

Discovery Research Results - Employee Gamification

Sponsored by Zebra Technologies



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I. Executive Summary

In this report, we will discuss our goals, methods, findings, and conclusions of our research for this Zebra Gamification project. Our primary focus of this research phase is to understand our users and the concept of gamification, and how it can be applied in the workplace. We conducted primary research (surveys and interviews) and secondary research (literature review of gamification and Zebra). From our primary research, we learned more about our users: money is a large motivation, many are familiar with gamification, and the use of technology was present in most of their companies. Through our intensive literature review on gamification, we found implementing gamification in the workplace provides tangible change and uses concepts such as rewards and recognition. However, the impact of each gamification method varies from person to person. Our research on Zebra revealed that their brand revolves around connectivity and efficiency, which we will attempt to emphasize as we ideate and execute design iterations. With this information, we will begin creating our persona and defining a specific problem to implement in design in the future weeks.

II. Research Goals & Objectives

A. Goals

Our goal in the discovery research phase is to better understand gamification and comparative gamification systems to define user needs for employee gamification. By doing a comparative literature review on gamification and existing platforms, we hope to find the best features and interactions that could be employed on a mobile app that we will prototype. Additionally, through conducting extensive research on Zebra (their website, their values, etc.), we aim to make our end product more personalized to Zebra while still starting from the ground up and delivering a fresh, new take on employee gamification. In terms of our primary research that we are in the process of conducting (surveys and interviews), we are looking to understand potential users, their workplace experiences and motivations, and finally, their experience with gamification (if any).

B. Objectives

- Understand gamification as a concept and a practice.
- Understand existing digital platforms used in the workplace and gamification within these spaces.
- Understand Zebra as a company.
- Understand how to apply Zebra's current values to a new take on an employee gamification app.
- Understand the users.
 - *In order to narrow down scope (and create a persona for the experience).*
 - Their experiences in the workplace.
 - Their motivations, preferences, likes/dislikes.
 - Their experience with technology and gamification.

III. Research Activities

A. Literature Review

In order to have a comprehensive understanding of our topics, we conducted a literature review that examined gamification as a concept, existing rewards and recognition platforms, and Zebra as a company. These sources ranged from general information about gamification to real-life applications companies use today to keep their customers engaged. In addition, these sources came from different perspectives in order to provide us with a more holistic view of gamification and the different ways it can be conducted. In addition, to ensure we can provide Zebra with our best work, we researched their software and hardware to confirm we understood their systems and products.

B. Surveys

In an effort to elicit information about our potential user base, we have created and published a survey. Our goals for this survey primarily include analyzing peoples' experience working in retail, identifying gamified practices commonly used in retail workplaces, and distinguishing motivating factors for retail employees. To accomplish the above goals, the survey is composed of questions relating to the following themes: onboarding experience; technology in retail; retail work experience more generally; and, exposure to gamification. In dividing the survey into these thematic sections, we hope to gain valuable insights which will ultimately guide our persona-development process. We have distributed our survey to friends and family, and we have also posted it on various social media platforms.

([Survey link](#))

C. Interviews

By creating a survey to learn more about the users that we will focus our project on, we wanted to get more elaborate results through in-person interviews. We took the general themes from our survey (onboarding experiences, retail work experience (technology), retail work experience (general), and gamification) and created flow and questions that were more open-ended. After we collect information from our initial more conversational interviews (with friends) and surveys, we hope to speak to individuals in the retail industry to dig deeper into relevant areas. We will gain access to participants by walking into stores and talking to employees, managers, asking for participants through social media, etc. This iterative process of the interviews informing the survey and the survey informing future interviews (interview-survey-interview) will hopefully give us a comprehensive view of our users so we can be well-informed when defining our persona.

IV. What We've Learned

A. Literature Review

1. *Gamification*

Gamification can be a great tool to keep employees engaged, maintain customer loyalty, and develop a more enjoyable workspace. Over the past two decades, various companies have implemented the concept to be creative with their problems, marketing campaigns, and more. Gamification not only makes learning fun and creates friendly competition among employees, but it also motivates them and offers a sense of achievement. A recent study found that 83% of those who receive gamified training feel motivated while 61% of those who receive non-gamified training feel bored and unproductive, demonstrating the impact the immediate impact gamification can have on employees' attitudes.

Gamification can be implemented in a variety of ways to engage audiences. On the customer side, examples include KFC implementing a "Shrimp Attack" that involves users swiping away shrimp on their phone with the goal of promoting their new shrimp dishes, M&M's creating a digital puzzle for users to find a hidden pretzel among M&M's to promote their new line of pretzel M&M's, and Starbucks creating a rewards app with "stars" to motivate their users to make more orders. On the employee side, examples include winning free company-branded merchandise when an employee gets the highest score on a company-wide assessment, creating characters for onboarding, and providing tangible rewards. These unique experiences not only motivate customers and employees but also build a positive reputation for the companies.

