

What is Gamification?

Gamification with Dr Zachary Fitz Walter

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Gamification is the addition of game elements to non-game activities

What's interesting is that gamification is not a new concept. While the term may have been coined in more recent times, the concept has existed in many areas of life for as long as civilisation has existed. If you remember watching Mary Poppins, she sums up gamification quite nicely with the quote "*In every job that must be done, there is an element of fun. You find the fun and SNAP! the job's a game.*"

She was onto something here. Mary Poppins knew all the way back in the 1960s that anything could be turned into a fun activity by making it into a game. There were prominent examples of gamification existing even earlier than Mary Poppins however.

Back in the early 1900s, if you were a Boy Scout you could obtain real badges and ranks, a tradition that is still carried out today. However as video games started to take off, we saw educational video games then become popular in the 1970s and 80s. You may remember such games as 'Where in the World is Carmen San Diego', 'Reader Rabbit' and 'Math Blaster'. These games were forms of entertainment that were built for serious purposes, to educate players.

Foursquare is an example of social gamification. If you checked into a location, you would receive points. Check in to a new location, you hadn't visited before and you would receive even more points. You could then compare the number of points you had on a leaderboard with friends and you could also receive badges for doing special things like checking in on a boat or checking in with more than 50 people in one place.

If you checked into a place more than anyone else, you became the "*Foursquare mayor*" of that location. This user experience felt like a game, and it was a lot of fun to use. Foursquare became a popular example of an app increasing user engagement through loyalty program gamification.

What's interesting, though, was that the game elements they used started to appear in many different other applications and websites. This may have contributed to these game elements becoming a popular way to add gamification.

These days we're seeing more and more serious games in gamification, partly because video games have become mainstream and, as well, smartphones have made it incredibly easy to play games anywhere at any time.

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How Does Gamification Work?

Gamification is the art of making everyday activities feel like games. It involves applying game mechanics, such as points, badges, and leaderboards, to non-game situations to motivate people and enhance their engagement. Let's dive deeper into how gamification works:

Historical Roots: The concept of gamification dates back to the 20th century. Retail stores introduced rewards programs to foster customer loyalty, and industrial managers encouraged competition among factory workers. In 1984, Charles Coonradt's book "The Game of Work" highlighted how game mechanics could improve employee engagement and productivity.

Goals: Set clear objectives for participants (e.g., hitting targets, learning new things).

Status: Recognize individuals for their achievements, creating a sense of accomplishment.

Community: Foster a social environment where users interact and compete.

Education: Use gamified elements for learning and skill development.

Rewards: Offer tangible or virtual rewards to motivate action.

Brain Chemistry: Gamification taps into how our brains work. It stimulates the release of dopamine (associated with positive feelings) and endorphins (which reduce stress and anxiety).

The most recent example of Brandification? Tesla is using Player Unknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) as a platform to market their cars. PUBG is one of the most played and viewed (Twitch) video games in the world right now. Tesla as of July 2020 placed their cars within the game as drivable vehicles for players. If marketing is all about "being where the attention is" Tesla may go down in history as having the best Video Game Marketing Campaign of all time.

3. Advergame: Pepsi Man

Advergames are online video games that promote a particular brand, product, or marketing message by integrating it into the game template, created expressly for promotional purposes. Advergames are often commissioned to support other media, not replace them. The idea is that the more interaction with the property through the form of the game the stronger it leads to better associations.

Advergames first became popular with Pepsi's "Pepsi Man" and 7 Up's 'Spot' in the late 90s. In 2019, snackable mobile games like 'Candy Crush' & 'Temple Run' have begun to be 're-skinneled' with company branding and themes to promote their products and services. These are done through companies like Gamify or popular DIY website platforms like Wix or Shopify. Advergames have been proven to get higher levels of engagement & redemption than more traditional advertisements.

Gamification in Health

1. Physical Health: Nike

Nike launched Nike+Run in 2010 as a gamification platform that tracks and gamifies your run time, distance covered, health levels and compares yourself to your previous recordings and others within your social field. They have a leaderboard, points, and badges. This is a classic example of live feedback and micro-measuring progress to help runners to improve and progress in their personal goals.

For a more in-depth look at some of the best Gamified Health Apps on the market, check out Gamify's [Top Fitness Apps](#).

2. Mental Health: Headspace

Headspace comes in the form of an app that uses gamification to increase user completion and mastery of a level of meditation before moving on to a more advanced section. Each session is about ten minutes long and usually in audio format. Gamifying the process helps users to track their progress in bettering their mental state and in truly seeing the strides they've taken towards being better balanced.

3. Group Workouts: Les Mills

Other organisations like CrossFit have done well with their group connection and leaderboards but Les Mills 'Be Moved' utilises gamification at another level. They do group classes on stationary bikes with a computer screen in front of them, simulating a futuristic roller coaster. Once you log in, it tracks your scores, provides leaderboards and if you don't show up to class it gives you a warning (an example of loss aversion). 7/8 of our gamification core drives are displayed within Les Mills 'Be Moved'.

Gamification in Education

1. Computer Games: Minecraft - Education Edition

Math Blaster and Treasure Mountain are some of the earliest examples of popular educational games, however, one of the best and most current examples of Game-based Learning is Minecraft: Education Edition. This game teaches students how to code through one of the most popular game formats in the world. If you're a teacher you already know a lot of your students love this game and the game mechanics that come with it.

2. Apps: Google's Read Along

Another app-based learning game is "Read Along" by Google. The app uses Google's voice technology to encourage kids to read and follow along with stories. It has great reviews and is used around the world. The only drawback at the moment is it only being compatible with Android at the moment.

3. Classroom: Kahoot

Kahoot allows you to create a multiple choice quiz through a quick website link share. This allows for students to use their phones in a productive manner, participating in selecting or typing their answers to in-class quizzes in real-time. Kahoot is one of the most straightforward and interactive examples of gamification motivating people in the classroom.

4. eLearning Platforms: Archy Learning

Archy Learning is a simple gamified eLearning platform. Teachers can cut and paste YouTube links and classroom notes into a learning pathway. Where it gets really fun is with the addition of gamification strategy in the form of class quizzes, educational video games, mixed media exams, and awarded certificates upon completed courses for an all-around gamification learning experience.

For more examples see our video and blog [Gamification Examples in Education](#)

Gamification in Websites

1. Physical & Online Locations: Foursquare

Previously mentioned, Foursquare was the original website and brand which not only built their company around the premise of gamification but grew 10x in size in just five years of implementing game elements into customer onboarding. Bringing both real life and online elements to their brand, store and website. Watch the video at the top of this page to learn more about Foursquare.

2. Website: DevHub

In August 2010 DevHub announced an increase in the number of users who completed their online tasks from 10% to 80% after adding gamification elements. Social websites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn now have implemented game elements into their sign-up & account processes as a result of DevHub's success. The easiest tool to Gamify your site is through the largest DIY website engines in the world; Wix & Shopify allow users to add games to eCommerce stores in order to encourage engagement and email subscriptions.

3. Social: Reddit

The most well-executed example of gamification within a social site can be found on Reddit. Using badges, points, leaderboards, personalisation/avatars, coins, and many other elements and mechanics to increase engagement, Reddit took a basic blog website and transformed it into one of the top 10 most visited sites in the world through gamification. By gaining points for the amount of time you write, interact, and have simply been a member on the site, you can buy "coins" and "gift" them to article writers. This is a great example of intrinsic motivators building up a website's following.

4. Online Portfolio: Bruno Simon

One of the most engaging online portfolios you will ever 'experience'. Bruno Simon is a Creative Developer who is just showing off at this point with his fully interactive online portfolio. Control a 3D model truck as you literally drive around his past projects, social links, and added playground to ensure that viewers truly take their time to soak in and enjoy what Bruno has achieved (click on the link and go for a spin).

Gamification Influencers

1. The Original: Yu-Kai Chou

Yu-Kai was one of the first prominent figures in gamification. First, truly rising in popularity around the topic of gamification with his [TED talk](#) in 2014, and soon followed up by awarded "Gamification Guru of the Year" - [Gamification Europe Conference](#) in 2017.

His book 'Octalysis' is the framework I mentioned in [8 Core Drives in Gamification](#).

2. The Consultant: Gabe Zicherman

Gabe has written three major books on gamification and done numerous live videos and events, including major [gamification conferences](#). His talks, workshops, books, and courses have helped train marketers, customer loyalty experts, HR professionals, strategists, and product designers to make the world a more fun and engaging place.

3. The Face: Jane McGonigal

Game designer, author of [SuperBetter](#), and public speaker. Jane's TED Talk on 'How Gaming can Make a Better World' has established her as "the face of Gamification".

4. The Doctor: Dr. Zac Fitz-Walter

Dr. Zac earned one of the world's first PhDs in gamification design and has since lectured and developed a curriculum on gamification for universities. He speaks and educates governments, conferences, and companies around the world on effective gamification and engagement design including [Gamification Europe](#).

Summary

What actions do you want your audience to take? Whether they are students, customers or employees - Can you think of any way of measuring and rewarding them for doing certain actions? The old saying is true "whatever gets measured, improves".

This is why loyalty cards and Airpoints have done so well. They acknowledge and reward customers for behaviours the company wants them to continue doing. In the next article, we'll be going through more examples of how individuals and companies have utilised gamification to their benefit, titled: "5 Best Gamification Examples".

Can you think of other companies which have gamified their products or services?

What other industries have done well with gamification?

This is the first of a three-part series. Click on the "Next Article" tab in the bottom right to go to the next page where we look at other "Top Gamification Examples" within a video presentation.

Resources:

- OwlTail Podcast on - [Gamification](#)
- Smart Insights Gamification - [What is it and why is it important?](#)
- Smallbiz Technology - [What is Gamification and What does it mean to you?](#)
- UX Mag - [A Gamification frame work for interaction designers](#)

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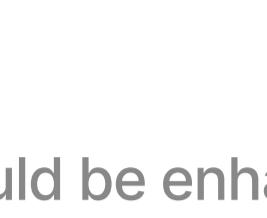
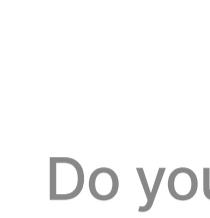
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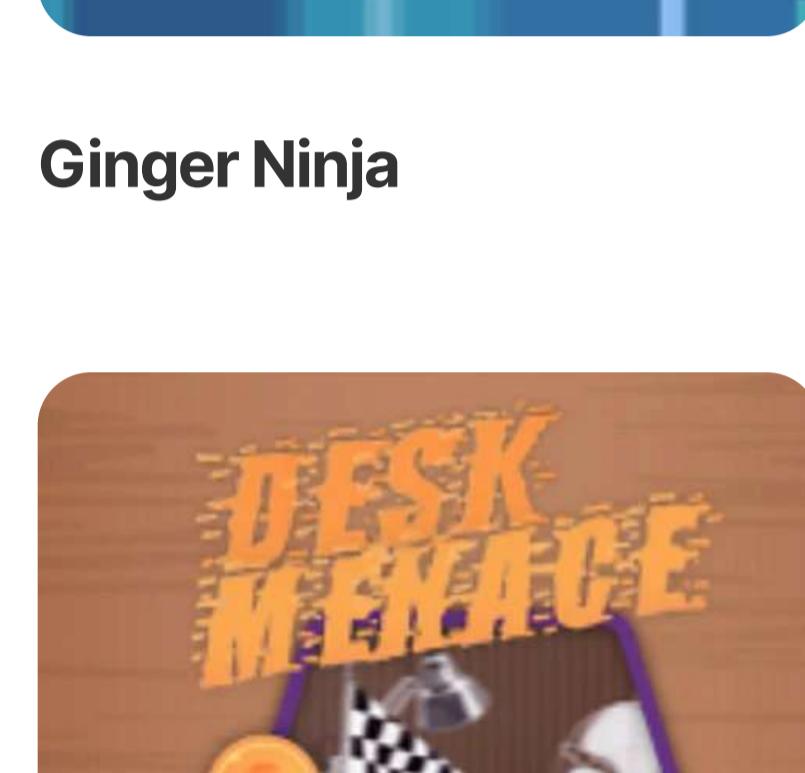
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Video Games We Can Create For You
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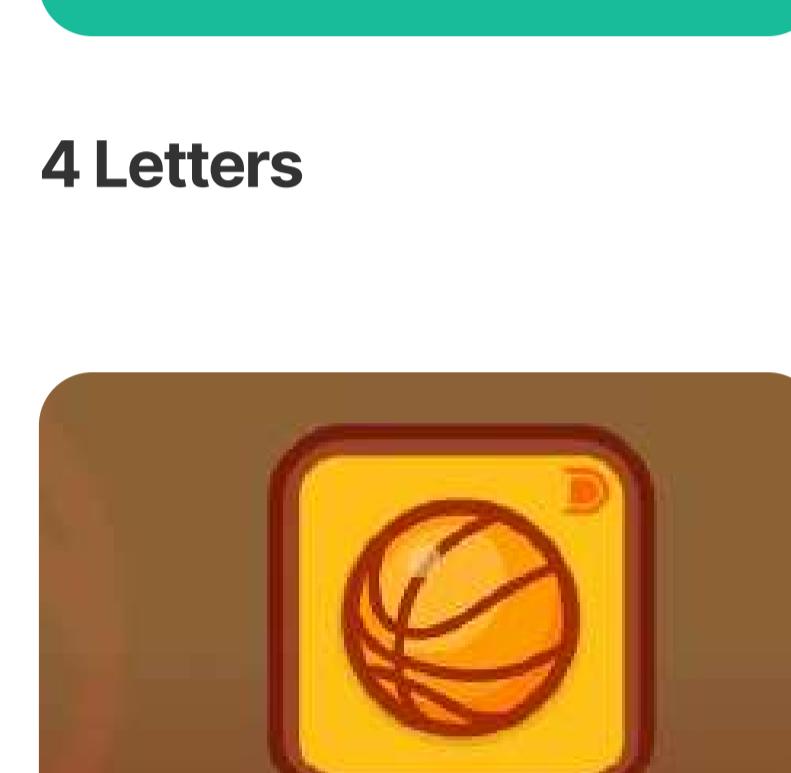


