Is the new ‘Business Buzzword’ simply too important to ignore in the modern world of Project Management? Gamification as a tool in the workplace has quickly taken a hold on many large-scale companies around the world- Microsoft, Google and the U.S Navy are three of them. By turning motivation and incentive systems into a science, Gamification ensures that everyone is on the ball, and knows when they’re about to drop it.

If you’re thinking that ‘gamifying’ your employees and co-workers would prove to be too much of a distraction from delivering important projects, take a look around the office. The colleague in the seat next to you is jazzing up their LinkedIn profile, and Warren from the IT department is at the coffee shop downstairs, checking in on Foursquare to gain that major badge he has been waiting for. Games are virtually everywhere- from frequent flyer miles (come on, who hasn’t bought just **one** more block of Lindt to score more points towards that trip to Hawaii), to the Thursday Powerball.

In an article for Forbes magazine, Adam Penenberg, the author of ‘[*Play at Work: How Games Inspire Breakthrough Thinking*](http://www.amazon.com/Play-Work-Inspire-Breakthrough-Thinking/dp/1591844797/)’ claims that Gamification can ‘tap into the same human instincts that have led to centuries of passionate competition and engagement - our innate desire to learn, to improve ourselves, to overcome obstacles, and to win. Technology in the workplace can be rewarding, and (gasp) even fun.’[[1]](#footnote-1)

If you’re scratching your head around the best way to press PLAY in your PMO, start simple. Begin with badges for documents completed on time, or creating a ’promptitude’ scale evaluating whether the user completed the work to an acceptable degree. Being on the receiving end of a smirking face ‘badge’ (light humored shamification?) would make striving for the next week a lot more inviting. But alas, although this is healthy competition, even the best designed games may only please a fraction of employees. Think of ways to revolutionize the way your company works. Mapping decision making into an alternate environment as a way to challenge minds could be extremely beneficial. Add some virtual avatars, and, voila! Suddenly your monthly meeting seems to go a lot quicker and more smoothly.

Gartner claims that, by 2015, more than 50 percent of organizations that manage innovation processes will gamify those processes.[[2]](#footnote-2) In the realm of Project Management, Gamification builds a narrative, engaging players to participate and achieve goals. Brian Burke, an analyst for the Gartner, says that "where games traditionally model the real world, organizations must now take the opportunity for their real world to emulate games”.[[3]](#footnote-3)

So, use those elements that prove critical to a winning strategy for gamifying the way your company manages projects, and promote technological tools to create a space to excel at previously mundane tasks. After all, business played out with a bit of fun and some healthy competition can only do wonders, right?

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1. Penenberg, A. [*Play at Work: How Games Inspire Breakthrough Thinking*](http://www.amazon.com/Play-Work-Inspire-Breakthrough-Thinking/dp/1591844797/), Penguin, New York, 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.gartner.com/newsroom/id/1629214> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://www.gartner.com/newsroom/id/1629214 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)