



TAPPING INTO THE FITNESS INDUSTRY WITH SUSTAINABLE GAMIFICATION MARKETING TECHNIQUES IN A POST CORONA WORLD

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Abstract

Introduction: Gamification is a craft where we derive all the fun and engaging elements found in games and apply the same to real world productive applications. Any process can be better implemented if we design the process for human motivation in a system as opposed to pure-efficiency designs. It should be more of a Human focusing design rather than a Functional focusing one. Sustainability is not an end game process. It is like taking a bath or brushing your teeth. It has to be worked upon every day, with the same vigor and with the objective of KAIZEN. It is not something that can be achieved, rather it is a process that can be developed and retained. This objective can only be achieved if the individual voluntarily steps up and takes active and responsible steps towards a better future.

This paper explores the aspects of utilizing the eight human core motivations for voluntary and continued involvement in fitness building activities. Corona has been a turning point in the lives of almost everyone. It has suddenly resulted in a spurt of fitness awareness and people are flocking to get involved in some kind fitness activity. We want to study how the applications that are being used by the people to measure their fitness, motivate them to keep doing more work for better results.

Area of Interest: Gamification Marketing, Post Corona World, Fitness industry

Objective of the Study: This paper has been written with the following objectives:

1. To understand how we can tap into the fitness industry through gamification marketing.
2. To create a practical model of sustainable gamification wherein the fitness enthusiasts get engaged in the process of continuous improvement.

Methodology of conducting the study: The Methodology that has been adopted to carry out this study is mentioned below:

1. Primary Source: The fitness enthusiasts are involved in an informal discussion with an objective to understand how they can be involved in fitness activities sustainably.
2. Secondary Source: Data available through previous research works that have been done through different agencies has also been used to formulate a conclusion.

Review: As a gamification pioneer, whenever I ask people about their views on gamification the most common reviews include a response that sounds like, "Interesting concept, but how can it be applied to real world situations?" In other words, the same means that people consider gamification to be a gimmicky fad that has no impact. So instead of trying to convince the people over and over again I try to present them with certain facts that steer the conversation in a way that settles the argument. I am convinced that Gamification not only has a real-life value but it also has a substantial impact for futuristic marketing campaigns.

The Eight Core Motivations: Fitness activities are an individual's way to contribute to their well-being. An individual is made up of activities that benefit from fitness activities. The basic problem that most of the individuals encounter in effective implementation of their fitness programs is motivation. We approached this problem from two perspectives:

1. The perspective of the marketer: The individuals that are directly benefitting from the fitness initiatives have to come forward and actively contribute in the application building process so that we can not only gain a better understanding of how and what to contribute to them but we can also create a self-sustaining system wherein they can keep improving their lives even when the applications pull out their contributions from the same. The application effectiveness initiatives are not implemented very effectively because the organizations don't have a very detailed in-depth picture of what the individual actually requires.
2. The perspective of the individual: The individuals normally do not participate because they feel that there is no obvious tangible benefit of getting involved in marketing initiatives. On the other hand, they feel that they are entitled to be a beneficiary of the marketing initiatives because it is the responsibility of the corporate organizations. They have a list of things that they expect the organizations to do for them but they are of the opinion that there is hardly any benefit in getting involved in the marketing process as the organizations have more than enough resources to go through the whole marketing activity on their own. More so the individuals responded that they feel that if they get involved in the marketing processes the organizations will go on a back foot approach to implementing these initiatives and will pass on the buck to the individual involved. That way the individual will end up losing more than they are gaining from the marketing initiatives.



