver pre–boarding content in an engaging manner. This helped increase HCL's branding with new joiners, engagement between the company and the new hirees, and also increased the preparedness of company hirees.

The candidates were presented with individualized tasks through the platform and were rewarded with new materials as they completed each task. Learning was treated much like a game, where they could earn badges and ascend levels while going through the content.

As a result the dropout rate of the cohort that participated was nine times lower than those who did not. Pre–joining churn was reduced by almost 90 percent, there was a fall from 10.62 percent to 1.26 percent. HCL could more effectively predict whether a candidate would accept an offer through participation, which helped them more accurately plan for their staffing needs.[5]

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4   http://www.hcltech.com/.
5   MindTickle Helps HCL Decrease New Hire "Pre Join" Drop Out Rate by 90%, http://www.itbusinessnet.com/article/MindTickle-Helps-HCL-Decrease-New-Hire-8220Pre-Join8221-Drop-Out-Rate-by-90-2935158.

Business software behemoth SAP used a similar approach and reported a 75 percent increase in awareness about the company and its products. It realized a savings of 70 percent in senior management coaching time, and saw a 60 percent reduction in administration and logistic costs.[6]

How executives manage their employees can also benefit from gamification design. Talent management solution provider *Peoplefluent*[7] demonstrated this with a gamified iPad app called *Workforce Explorer Challenge*.[8] This application makes it fun for managers to learn more about their workforce through quizzes and simulations.

Some concepts go even further than just adding some quizzes. In *Venture Capital Model of Talent Management* employees are treated like a startup with a share price. Each manager receives a starting value for each direct report they have or hire. Whenever they send an employee for training, the employee's value increases, as does the "portfolio" of the manager. When a talent gets promoted, this also means an upward bump in value and the manager's portfolio. At the end of the year, each manager is evaluated on the basis of the value of his or her "talent portfolio." No talent development, no bonus for the manager.

What is interesting is what happens when an employee moves to another department and is later trained and promoted there. The portfolio–value of the original manager still profits from these additional investments and promotions. This encourages each manager to change the evaluation process of a potential move of an employee to another team. The concern linked to losing a talent and having to refill the position will no longer dominate the releasing manager's thought–process. This indicates that this employee may contribute more to the company in the new position than in the old one. This results in a win–win–win–win situation (yes, a quadruple–win). Win for the employee, win for the company, win for the new manager, and win for the releasing manager. The employee can grow, the talents of the employee may benefit the company better, and the new manager's portfolio grows as does the releasing manager's portfolio, where the talent is still being counted.

Evaluating every employee in such a way also changes the recruiting process. The long–term benefit of an employee also becomes important during the interview. A high–performer will add more value to the company than the development of such skills cost, while a low–performer costs more. Keeping, nurturing, and growing employees are important tasks for the managers as is identifying the best—just like venture capitalists do with startups. The future for employees looks like an IPO.

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6   http://www.mindtickle.com/customer-case-studies/new-hire-sap/.
7   http://www.peoplefluent.com/.
8   https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/peoplefluent/id474251804?mt=8.

A gamified career development tool that many HR practitioners have already used is the LinkedIn professional network. This may come as a surprise, but LinkedIn uses a number of gamification design elements to change the behaviors of users and have them share more and updated information with their network.

To understand how LinkedIn nudges people into changing behaviors, let's take a look at the LinkedIn profile. To make the professional network valuable for all members, information about each member is required. The more data a user shares, the more valuable the network becomes for other members. When new members sign up, they tend to fill out only the most basic information. The *profile completeness* bar gently nudges users to reach 100 percent by appealing to a sense of completion. Note that while it is easy to quickly increase the percentage at the beginning, reaching one hundred percent completion requires successively more effort.

It is no surprise that gamification data contains extremely valuable data. For organizations, for recruiters, and of course for the employees or players as we call them, the value is tremendous. By recording the players' activities, achievements, and progression through the systems, finding the right player (employee or team member) for certain challenges (positions or projects) becomes not only easier, but also more reliable. No need to trust references that cannot be verified. No need to rely on résumés that can be total inventions. Even if some of the information in résumés can be checked through educational institutions (graduation, grades, certifications), obtaining this information requires time and effort.

A gamification–data–based competency score would reflect an employee's achievements, skills, and progression. Data from predominantly skill and brain–based gamified applications and processes can be weighted differently than data generated predominantly by chance and hand–based systems, varying for each industry and players with their typical tasks. Such a score would make promotions fairer and more objective and base bonuses and other decisions on a better base.

The examples discussed demonstrate the high value of using gamification in your organization. They make it clear that HR needs to lead these efforts and come up with an overall gamification strategy. Start making work more fun!

W każdej pracy jest element zabawy – Mary Poppins
Streszczenie

Gdy w świecie korporacji pojawiło się pokolenie Milenium, okazało się, że tradycyjne modele motywacyjne nie działają. Ani wysokie pensje, ani bonusy nie są wystarczające dla pozyskania ich zaangażowania. To pokolenie nie działa na zasadzie „wrzuć monetę". Szukają znaczenia swojej pracy. Chcą się uczyć oraz chcą feedbeku, przyjaznych relacji i „dobrej zabawy" ze współpracownikami. Jest to dokładnie

to, co zapewniają gry video. Organizacje, które nie są w stanie zapewnić im takich wrażeń nie mogą liczyć na zatrudnienie czy zaangażowanie pracowników nowych pokoleń.

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M a r i o   H e r g e r – Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from the Vienna University of Technology and an undergraduate degree in International Business Management from the Vienna University of Economy. He is CEO, founder and partner of Enterprise Gamification Consultancy LLC, a strategic consulting group focused on gamification, innovation, social business, and intrapreneurship in the enterprise. He had been Senior Innovation Strategist at SAP Labs in Palo Alto, California and Global Head of the Gamification Initiative at SAP where he had worked for 15 years. In 2013 he also co-founded and leads the Innovation Center Europe Silicon Valley (ICESV) that connects European startups and companies with the Silicon Valley.

In his work as gamification consultant and at SAP he has encountered and supported gamification efforts in the enterprise from multiple levels and departments, like Sustainability, On Demand, Mobile, HR, Training & Education, Banking etc. He has driven the awareness around gamification by organizing and leading innovation events around this topic, holding dozens of one- or two-day gamification and innovation workshops, working with gamification platform- & service-providers and game studios, consulting and advising organizations, and by incorporating gamification into the strategy. He regularly speaks at and co-organizes conferences on gamification and innovation (amongst other topics). His large network in the gamification and innovation space allows him to pull in experts from every corner of the world into projects.

He is the author of the following gamification books: "Gamification @ Work: Designing Engaging Business Software" (2013, co-author Janaki Kumar), "Enterprise Gamification – Engaging people by letting them have fun" (2014), "Gamification in Human Resources" (2014), "Gamification in Banking & Financials"(2014), "Gamification in Community & Innovation Management" (2014), "Gamification in Sales & Support" (2014), "Gamification in Healthcare & Fitness" (2014).

His mission is: "to help organizations make work more fun".