Do you have an upcoming campaign that could be enhanced through [Gamification?](#)

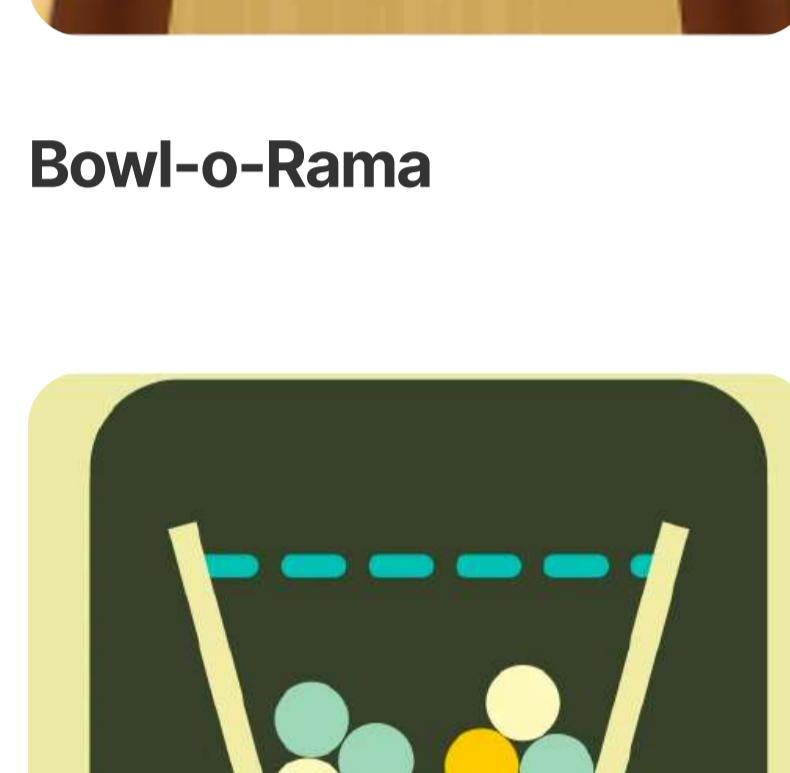
Read up on the history of our game templates by our awesome team and their proven target markets & demographics, along with playing any of the available games in the library, in order to help you gain an understanding of which game would work best for your next marketing push.



