

# Olympic Gamification

## **How we can motivate our learners to go for gold**

Team GB's performance in Rio was inspiring. But watching back home we only saw the tip of the iceberg - supremely conditioned athletes battling for a place on the podium.

We didn't see the grind. Four years of dedication and sacrifice.

Decathlete Daley Thompson used to train twice on Christmas Day quipping he would steal two days over his rivals.

## **A level of motivation we can only applaud and wish we could instill in our learners.**

Back in '84, while Thompson was winning gold in Los Angeles, I too dedicated myself to Track & Field. Konami's Track & Field in my local video arcade.

Bashing buttons as fast as possible and hitting jump/throw at the right time would propel my pixelated athlete through six different events.

I was hooked, pumping in coins and practicing every day to get better.

*Why was i so committed?*

**Going up against other arcade Olympians was exciting. And the best players had swagger. I craved the status enjoyed by the neighbourhood champs.**

But competition would be put aside occasionally as we shared hacks and tips.

The optimum number of rotations before releasing the hammer? Shown to me by another player. Best angle to release the javelin? Ditto.

So it had a social element too.

## **And it's these game mechanics we can use to engage with and inspire people to learn.**

Not to Olympic levels of commitment perhaps.

**But we can turn basic human impulses for status, achievement and socialising into powerful motivators to strive to improve workplace performance.**

Gamification was a term first coined in 2003, but it's only in the last few years it's entered the mainstream.

An old marketing tactic for customer retention - it all started with frequent flyer programmes - as learning practitioners we can utilise gamification to increase engagement by rewarding desired behaviour.

**Think about how gaming has evolved and there's even more we can potentially borrow.**

Arcades are long gone. Today we game at home on consoles that are connected.

Not only can we play with/against human opponents online, but we can share in-game achievements: challenges completed, levelling up, a screamer to the back of the net in Fifa.

'Props' that extend far beyond our immediate vicinity or social circle.

Consider also today's games are huge, expansive affairs. An element of exploration and repetition is often required to complete a chapter or mission.

So game designers include the award of virtual badges to incentivise players to grind.

Travel a certain distance or master a new skill - your perseverance is noted and you're rewarded with some sort of bonus.

**And it's this desire for recognition that keeps us going back for more and drives deeper engagement.**

Skill Pill's new [Bulb](#) app, available on [iPhone](#) and [Android](#), provides a gateway to gamification via your smartphone, introducing these elements to learning.

**It's a smart and simple way to motivate your population to engage with self-service learning and keep them coming back for more.**

A learning leaderboard creates an element of good-natured competition.

A series of achievements to unlock meant that time spent acquiring new skills and maintaining them is recognised as you work towards your learning goals.

It'll even prompt you if you're getting rusty and intelligently recommend content.

And of course it's social. Share useful resources and poll your peers for instant feedback.

If you'd like to discuss new ways to motivate and inspire your learners using gamification, then let's talk - [info@skillpill.com](mailto:info@skillpill.com)/+44 (0) 870 240 6656.

Look forward to hearing from you.

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