When creating gamification efforts for workplace settings, designers need to consider the current problem areas they are addressing and how this new process will mitigate the issues. Goals, criteria, rewards, and consistent feedback must be communicated clearly in order to provide an equitable space and allow for a clear procedure. Furthermore, gamification must have a quick turnaround for recognizing participants' contributions in order to keep them engaged while also providing a way for them to reflect on their experiences. Common areas for gamification in the workplace include learning and development, customer support, sales improvement, marketing, product development, and creativity.

Gamification is more than just badges, rankings, and points. While the methodology certainly includes those factors, the concept allows employees and customers to engage with their work in a creative and efficient way when the experience is tailored correctly. Studies demonstrate that by implementing gamification consistently and personably, the quality of the workplace can increase for everyone involved.

2. Existing Platforms

For this project proposal, we examined four existing platforms that focus on rewards, recognition, games, and other topics related to gamification. Our results are presented in the following chart:

<i>Name</i>	<i>What Do They Do?</i>	<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Drawbacks</i>	<i>Price</i>	<i>Rating (0-5 stars)</i>
Confetti	- Virtual & Hybrid Team Building Experiences - Creative Bonding & Learning - Event Examples: Virtual Escape Room, Trivia, DIY Cooking Kit Class	- Easy to set up virtual or hybrid games, events, and sessions - Flexibility in how events are experiences and customized - Easy to see what event looks like before purchase - Ability to not only play games but also learn about cultures and history - Great UI to navigate what type of event is desired	- Few fully in-person events or opportunities - Events do not continue outside of the timeframe they are used in	- Varies for each event - Events are either priced per person or event	★★★★
Reward Gateway	- Employee Engagement Program Focused in Five Areas: 1. Discounts 2. Recognition 3. Communications 4. Surveys 5. Wellbeing	- Clear target areas that provide an efficient experience - Customizable platforms including elements such as layout, aesthetic, and available features to increase community among employees - Data analytics available to see company usage and areas for improvement - Immediate employee recognition and rewards - Easy to schedule a demo and more information	- Limited resources available online without scheduling demo - A lot of setup time and time to learn the software needed in order to implement it well	Information Unavailable	★★★★
Worktango	- Employee Engagement Platform Focused in Three Areas: 1. Recognition & Rewards 2. Surveys &	- Clear relationship between three focus areas to promote overall cohesive experience - Each area has specific	Limited video resources online	Information Unavailable	★★★★★

	Insights 3. Goals & Feedback	tasks that make the software easy to use • Recognition & rewards area is immediate & personal, surveys & insights provide tangible results, and goals & feedback provide real conclusions • Customizable platform in all three areas			
Bonusly	• Employee recognition platform through three methods: ○ 1. Personal ○ 2. Meaningful ○ 3. Inclusive	• Clear amount of points everyone gets that can be allocated towards others for praise, success, or other reasons • Division of recognition methods provides organization for rewards • Tangible rewards available through the accumulation of points including gift cards, and custom rewards • Offers an amazing self-guided demo on the website directly for free	• Compared to other softwares, the recognition feels artificial and a little forced at times	• Core: \$2.70 per user/month • Pro: \$4.50 per user/month • Custom	★★★★★

Takeaways: Based on this chart, we found that worktango was best overall. The Recognition & rewards area is more personal than other apps and the software is super easy to use.

3. Zebra Research

Zebra offers intelligent hardware and software, as well as solutions that offer visibility to help a wide range of organizations make important decisions regarding actions and planning. Their technology is used to sense, analyze, and act in real-time. Zebra's CRS (Corporate Responsibility Program) helps ensure that they are globally conscious and focuses on supporting people, communities, and the environment.

Their overall goal is to connect teams and transform businesses around the world. Some of their many solutions for organizations include visibility to assets, optimization of operations to focus on innovation, and empowering workers by offering the tools they need to communicate and collaborate. Some of the products Zebra offers are scanners, mobile computers, tablets, and printers. Their mobile computers are the product that our team is focusing on as we are creating a

software experience that can be embedded within them. These devices range in form (handheld computers, vehicle-mounted computers, wearable computers, etc.) and provide an intuitive and recognizable interface. These mobile computers are made for work. They have an exclusive suite of software, apps, and utilities that are meant to assist in accelerating productivity and improving decision-making at the point of work. Our goal with our project – creating an employee gamification mobile app – is to emphasize these values of improving productivity and decision-making– but also to determine how to increase employee longevity and happiness in a fair, equitable, and accessible manner through our design.