Ginger Ninja



4 Letters



Bowl-o-Rama



Desk Menace



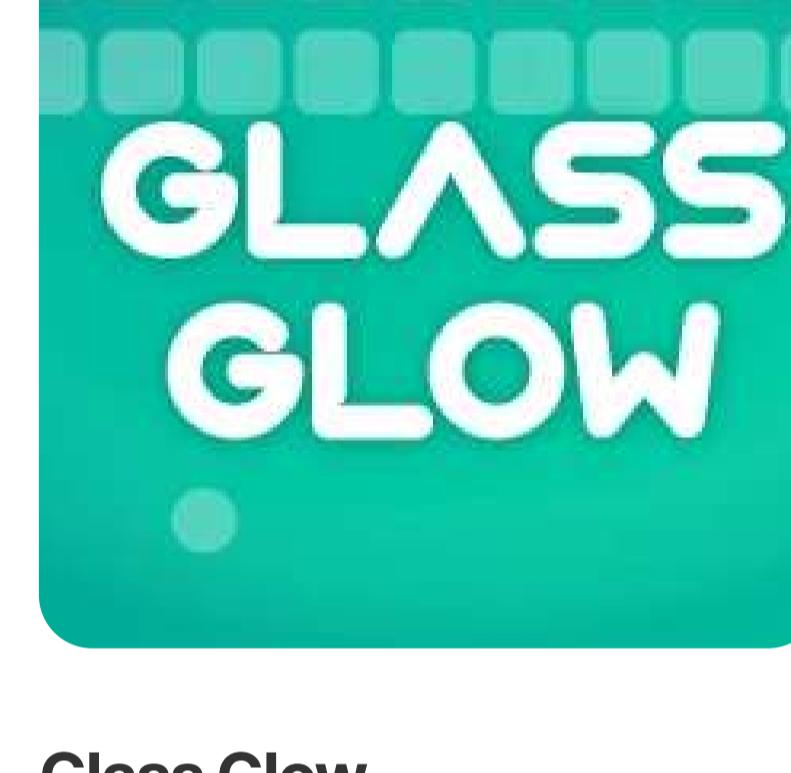
Dunk Shot



Filled Glass



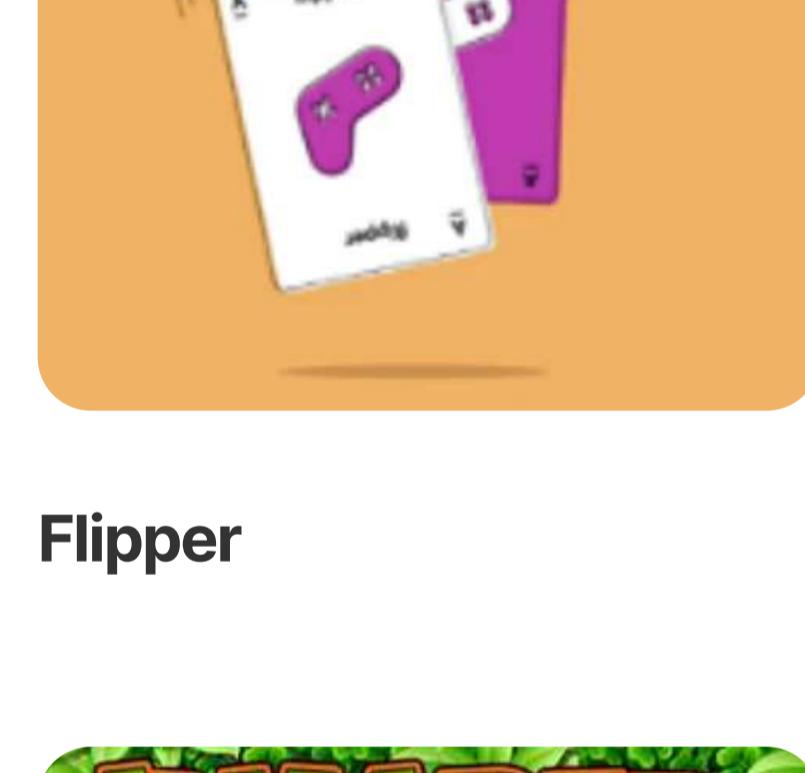
Flapcat



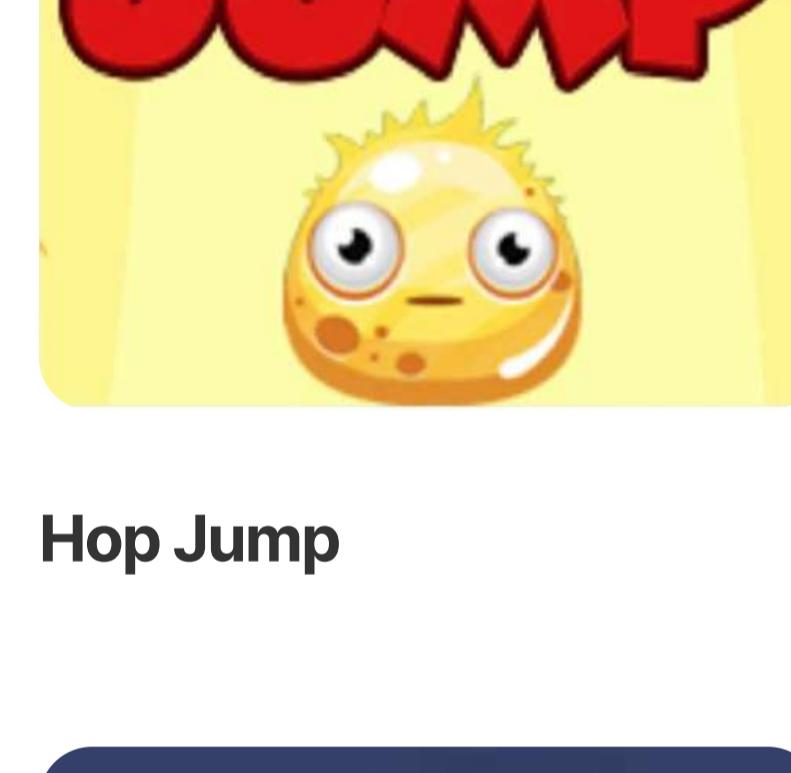
Fruit Master



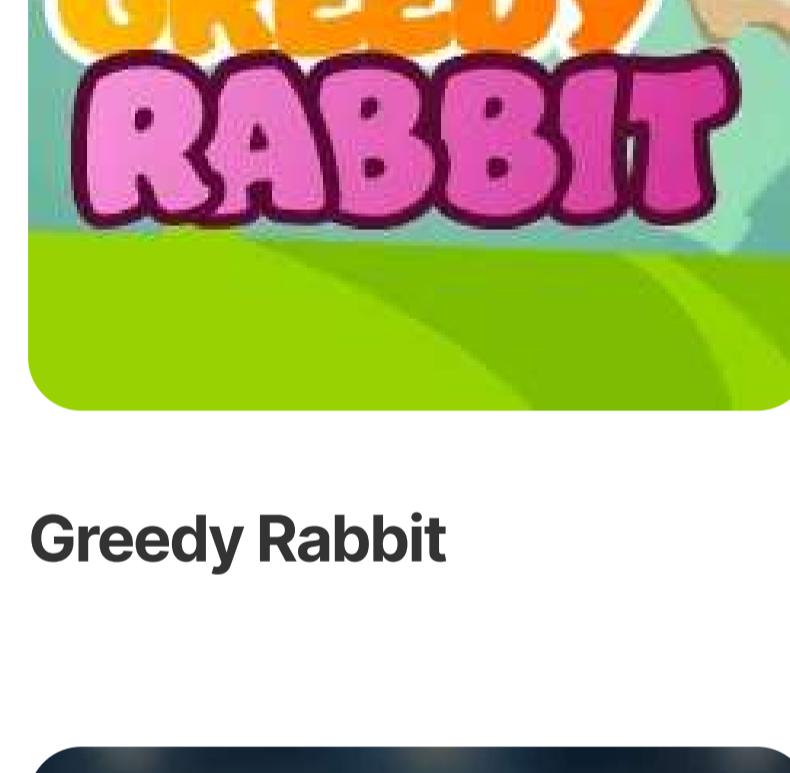
Fruit Chef



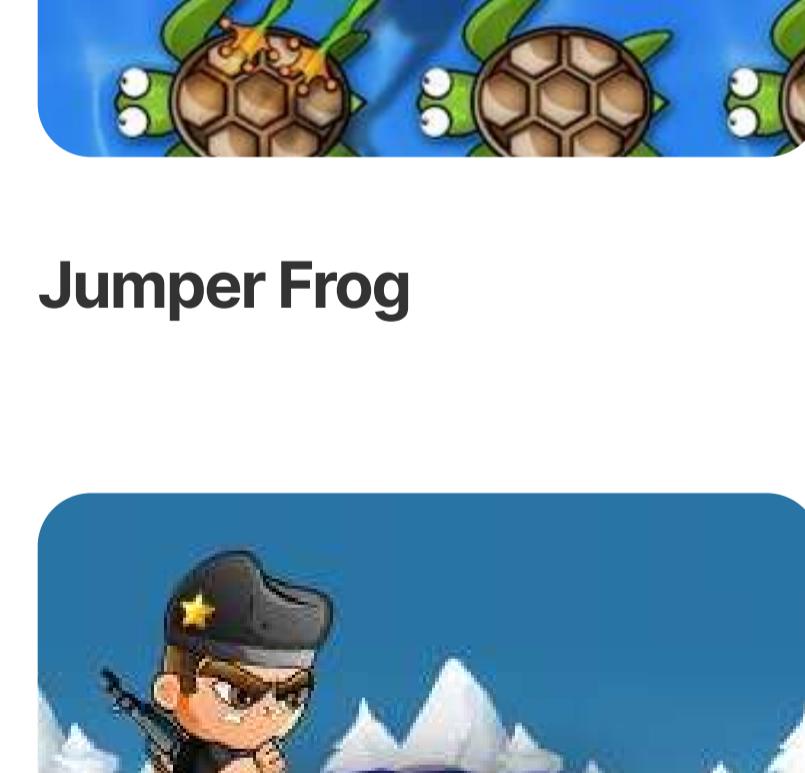
Solitaire



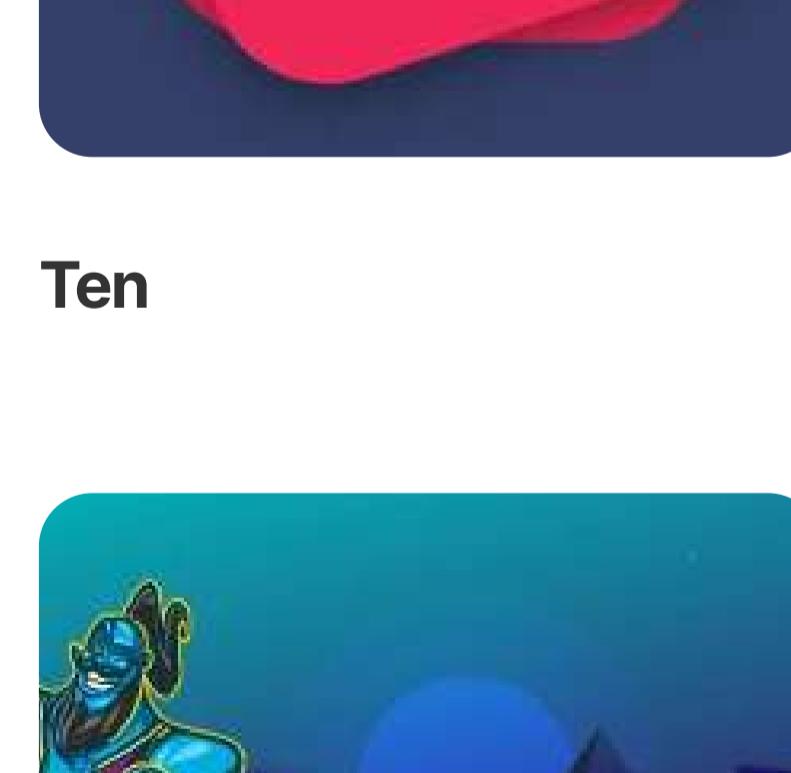
Glass Glow



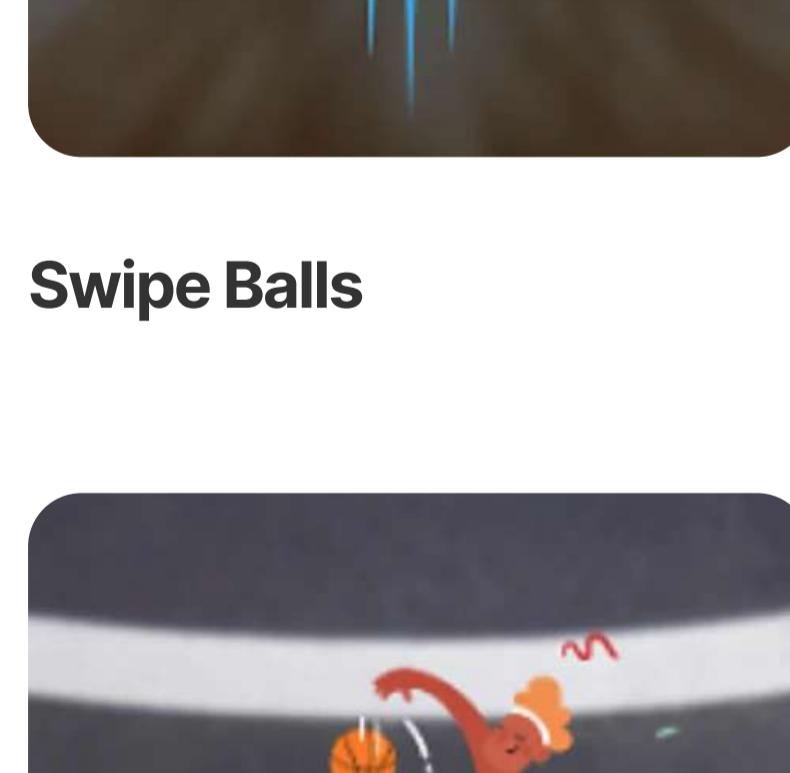
Aerial Flight



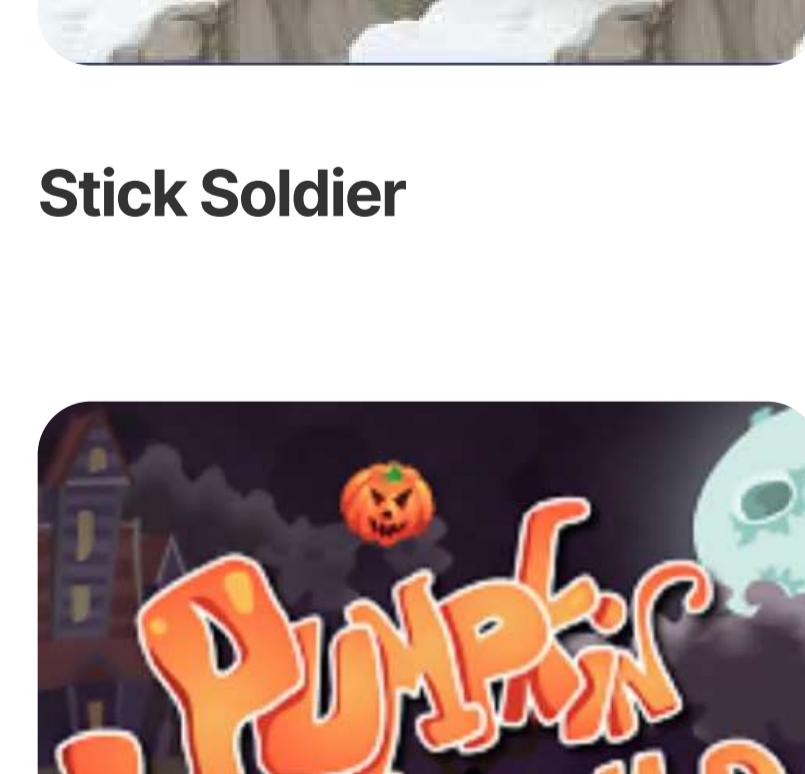
Flipper



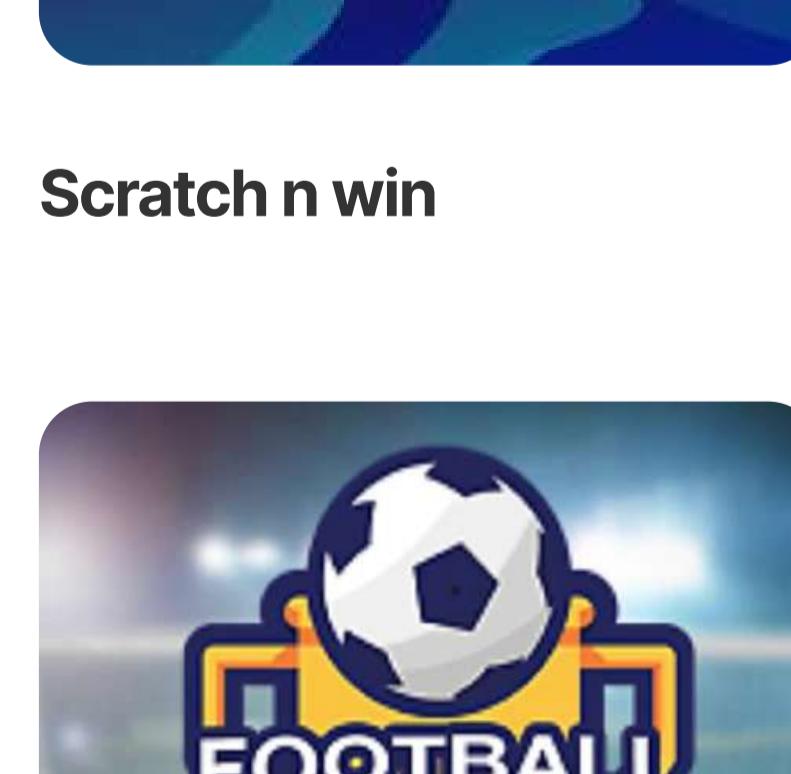
Hop Jump



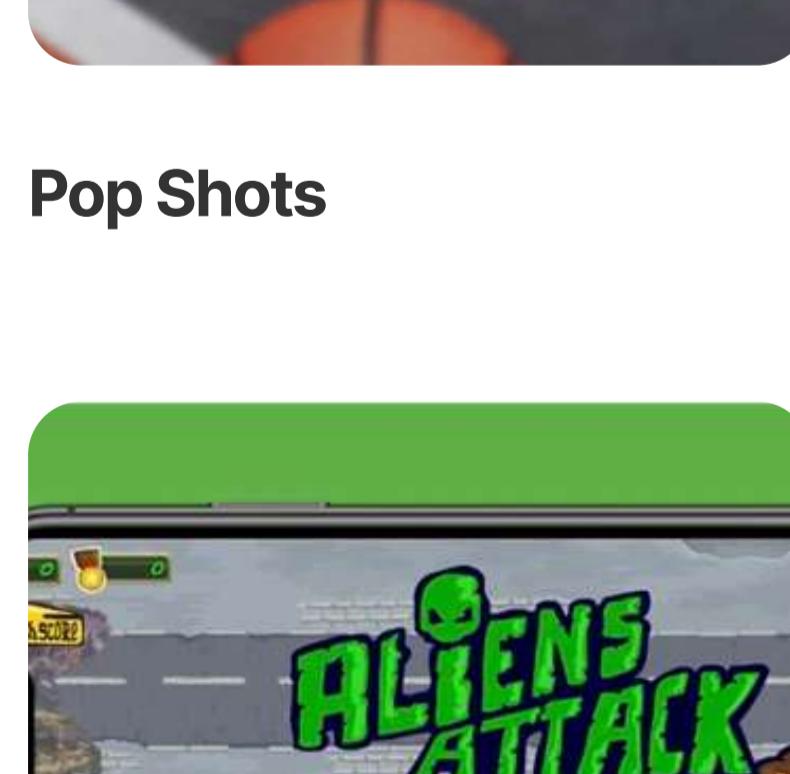
Greedy Rabbit



Jumper Frog



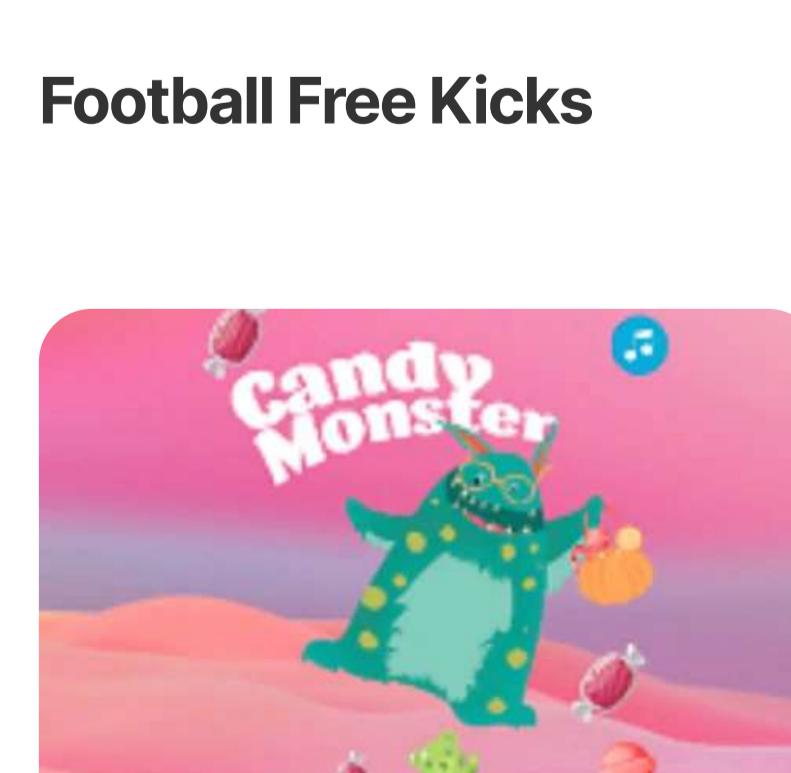