While both the perspectives are seemingly correct and possible there has to be a solution that enables the marketers to get better involvement from the individuals while they also keep to their pace and both the stakeholders complete the cycle in unison. We ended up inquiring about the factors that can act as motivators for the individuals to actively participate in the Marketing initiatives for a continuing sustainable system of improvement. Through numerous informal interactions with various individuals that are normally the target of Marketing initiatives by most of the organizations we recognized eight basic factors that motivate people to participate more actively in the Marketing initiatives. The common factors across all individuals were possessions of mobile phones with internet access and a desire to be more relevant. The eight basic motivational tools recognized were:

Meaning & Calling

Meaning & Calling is the Core Drive where a person believes that they are doing something greater than themselves or they were “chosen” to do something. For our challenge, we had our respondents from the fitness individual choose to complete a passion fitness regime that they’ve been thinking about, putting off or wanting to do for a long time. Talk about meaningful, right? The challenge was for them to launch that fitness regime within 30 days. Many respondents choose fitness regimes that didn’t have to do with their current routine, and are experiencing tons of residual momentum in all areas of their life because of the choice they made to do the thing they are extremely stoked about.

Development & Accomplishment

This is the internal drive of making progress, developing skills, and eventually overcoming challenges. Aside from the obvious satisfaction of finally doing the thing they want to do and having a better physique, we incorporated several other motivators to inspire action.

Empowerment of Creativity & Feedback

Empowerment of Creativity & Feedback is when users are engaged in a creative process where they have to repeatedly figure things out and try different combinations. In the constructs of this challenge, we eliminated the need for their fitness regime to “make them better” and encouraged everyone to ONLY do something they are wildly excited about.

This freedom took the perceived risk out of the equation and all of a sudden, everyone is motivated by this sense of creative expression, fun and passion.

More people than ever are suddenly showing up and sharing themselves in the fitness activities, when before they may have held back or stayed silent. It’s been so incredible to witness the shift that’s taken place.

Ownership & Possession

This is the drive where users are motivated because they feel like they own something. This is where our respondents got to take pride in finally having done something about that fitness regime they’ve been thinking about for so long and to be able to feel better about themselves. No longer was it just a good idea.

Social Recognition and Acceptance

This drive incorporated all the social elements that drive people, including: mentorship, acceptance, social responses, companionship, as well as competition and envy.

Everyone participating in the challenge was required to make at least ONE progress update in their forum thread every week, sharing with everyone what they did, what they’re excited about, where they’re struggling and to be fully seen in their fitness regime. The challenge was also a competition, where one person who does the best job (based on our criteria) would be crowned champion. What we’re noticing too through the nature of the challenge, was that everyone was being super helpful and supportive with one-another; offering feedback, encouragement and brainstorming ideas and genuinely showing up to help.

Scarcity & Impatience

This is the drive of wanting something because you can’t have it. We gave everybody a small window of time to sign up and commit to the challenge. Plus, it’s only 30 days long, so there was a clear beginning and end in sight.

Given that so many people jumped on board, especially on the final day of signing up, we think the fear of missing out (*on their dream*) inspired the best in them.

So, on that note, the scarcity of creating a window of time to get in and do the damn thing was extremely beneficial for all.



Unpredictability & Curiosity

Generally, this is a harmless drive of wanting to find out what will happen next. We also posed the question to everyone: “What if you were to start dedicating one day per week to this big passion of yours? What could you create in 30 days? Where could you be with it in 365 days? What if it all starts here with this challenge? Asking the questions makes them curious enough to dive in and say, “Yeah, what if?”

Loss & Avoidance

This core drive is based upon the avoidance of something negative happening. This one is obvious. They have been putting this fitness regime or idea off for a long time, and yet it keeps showing up as something they need to and want to do. Where loss and avoidance came up for everyone is them saying, “If not now, then when?” That fear of never doing it definitely came up for some, based on what we documented in the interactions.

Table: Affective Relationships

Conscious Motivators	Subconscious Motivators
Empowerment of Creativity & Feedback	Meaning & Calling
Ownership & Possession	Development & Accomplishment
Social Recognition and Acceptance	Unpredictability & Curiosity
Scarcity & Impatience	Loss & Avoidance

We discovered a positive correlation between the factors as listed in the table below

Table: Correlation summary

		Correlations			
		Meaning and Calling	Development and Accomplishment	Unpredictability and Curiosity	Loss and Avoidance
Empowerment of Creativity and Feedback	Pearson Correlation	0.597			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000			
	N	50			
Ownership and Possession	Pearson Correlation		0.684		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000		
	N		50		
Social recognition and acceptance	Pearson Correlation			0.538	
	Sig. (2-tailed)			0.000	
	N			50	
Scarcity and Impatience	Pearson Correlation				.624*
	Sig. (2-tailed)				0.000
	N				50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey Data