As shown in the image below (*from their mobile computer brochure*), Zebra’s mobile computers are used for a wide range of tasks in several industries. They empower the front line of business in retail/e-commerce, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, healthcare, public sector, and other industries to achieve a performance edge. For our user research regarding surveys and interviews, we will be attempting to understand the needs of retail workers (as this industry is more accessible to us) and, primarily, how gamification can improve workplace experiences and tasks such as product pricing, cycle counts, mobile points of sale, etc. Though our primary research (interviews and surveys) revolves around retail workers, an obstacle we hope to overcome is determining how to create an app that can be applied to various industries.



Zebra’s mobile computer brochure also mentions that the software determines whether these devices remain relevant – and improve an organization's experience. The software on these devices should enable workers to do more through the improvement of performance and UX of the computers. We will want to ensure our mobile app has intuitive and impactful UI/UX features to unify teams, communication, and workflows.

B. Surveys

At the time of submission, we have received nearly two dozen responses to our survey. From these initial results, we can begin to formulate conclusions about our user base, although we expect these conclusions to change as we continue to collect responses. Nonetheless, some major takeaways we can deduce from our participants are as follows:

- Nearly all participants worked in a retail store for additional income;
- Most were asked to complete an onboarding process;
 - Of those who completed an onboarding process, all included some gamification elements;
- About half of the participants were given technology to assist in their workflow;
- Participants were motivated by income, relationships, and responsibilities;
- About half of the participants recorded some level of gamification integrated within their workflow.

As our sample size grows, we hope to further substantiate these takeaways—or substantiate new findings—with statistically significant measures.

While we intend to collect viable data from this survey, we experienced difficulty in defining and measuring several subjective variables. Notably, we ask about employee motivation, and plan on measuring changes in employee happiness. Motivation and happiness are feelings that are especially difficult to measure, particularly in the context of self-reporting surveys. We look to hold further discussions as a team, with professors, and with our Zebra team to better understand how to measure these variables.

Even though we have received a limited set of responses, we were surprised to see that one participant may have experience using a Zebra device. In their response, they reported using a “z-scanning” device to “scan pricing, check different sizes/styles, [and check] if we had any extra in the back.” Many of these features emulate that of Zebra devices, and we hope to inquire further about their experience with this device.

C. Interviews

Up to this point, we have only conducted a handful of surveys. These beginning interviews were done with peers as a way to inform our survey creation. From this small sample size we surveyed, we learned about employee motivation in the retail industry and familiarity with gamification.

By asking broad and open-ended questions, we were able to see what about working in the retail industry was important (relationships with co-workers, interacting with customers, extra money) which helped us narrow down what questions we should include in our survey. This led us to add introduction questions to the survey: “Which of the following best explains why you chose to work in a retail store?”

We also gauged people's familiarity with gamification as a concept. Most people we talked to had heard the term and experienced it in their lives (work, language learning, social media) but weren't aware of the exact definition. We added a question about gamification, followed by a definition.

In the following week, we will go in person and interview associates, managers, etc. in Zebra-partnered stores to fill in the gaps of our user research, and answer resounding questions from the survey. Everyone who took the survey was a part-time associate, so we hope to broaden the scope of our answers by talking to more full-time employees and managers. We also want to dig deeper into what motivates people in the work environment (competition, rewards, streaks, etc.).

V. Summary of Findings

Gamification as a concept can have numerous positive impacts in the workplace. Not only can it provide motivation for employees, but it allows companies to be creative in how they get their employees to stay invested in their positions and how to retain customers. By integrating gamification, workplaces can become more enjoyable, efficient, and creative for all.

There are countless ways to implement gamification ranging from actual games to subtle tactics that make people not realize they are in a gamified setting. These differences allow for personalized outcomes in how companies want to approach solving their solutions through gamification, and they also acknowledge how employees and customers respond differently to gamification. Studies have demonstrated that implementing gamification in the workplace provides tangible change, and when used correctly, it can change the workplace entirely.

Zebra is a leading provider of intelligent hardware and software for a wide range of organizations. Through their products and solutions, they help connect teams and transform businesses. For our project regarding employee gamification, it was helpful to conduct further research on Zebra to better understand their mobile computers and their uses (and many different forms – such as handheld, scanner, wearable, etc) in different industries since we are creating a mobile app software experience meant for this product. These mobile computers assist in accelerating productivity and improving decision-making at the point of work through an intuitive and recognizable interface. We aim to create an app experience that encourages this value of productivity, while also attempting to support employee longevity and happiness in a fair manner through our design.