Ten



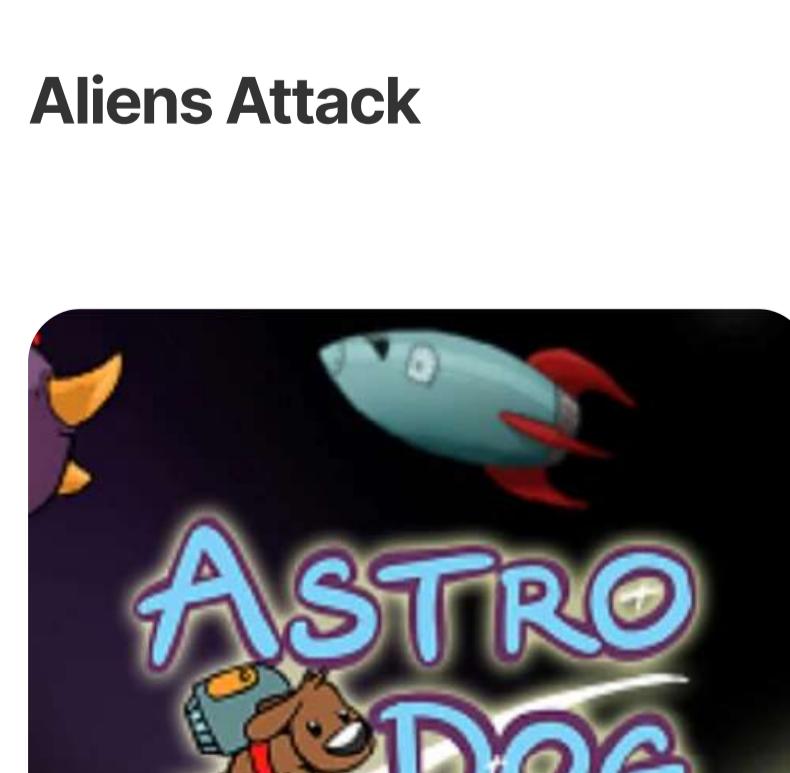
Swipe Balls



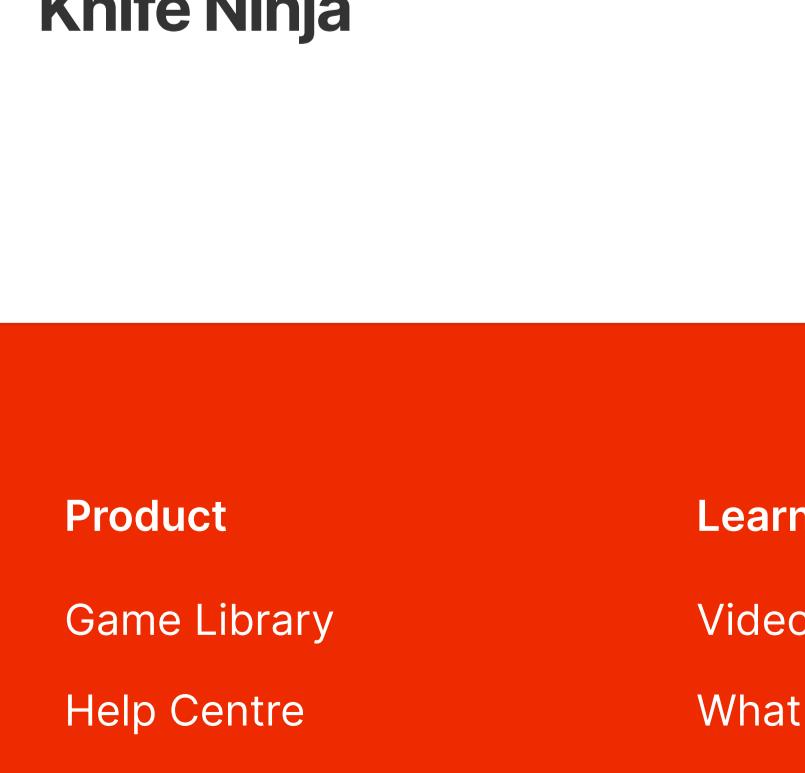
Stick Soldier



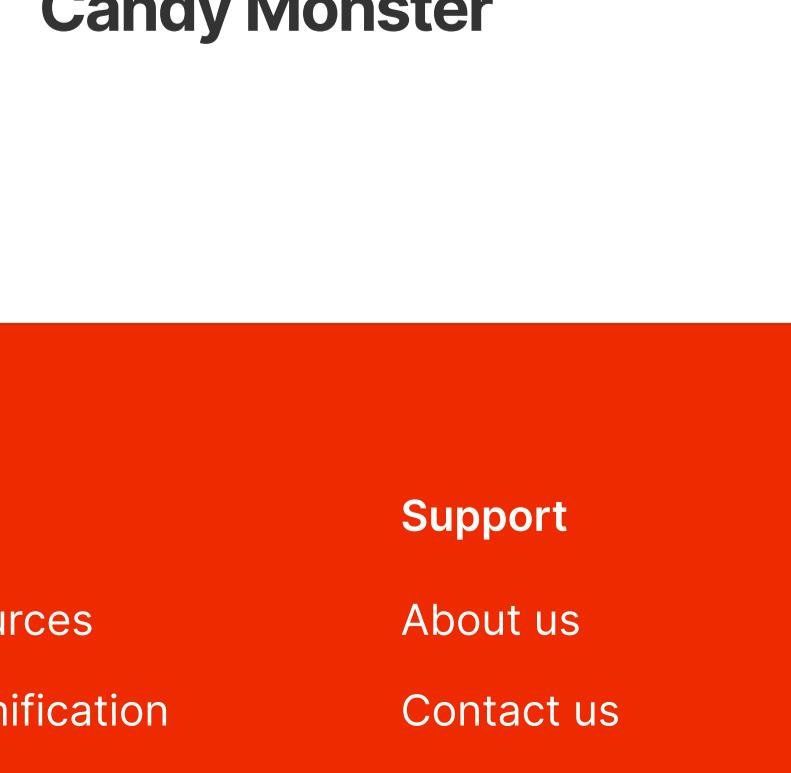
Scratch n win



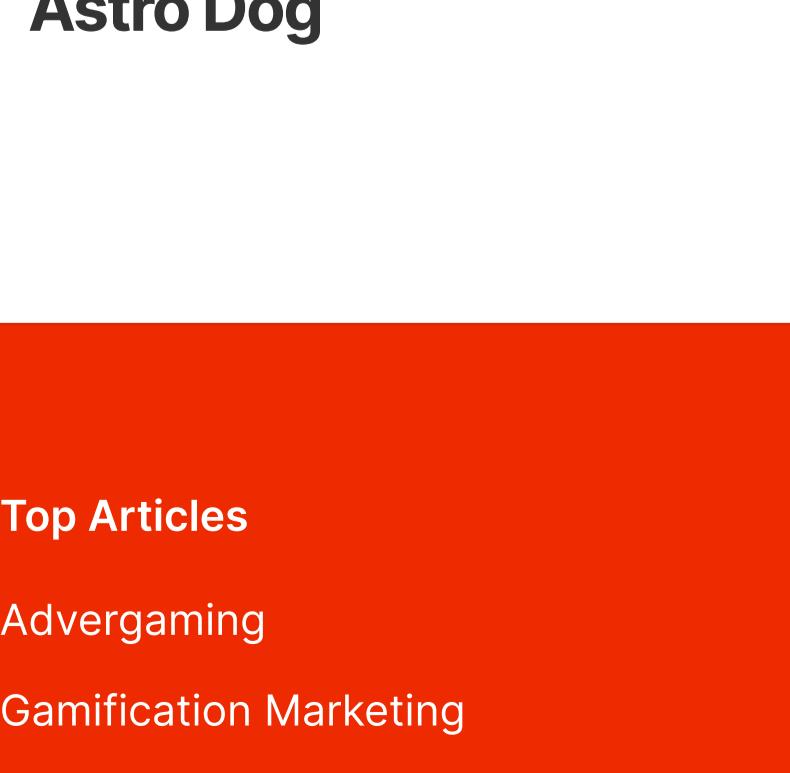
Pop Shots



Pumpkin Smasher



Football Free Kicks



Aliens Attack



Knife Ninja



Candy Monster

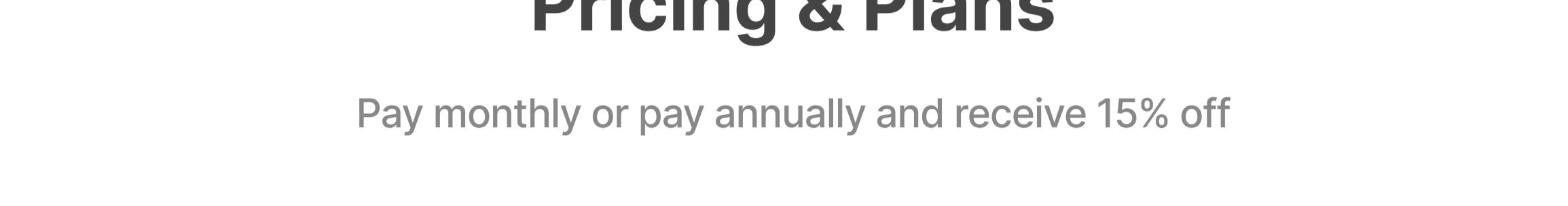


Astro Dog

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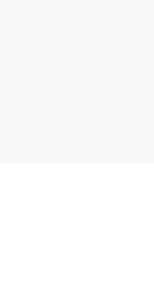
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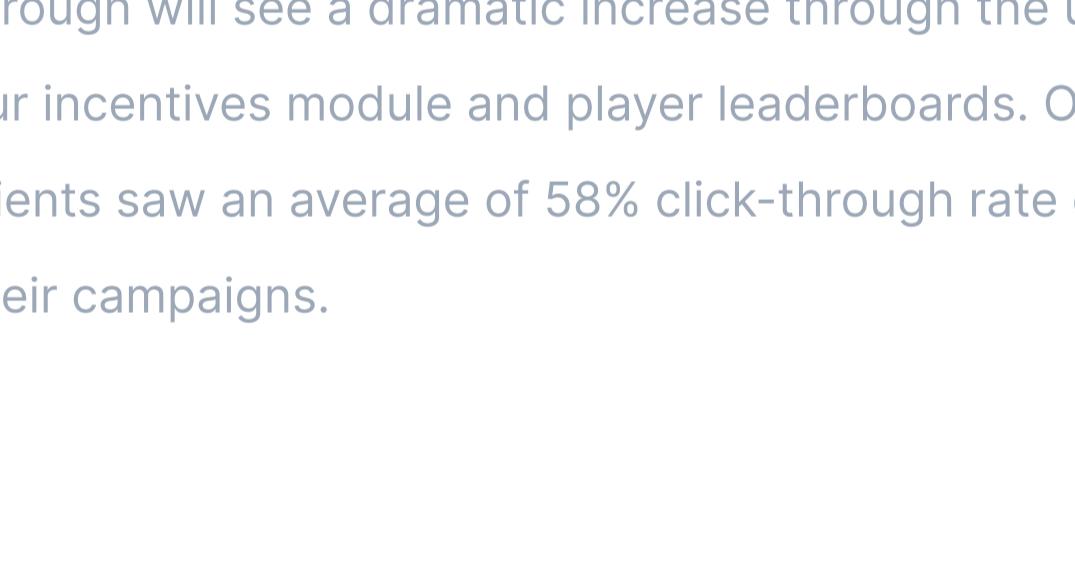
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Positive Brand Association