The construct of Empowerment of Creativity & Feedback which is an indicator of the net social impact on the people and also reflects the approach to Meaning & Calling has good correlation coefficient of 0.597 indicating positive and direct correlation between the two constructs. The construct of Ownership & Possession which is an indicator of the net achievement impact on the people and also reflects the approach to Development & Accomplishment has good correlation coefficient of 0.684 indicating positive and direct correlation between the two constructs. The construct of Social Recognition and Acceptance which is an indicator of the net social impact on the people and also reflects Unpredictability & Curiosity has good correlation coefficient of 0.538 indicating positive and direct correlation between the two constructs. The construct of Scarcity & Impatience which is an indicator of the net achievement impact on the people and also reflects the approach to Loss & Avoidance has good correlation coefficient of 0.624 indicating positive and direct correlation between the two constructs.



We further analyzed how the conscious constructs can be affected through the three basic factors of human-mobile interaction. The factors that we recognized for our study were based on three fundamental questions the first being, how much time does a person spends looking at his/her mobile phone? The second, how much time does a person spend playing games on his/her mobile phone? While the third question being, how much time does a person spends being involved actively with his/her mobile phone?

Table: Correlation summary

		Correlations			
		Empowerment of Creativity and Feedback	Ownership and Possession	Social recognition and acceptance	Scarcity and Impatience
Average Screen Time	Pearson Correlation	0.534	0.616	0.586	0.623
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	50	50	50	50
Average Game Time	Pearson Correlation	0.764	0.834	0.654	0.512
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	50	50	50	50
Average Involvement Time	Pearson Correlation	0.501	0.613	0.576	0.642
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	50	50	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey Data

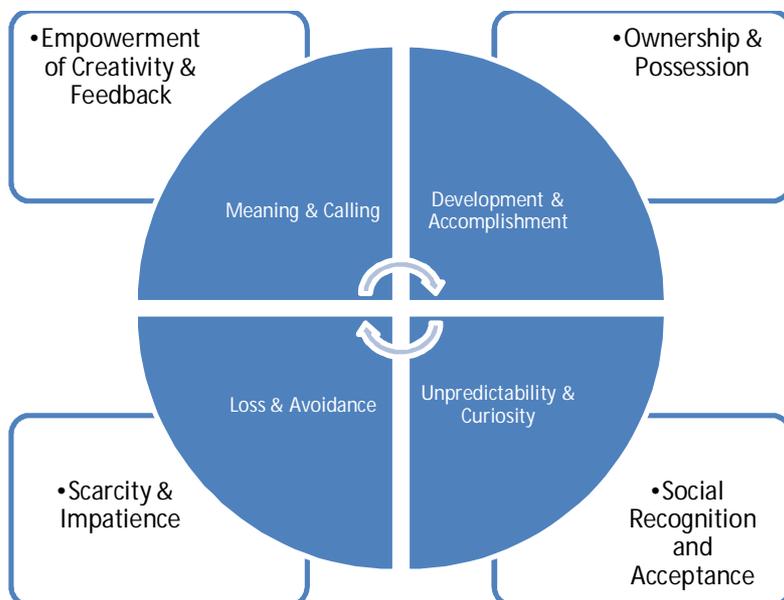
The construct of Average Screen Time which also reflects the approach to Empowerment of Creativity & Feedback has good correlation coefficient of 0.534 indicating positive and direct correlation between the two constructs. The construct of Average Screen Time which also reflects the approach to Ownership & Possession has good correlation coefficient of 0.616 indicating positive and direct correlation between the two constructs. The construct of Average Screen Time which also reflects Social Recognition and Acceptance has good correlation coefficient of 0.586 indicating positive and direct correlation between the two constructs. The construct of Average Screen Time which also reflects the approach to Scarcity & Impatience has good correlation coefficient of 0.623 indicating positive and direct correlation between the two constructs.