Through our surveys and interviews, we have found that while many college-aged students work in retail spaces for the additional income, they have had a wide range of experiences with onboarding and technology in the workplace. Our participants have provided us with answers that develop our understanding of their needs and desires to improve their workspaces and how gamification can be part of that. By continuing with our survey and interviews in the coming weeks, we plan to develop a deeper understanding that will adequately prepare us to develop our prototypes.

VI. Next Steps

A. Takeaways and Next Steps for Ideation Phase

- We will make sure to cater our ideation and prototype designs to users based on our research results.
- Takeaways:
 - The importance of thorough research, which we will continue as needed throughout the project.
 - The value in having a wide range of survey responses and interview participants.
 - Foundational knowledge regarding gamification and its various uses and implementations.
 - Better understanding of Zebra as a company and how they conduct their product development and production.
- Next Steps:
 - An analysis of survey and interview results to strengthen our understanding of our users' needs.
 - We will develop a persona based on user and gamification research we have done.

B. Remaining Questions

- How do people's results vary from region to region?
- Do people's opinions on certain areas of our survey differ from what type of retail industry they work in? Is there a way to address this in future interviews?
- How can we use Zebra to assist us with the research (give us feedback/additional information)?
- Is there a certain budget that companies use when implementing gamification?
- How are we going to gamify basic behavior vs. exceptional behavior?
 - For example, streaks for normal behavior and rewards for above and beyond behavior.

C. Changes/Pivots to Make

- We plan to add a question about the employee's position on the survey. For example, if they are a manager or associate employee, or part-time or full-time.
 - We also plan to ask this question in in-person interviews.
- We plan to add questions regarding metrics for quantitatively measuring happiness, motivation, work ethic, and other intangible concepts.

D. Challenges

- Determining what is the best way to measure intangible concepts such as happiness.
- Getting a larger range of people to do interviews and surveys with.

VII. Appendix

A. Qualtrics Survey

Link to access all survey questions:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Lo1Xo5BE6Lk8Mv-gt3nkv8j1d-gJBQxm/view?usp=sharing>

Thematic Sections of Preliminary User Survey:

The image shows a Qualtrics survey structure with six thematic sections. Each section is represented by a white box with a right-pointing arrow, the section name, and the number of questions. Below each box is a blue 'Add Block' link. The sections are:

- Participant Information | 4 Questions
- Onboarding Experience | 3 Questions
- Retail Work Experience (Technology) | 2 Questions
- Retail Work Experience (General) | 5 Questions
- Gamification | 4 Questions
- Future Surveys | 2 Questions

Link to survey results collected thus far:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/18ZWE0WCoIEwRCnvixQf-ECTdQ1lSahnzr171zSy732Y/edit?usp=sharing>

B. In-Person Interview Questions

Intro

- Hello I'm _____, do you mind if I ask you a few questions about working at (*store name*)?
- Have you worked in other retail stores?
 - Where did you work? For how long?
 - What types of roles did you have?
- How long would you say you have worked in the retail industry overall?
- How long do you plan to work in the retail industry?
- What made you choose to start working here? (For example, was it for money, or that you liked the store?)

Onboarding

- When you joined the company you work/worked for, was there a digital onboarding process?
- → Examples of a digital onboarding process might include: quizzes, training, mascots, instructional videos, etc.
 - *If yes to experience with onboarding, can you talk about this process?*
 - *To ask if they don't answer already, in talking about the process:*
 - How long did that onboarding process take? (Hours? Days? Weeks? Months?)
 - On a scale from 1-10, how effective do you think this onboarding process was? (1 being not helpful at all, 10 being extremely helpful).
 - Why did you provide this specific rating?

Misc

- Can you briefly describe your tasks? How motivated do you feel to do them at work?
Weekly tasks?
 - What, if anything, currently motivates you at work and why?
- What do you enjoy about your job? / What motivates you most?
- What do you least enjoy?
- What would motivate you to do your job? Is there a current rewards system in place and would you be able to describe it to us?
 - How does this system recognize teamwork, communication, and feedback, or fail to?
- Describe how you are evaluated based on your productivity.

Tech

- During your time working, do you use retail tablets or devices to complete tasks while working? Would you be able to show us?

- *If yes, how so?*

Gamification

- Have you heard of gamification?
 - Description → Gamification is a practice that uses familiar elements of games such as scores, rewards, and goals in a non-game environment. While gamification is a new field of study, some employers use it to drive employee engagement and motivation.
- Have you had any experience with gamification at your retail job, such as with an onboarding experience (*if you said yes to onboarding*)?
- What type of gamification types have you experienced?
 - Specify examples if needed.
 - What do you think of this experience? Did you like it? Why or why not?

Ending

- Thanks so much for your time! If you'd be able to potentially be interviewed again or used for user testing later on, we'd really appreciate it. Have a great day!

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