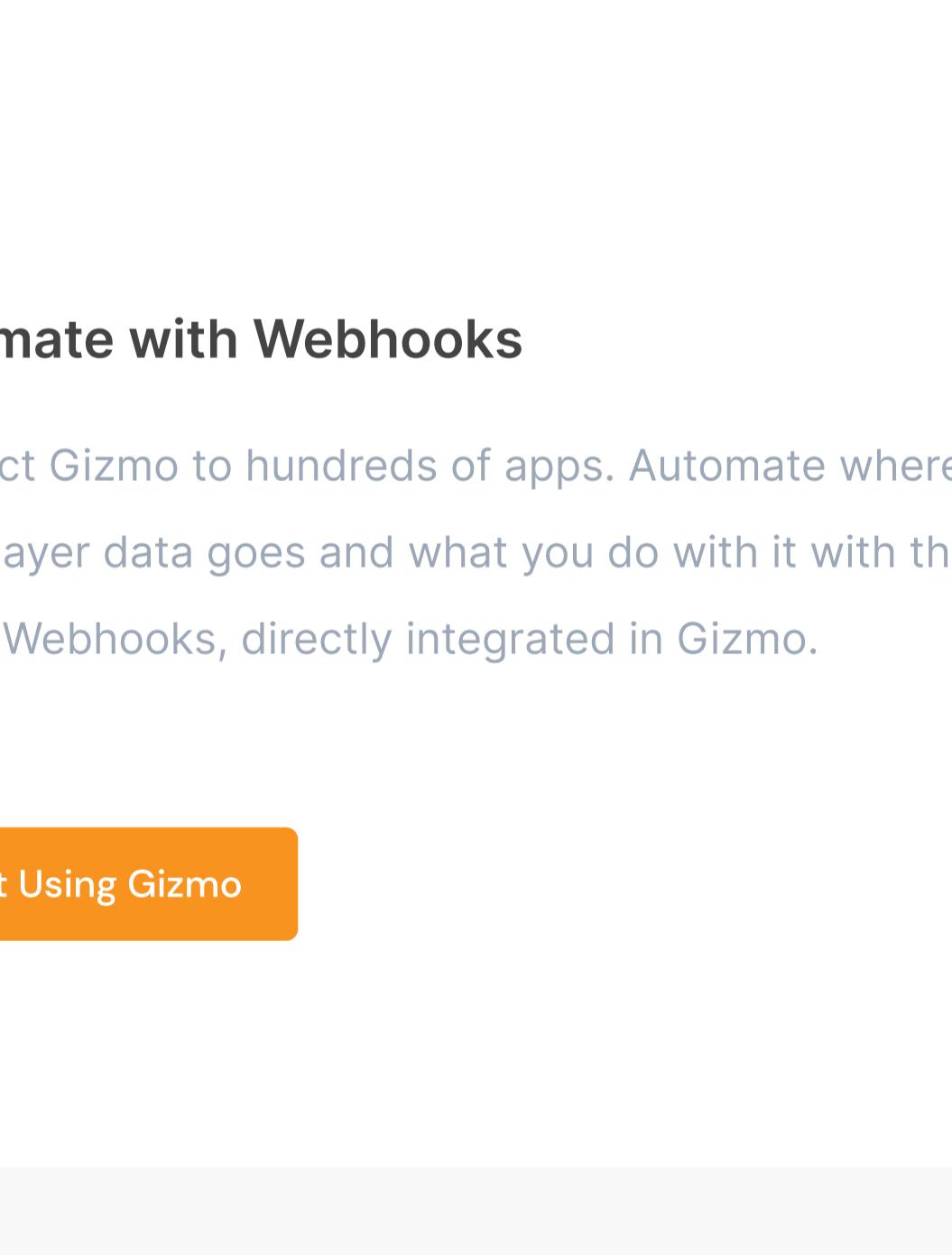
Traditional digital marketing often fails to leave your audience with a positive brand association. Create immersive, addictive and rewarding game campaigns that audiences will associate with your client's brand. In addition, you'll be able test & finely tune your campaigns in real time. *No more boring ads!*

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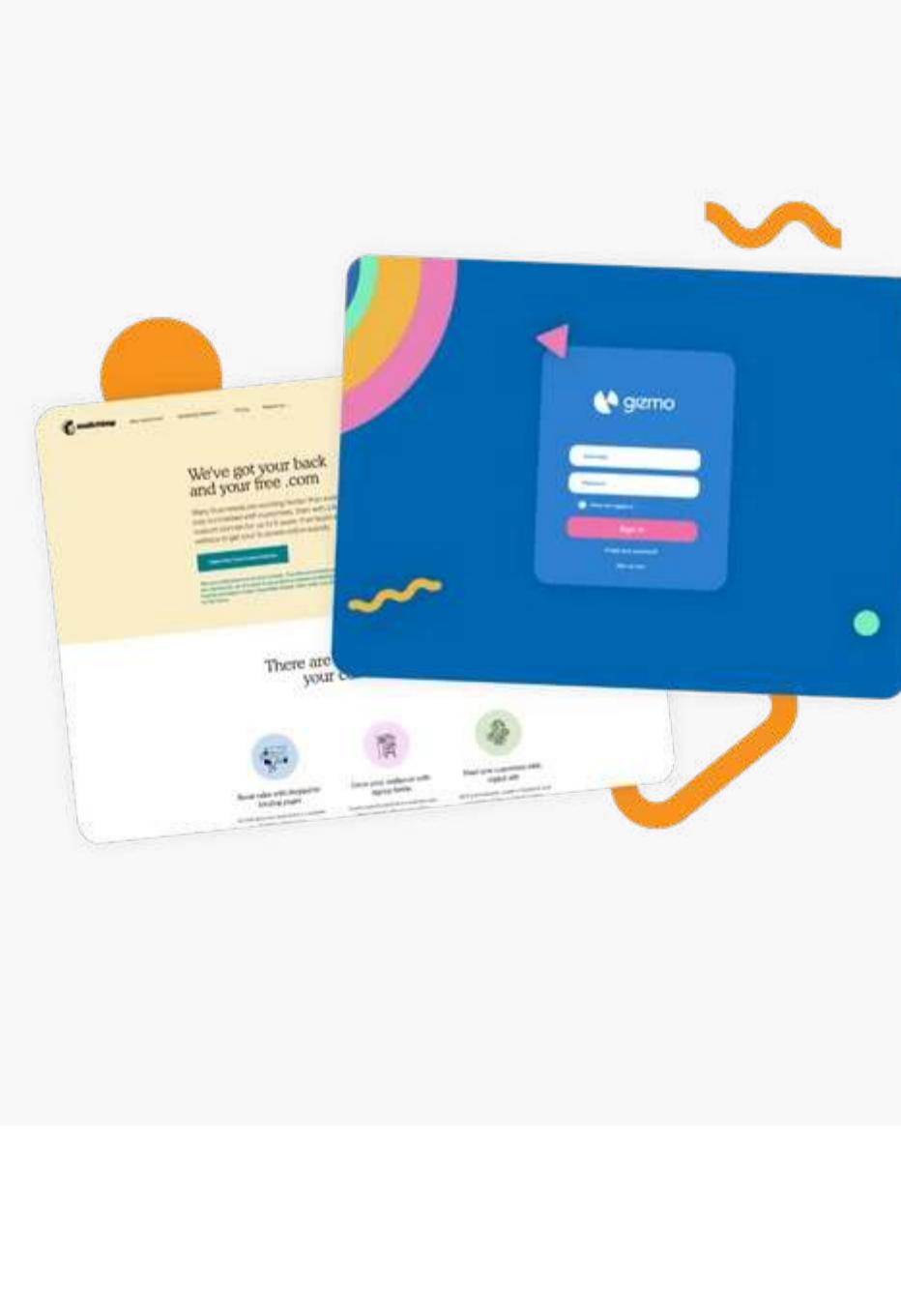
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Boost your customer engagement with a gamified marketing campaign. On average our clients see 82% engagement rate throughout their campaigns across their major social channels!



Click-through Rate

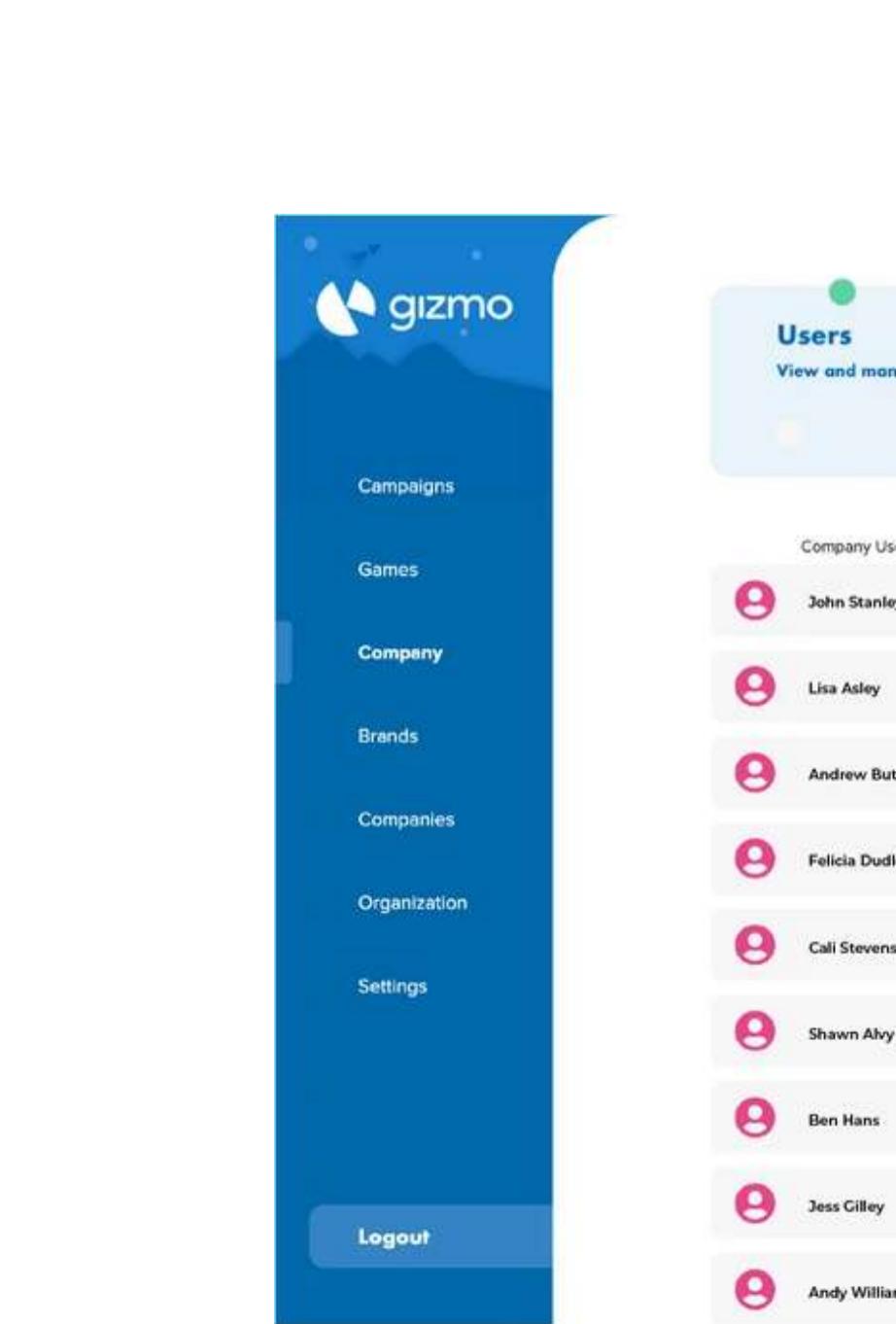
The average click-through rate on a Google Search ad is 1.91%. Through custom games, your customer click-through will see a dramatic increase through the use of our incentives module and player leaderboards. Our past clients saw an average of 58% click-through rate during their campaigns.