The construct of Average Game Time which also reflects the approach to Empowerment of Creativity & Feedback has good correlation coefficient of 0.764 indicating positive and direct correlation between the two constructs. The construct of Average Game Time which also reflects the approach to Ownership & Possession has good correlation coefficient of 0.834 indicating positive and direct correlation between the two constructs. The construct of Average Game Time which also reflects Social Recognition and Acceptance has good correlation coefficient of 0.654 indicating positive and direct correlation between the two constructs. The construct of Average Game Time which also reflects the approach to Scarcity & Impatience has good correlation coefficient of 0.512 indicating positive and direct correlation between the two constructs.

The construct of Average Involvement Time which also reflects the approach to Empowerment of Creativity & Feedback has good correlation coefficient of 0.501 indicating positive and direct correlation between the two constructs. The construct of Average Involvement Time which also reflects the approach to Ownership & Possession has good correlation coefficient of 0.613 indicating positive and direct correlation between the two constructs. The construct of Average Involvement Time which also reflects Social Recognition and Acceptance has good correlation coefficient of 0.576 indicating positive and direct correlation between the two constructs. The construct of Average Involvement Time which also reflects the approach to Scarcity & Impatience has good correlation coefficient of 0.642 indicating positive and direct correlation between the two constructs.

Marketing Individual Involvement Framework

Based on the interactions and their deductions we arrived at a basic framework which the organizations can work upon to generate involvement in their Marketing initiatives. Though this is not a very exhaustive study but still can act as a basic pointer for further developments and progress.



The above framework can help organizations implement Marketing initiatives with individual involvement through the help of gamification of their efforts. The main four factors are connected to their auxiliary support pointers which if utilized dexterously can have miraculous effects. We will try to explain the framework in brief:

1. **Meaning & Calling:** This factor is affected by the degree of empowerment for creativity and the feedback provided by the individual affected. It has been observed that a greater degree of empowerment results in better clarity of the meaning that the individual attaches to the Marketing initiative. The feedback mechanism keeps the whole process of improvement sustainable. Games are a very viable medium that are creatively open and can be directed to achievable real-world goals with a responsive feedback mechanism.
2. **Development & Accomplishment:** Accomplishments are treated as measuring benchmarks for development. Intermittent accomplishments are proof of continuous development and in the long term a sustainable achievement. The individual measures its accomplishments through the results and better fitness that it provides. The Marketing initiatives should have complete results and better fitness clarity. Gamification of their Marketing objectives will help the individual to keep a tab on its accomplishments in tangible and intangible terms and will keep them motivated to gun for more.
3. **Unpredictability & Curiosity:** The element of surprise, the feeling of ecstasy when we encounter the unknown, and the curiosity that gnaws on the insides to explore all that is undiscovered is one of the most tangible mediums of motivation available to mankind. The lust to explore pulls people to achieve feats that normally are considered impossible. This strong emotion combined with social recognition and acceptance fuels the individual to participate in endeavors that normally don't even catch their attention. Gamification provides new avenues to explore, connects the individual in a closely knit group with a common objective and has measurable objectives that reflect on the achievements of the participants.
4. **Loss & Avoidance:** The fear of loss and the caution of avoiding things that may harm the individual are a great motivator for the people involved. When the people will realize what they are at a stake of losing if they do not actively contribute to the development of their individual fitness and participate in the Marketing initiatives they will turn out in numbers and with dedication to create a self-sustaining system of continuous improvement.

The gamification of achievable realistic objectives results in better realization of the individuals involved as to how they can contribute to the development and avoid loss. The concepts of scarcity can be finely integrated into games which will test the patience of the players where they will be required to wait for their fitness to improve and thus realize the importance of the resources that they use in the real world.



Conclusion

The individuals need to rise above their insecurities to get involved in the Marketing initiatives that are being carried out for their benefits. The organizations have taken safe but concrete steps towards individual involvement and this can best be achieved by marking a presence in their hands all the times through their mobile phones. The gamified applications developed to promote Marketing initiatives will not only help in voluntary involvement of the concerned individuals but also serve as a measuring and ensuring platform for continued sustainability of the efforts thus made.

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