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We've made connecting with your leads even easier with a native Mailchimp integration. As your leads roll in, automatically populate your Mailchimp Audience for customer journey automation. No monkey business.

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Case Studies

Below are just a handful of successful campaigns with earlier clients. Read on for further information or play any of the games mentioned in each case. Enjoy!



Gamify has partnered with some of the largest marketing companies in the World to produce games for brands such as BananaBoat, KFC, RedBalloon & Nissan amongst over 9,700 other businesses ranging from corporations to local businesses.

Showing that Gamify not only delivers but that no job is too big or too small.

Companies we've partnered with



Banana Boat

A story of powerful collaboration and exciting player reward. The perfect gamification campaign in collaboration with TLC.

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KFC

KFC Japan used Gamify to get over 850,000 plays and over 600 hours playtime to promote a new product faster than ever before.

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ResMed

See how ResMed's campaign with Gamify helped them bring more people to their website to take their sleep apnea test, build brand awareness and educate their extended audience on sleep apnea.

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Wendy's

Wendy's has used Gamify on multiple marketing campaigns to change buyer behaviour and educate customers on new products.

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Nissan

How a popular car brand used gamification at a sporting event to build awareness around their Intelligent Mobility technology.

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Red Balloon

See how a popular online brand gained a better understanding of their Database through "Engage and Reward" Gamification and some friendly competition.

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Pita Pit

Pita pit was looking to engage new customers and promote its sponsorship and partnership with "The Block NZ".

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V Energy

See how the popular energy drink brand "V" was looking to engage customers and promote their latest energy drink product, along with their other objective to capture user data for future marketing campaigns.

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Donut Papi

How a small Donut shop in Sydney, Australia used gamification to increase organic social shares and their email database by 581%.

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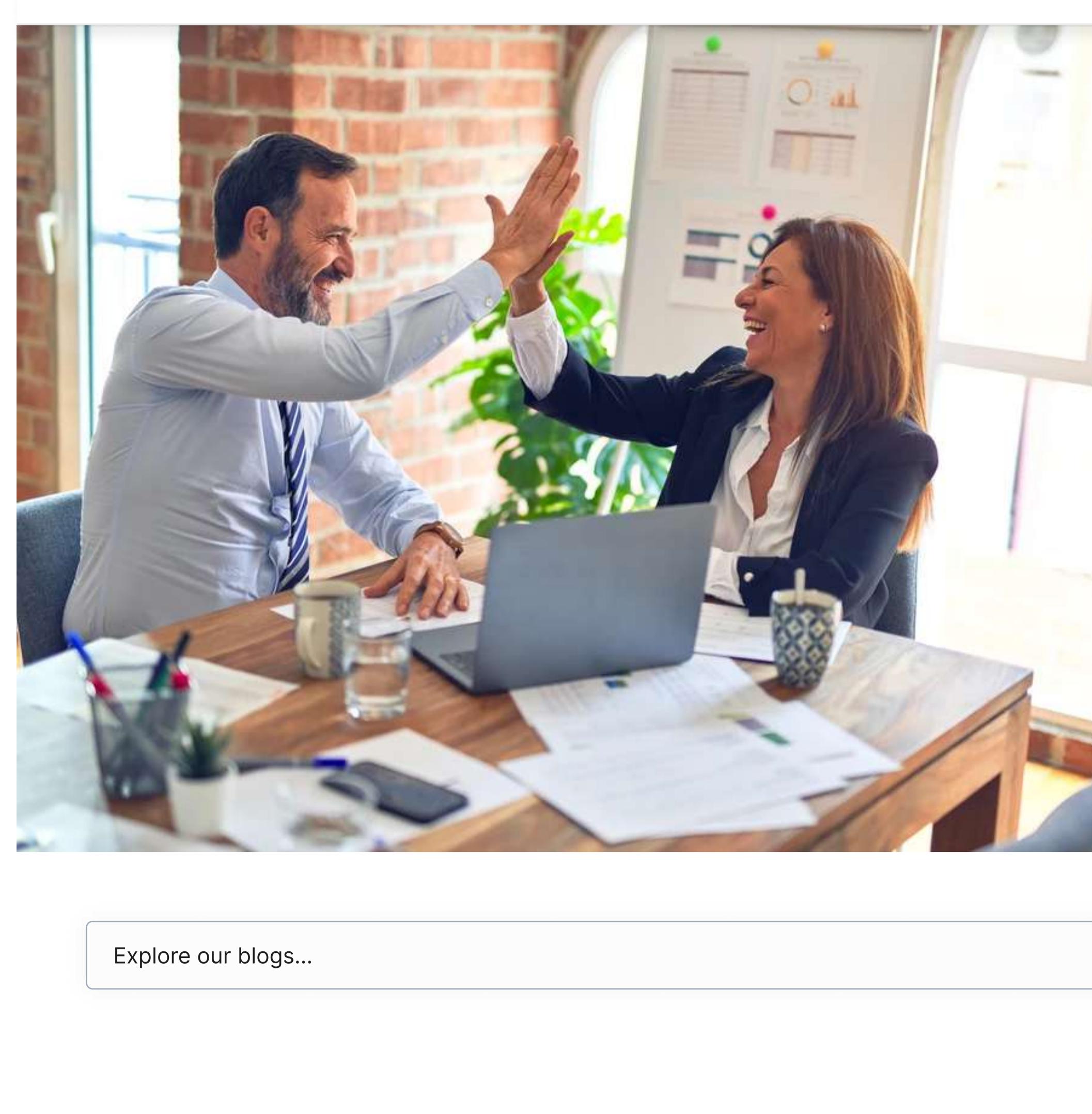
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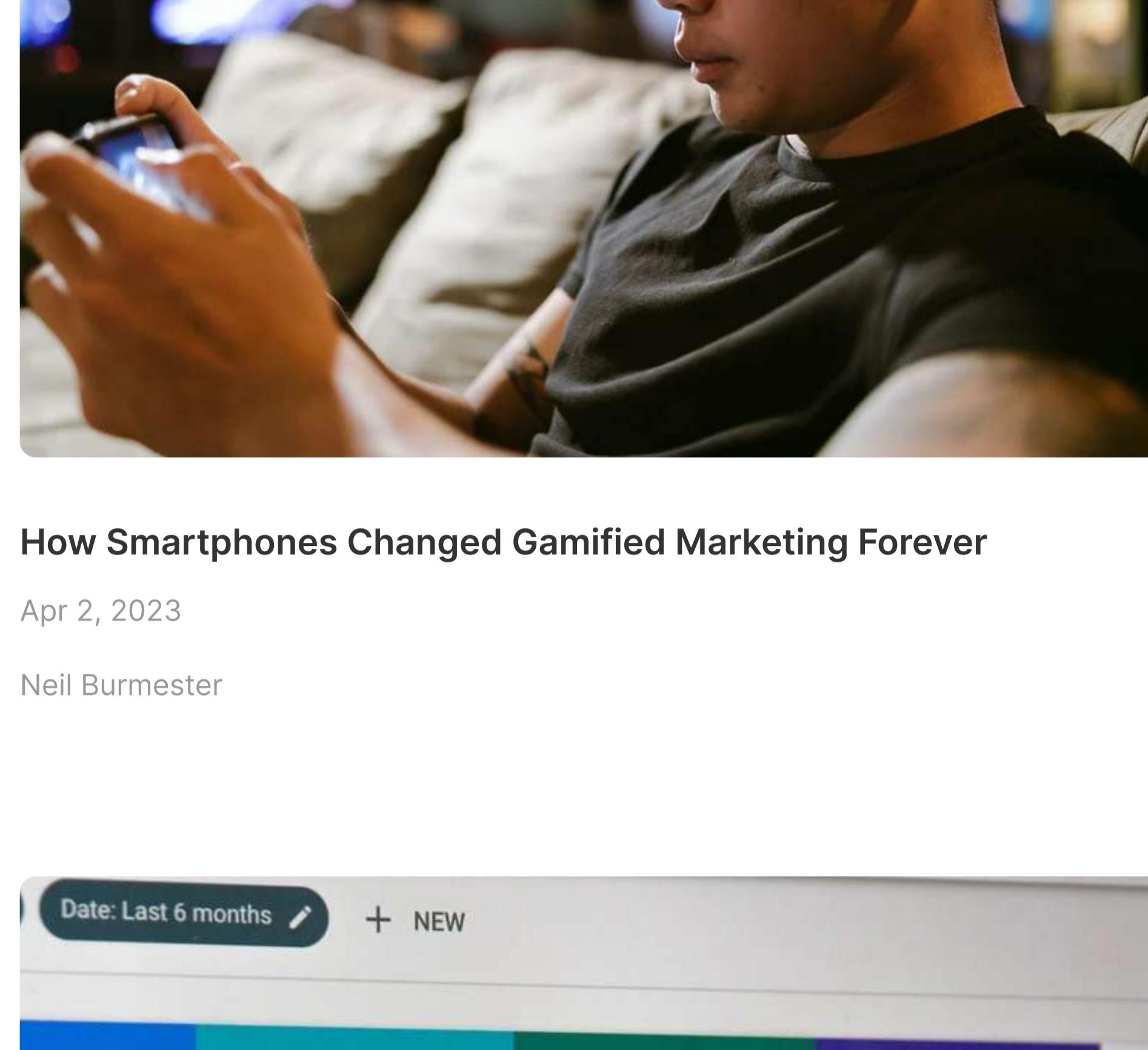


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Sep 27, 2023

Matt Sanasi

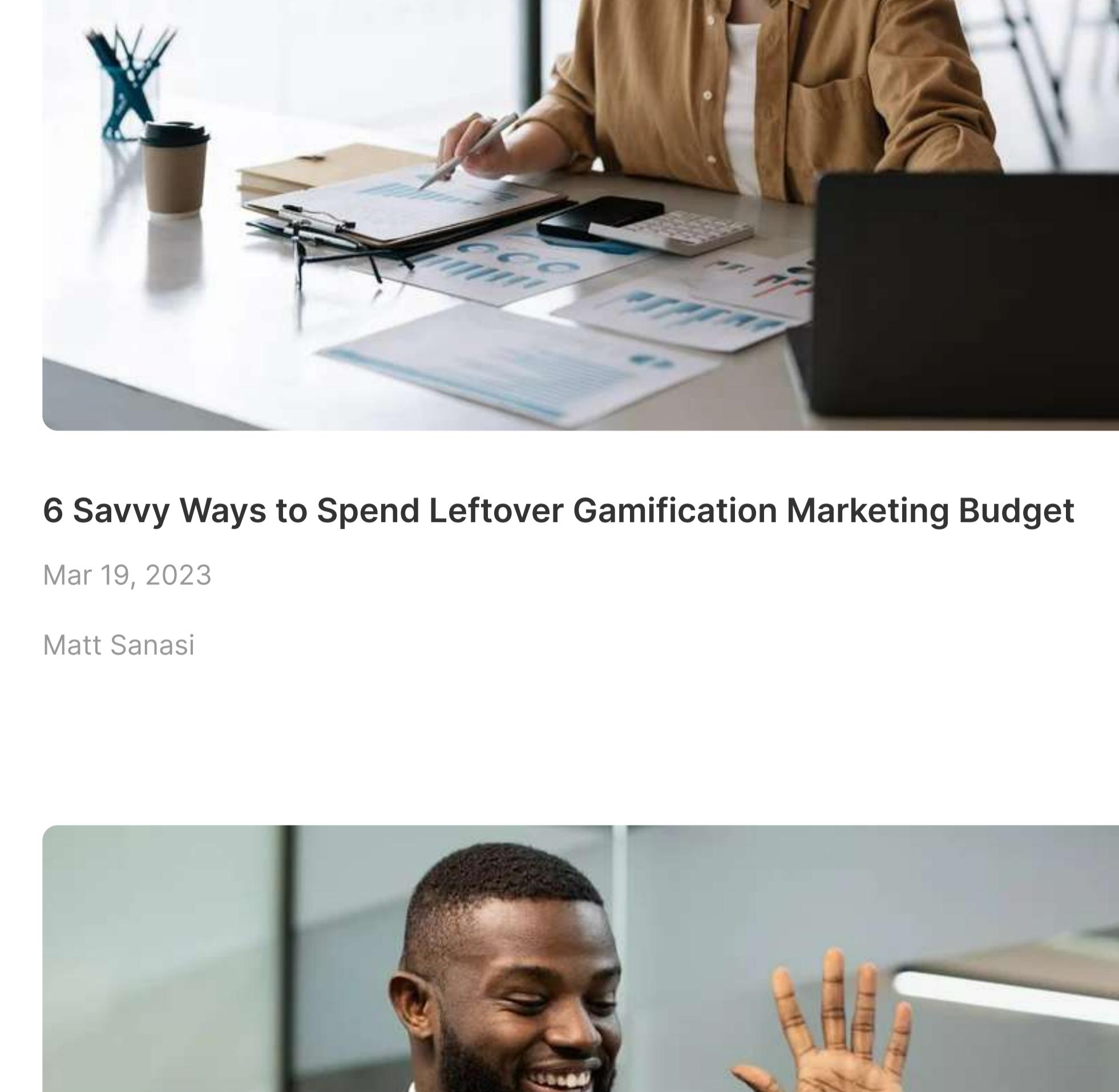
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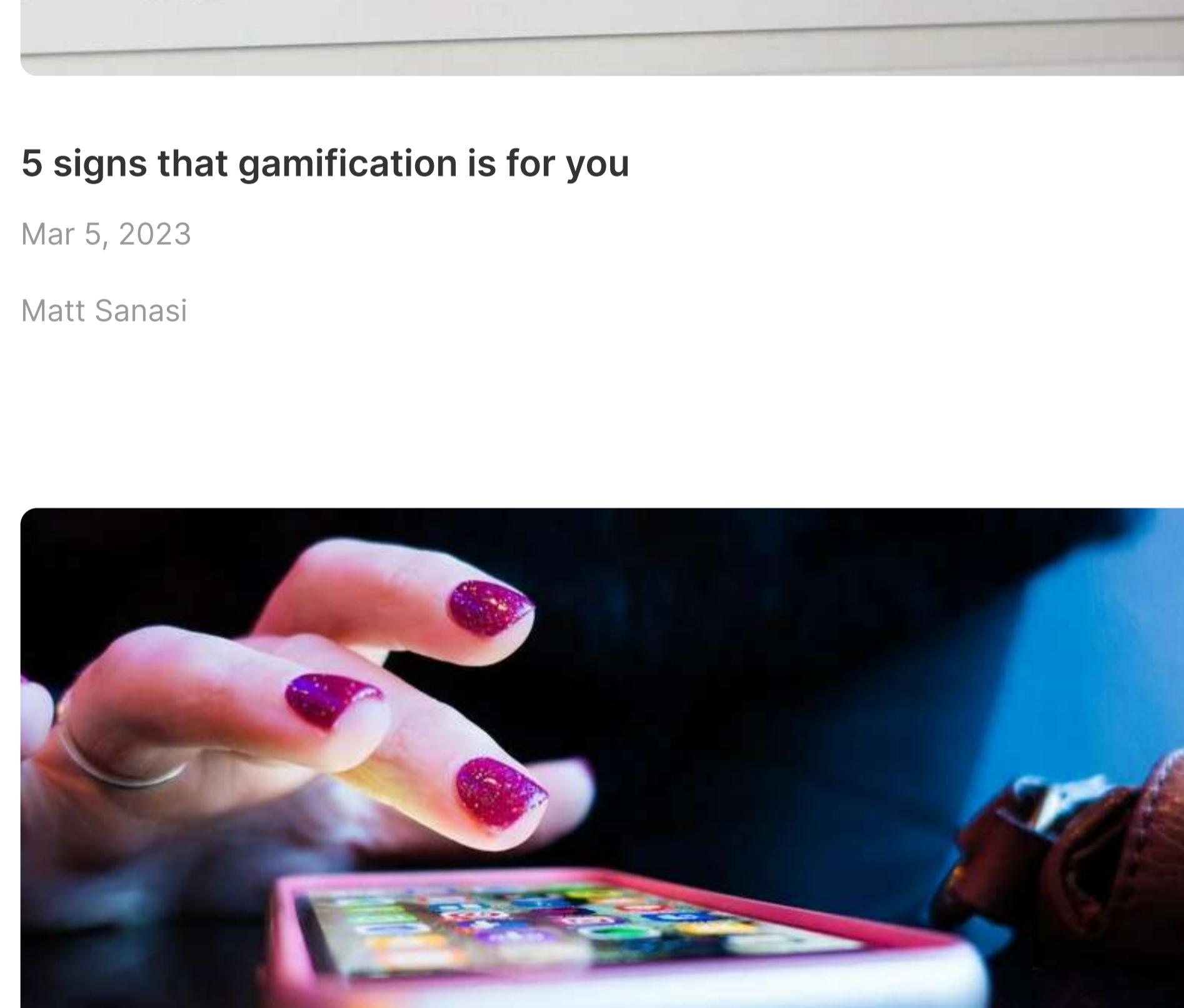
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6 Savvy Ways to Spend Leftover Gamification Marketing Budget

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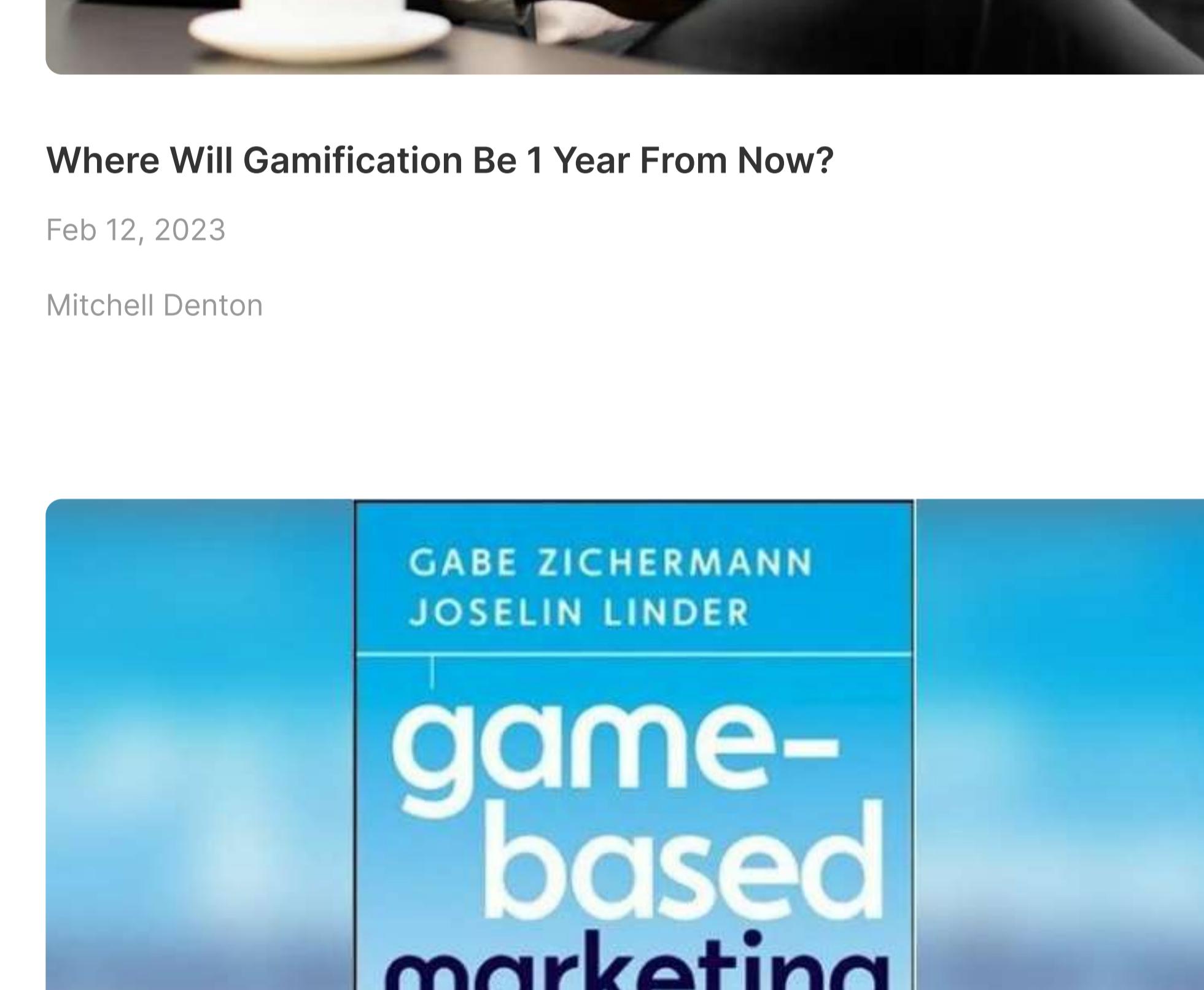
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5 signs that gamification is for you

Mar 5, 2023

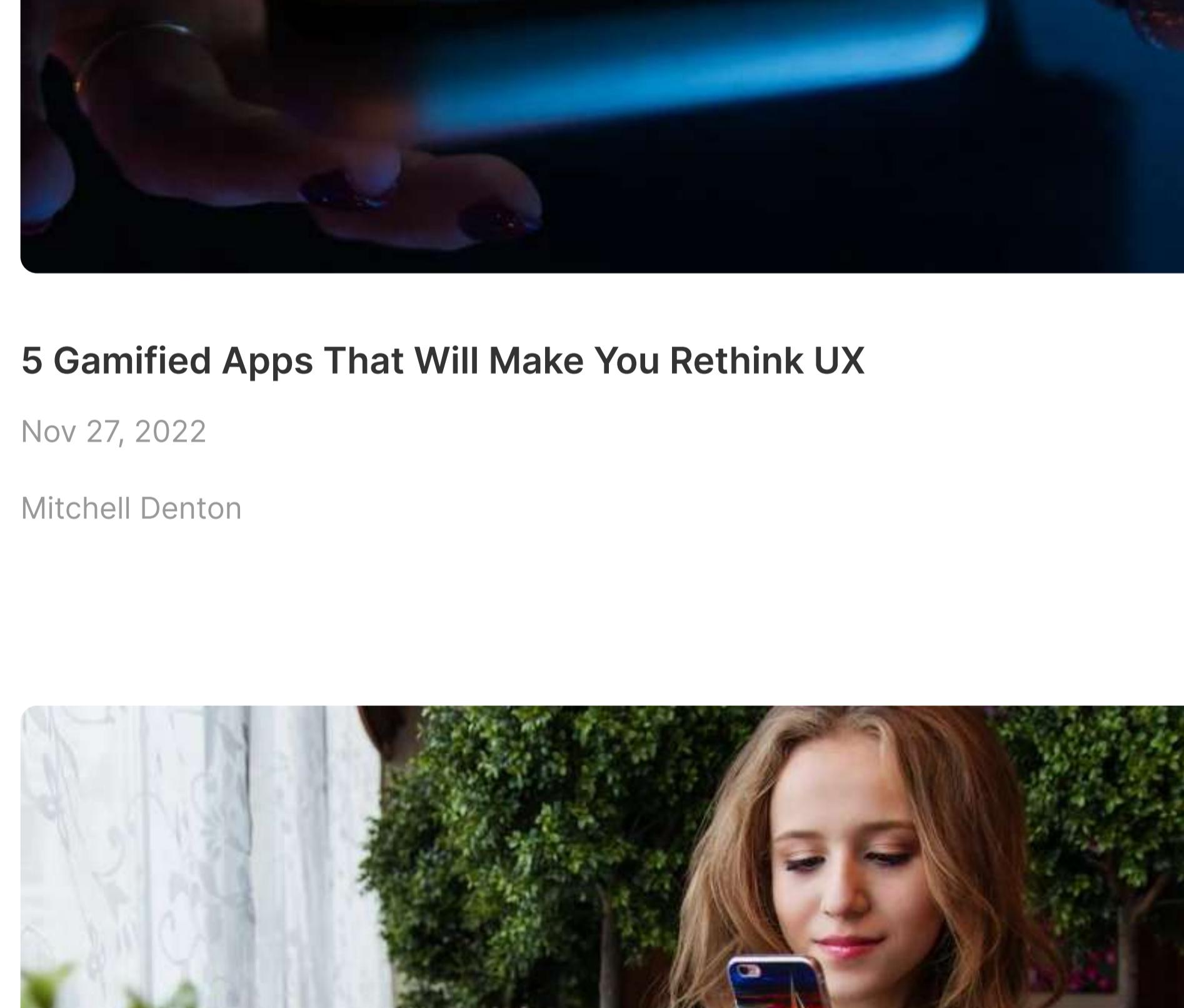
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Where Will Gamification Be 1 Year From Now?

Feb 12, 2023

Mitchell Denton



5 Gamified Apps That Will Make You Rethink UX

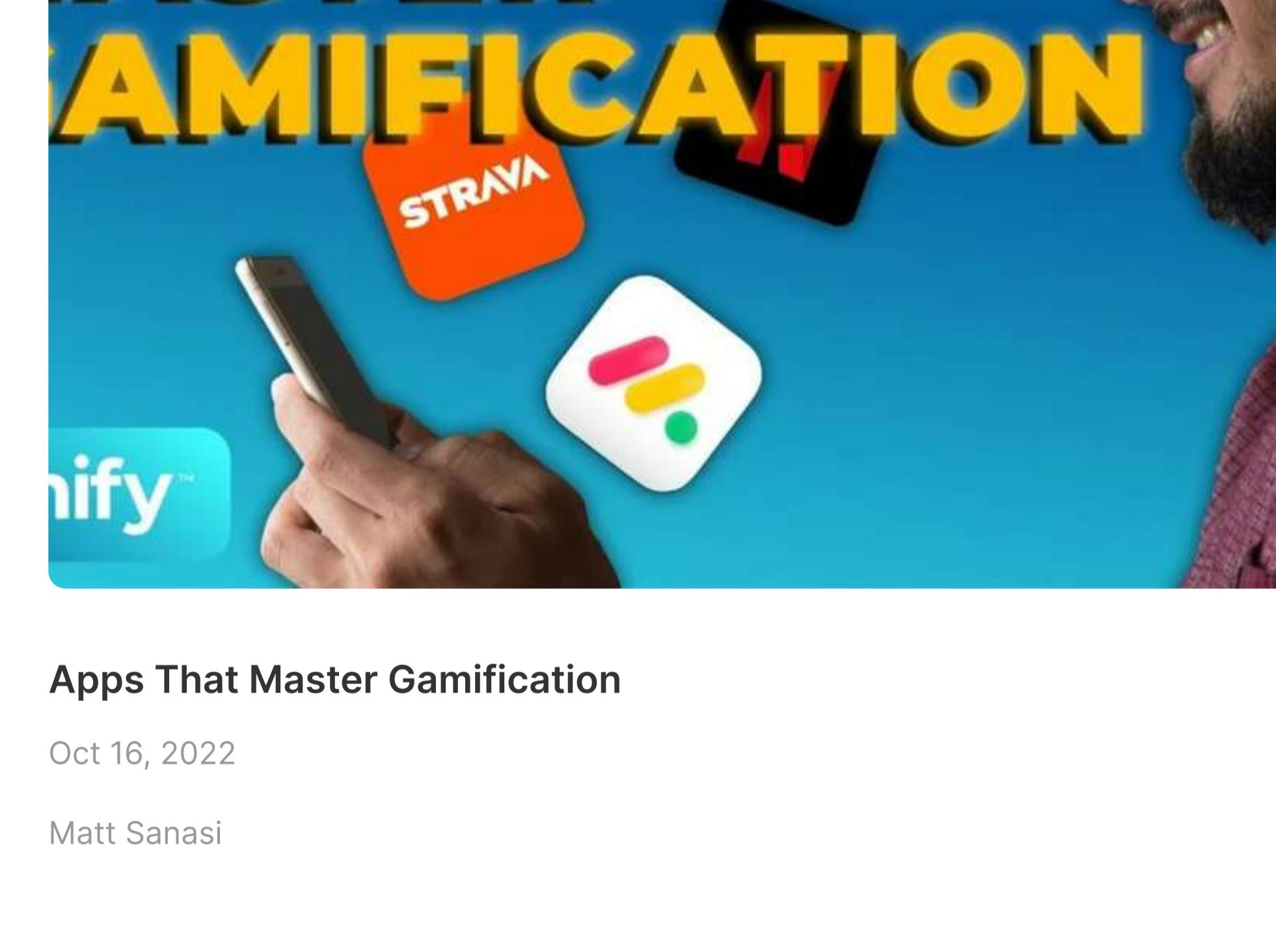
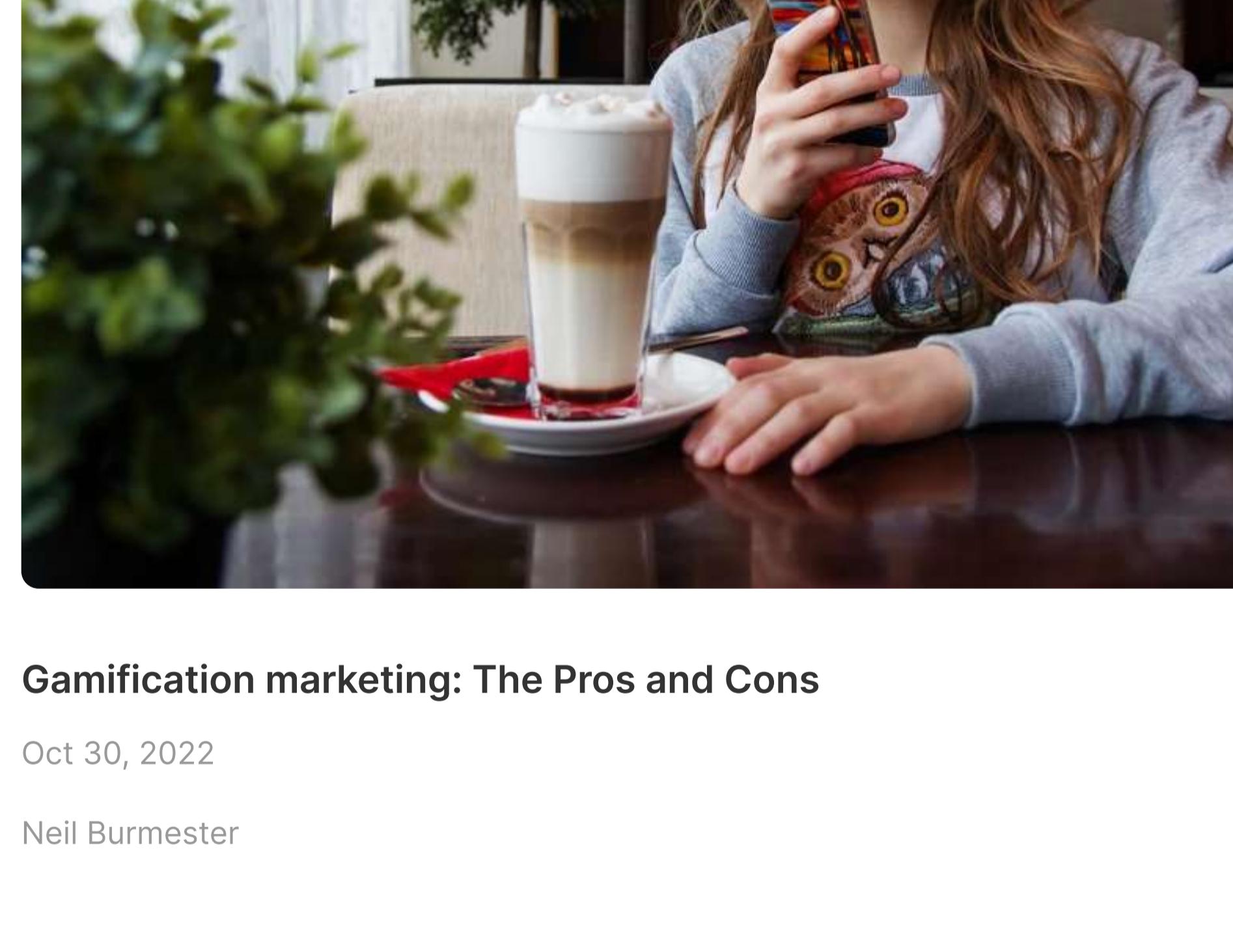
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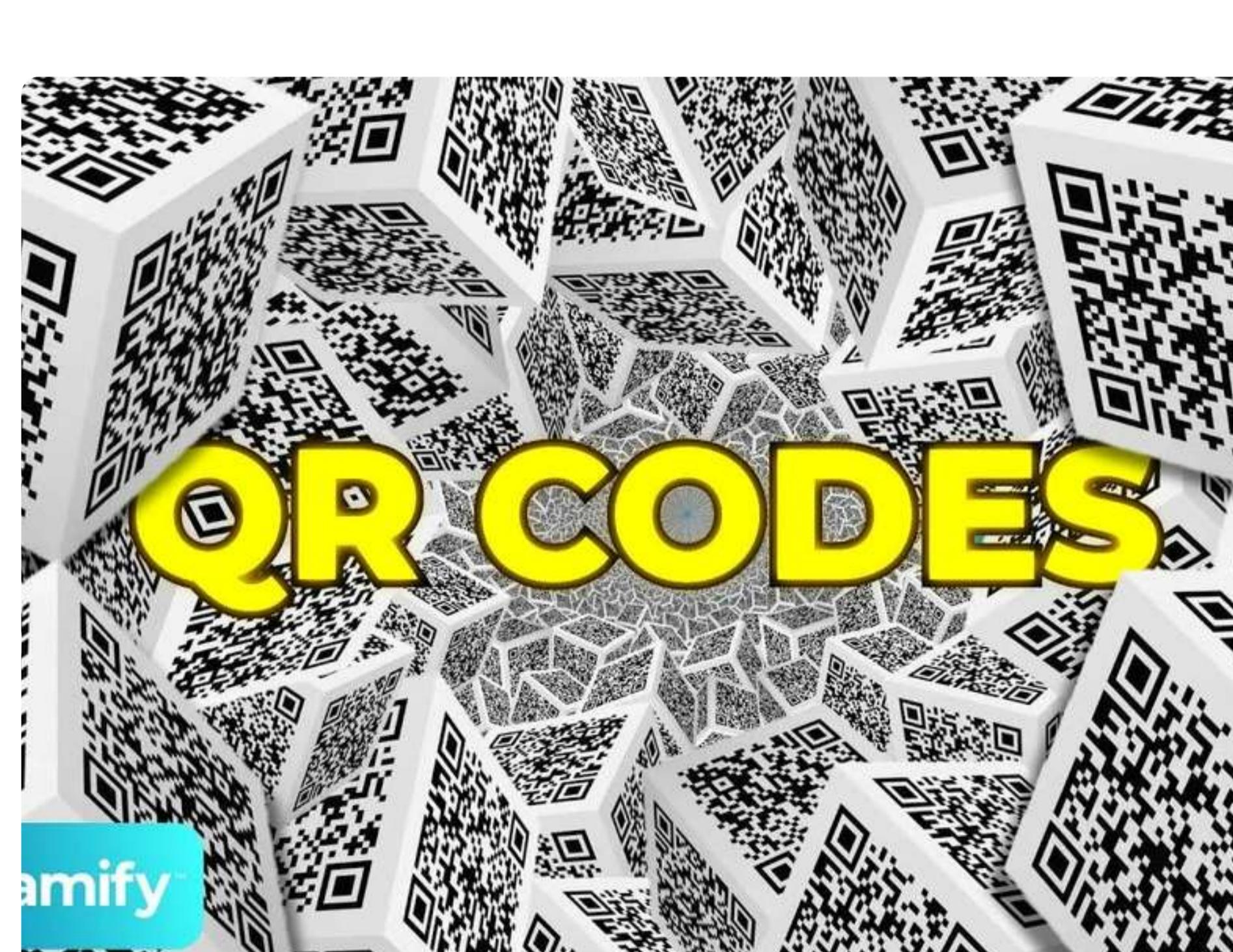
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