

System for Employee Motivation

"A different take at motivating in the workplace"

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1. Executive Summary

“The real leader has no need to lead—he is content to point the way.” —Henry Miller

1.1 Introduction

Organizations today are losing millions of dollars every day due to lack of motivation. Unmotivated employees can cost companies money by being underproductive in the workplace. As we have seen in successful corporations such as Google today, new innovative approaches to motivating can produce much more desired results. By changing the way companies think about motivation, they can be more productive, save money, and end up more successful.

What this new system proposes is to take the fun and innovative ideas from the video game world and apply them to employee motivation. Taking something such as an achievement system, for example, it has a lot in common with a task list. Players are asked to perform certain tasks and for performing those tasks they are rewarded with a point value along with a small medal that proves they completed that task. This is the same thing that employees see every day in the workplace. Taking the fun and entertaining aspects from these goal-oriented systems and applying it to employee task lists could produce more motivation for their jobs. This would give employees more intrinsic motivation to complete tasks as well as recognition among their peers, which is the number one motivating factor for employees today.

Every organization has their own method behind how to motivate their employees. Most of the methods include the ancient “carrot and stick” method. Managers try to motivate their employees by giving them pay raises or limiting their paychecks. This method can cause complications however. It makes the workplace overly competitive and can even limit innovation in jobs that call for a lot of imagination. It can also produce employees being uncomfortable or troublesome at work. What this system does is take money out of the equation and replace it with a system that is more fun and rewarding.

In the workplace the system will allow employees to participate in a point-like system which rewards them with both recognition and physical rewards. The “goals” or “achievements” can be created automatically by the system or even tailored to fit the company’s goals by managers or human resources. The system will give the employees goals to work towards as well as the motivation and reward to complete those goals. If done correctly, the new system could produce an increase in both productivity and motivation in the workplace.

1.2 Focus

The main focus for the system is increased productivity and motivation in the workplace. The system will include “achievements”, which detail out the task needed to be rewarded a certain amount of points. When an employee completes an achievement they will be rewarded either by an administrator or automatically by the system itself. The company can then decide what type of rewards they want to put in place for gaining achievements which can be a variety of things depending on the type of company.

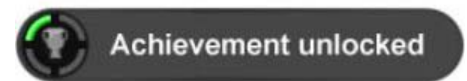
The system detailed here would require building a piece of software that can track and reward achievements. This would allow for the maximum possible return on investment because the system can be automated and can also cause the most recognition for employees. The system does not always require a software implementation however. The actual implementation of the software will be left up to the company.

2. Design Overview

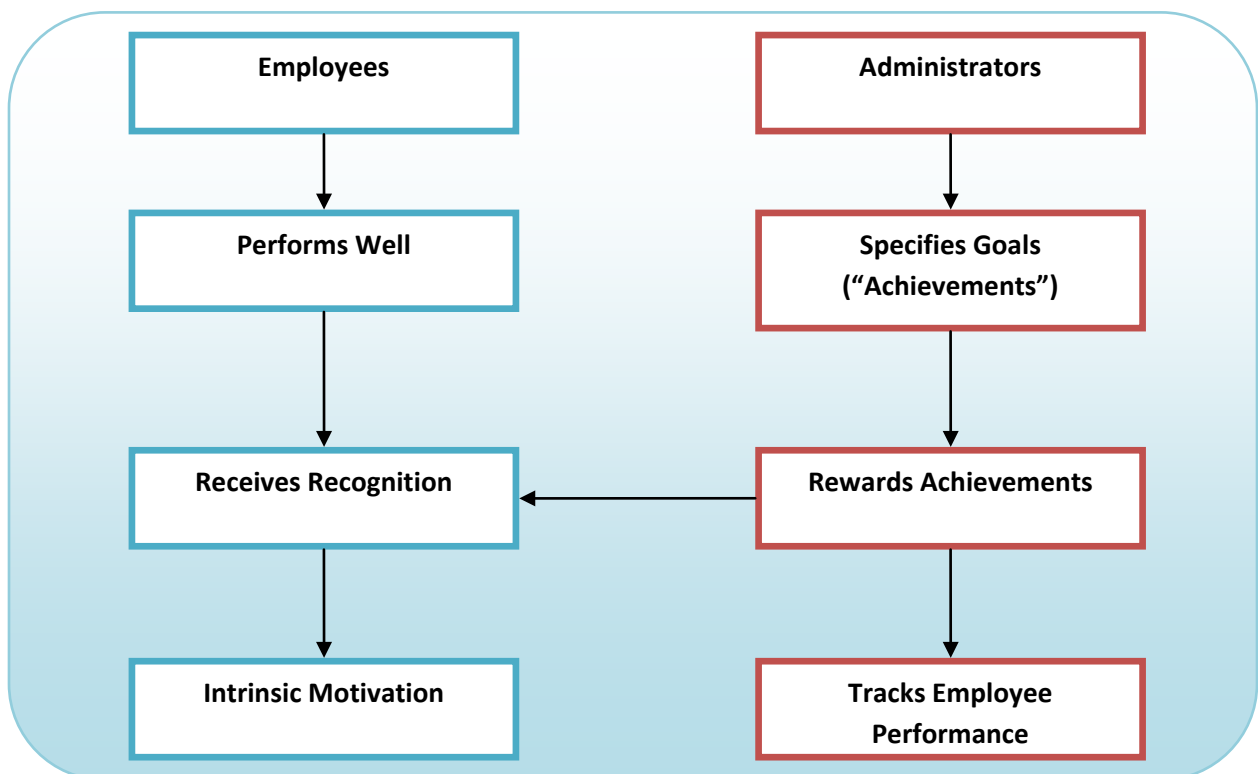
"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit." –Aristotle

2.1 "Achievements"

So just what are achievements exactly? Achievements are most well known from the Xbox Live system for the Xbox 360. These achievements are an add on for Xbox games which allow users to complete some task, such as "Get 3 million points", which will then unlock a badge that shows they completed the task. Achievements also give points to the player's account, called their "gamer score". From here the system spread like wild fire. Achievements are the hottest thing in video games, with several re-implementations such as the PS3 "trophy" system and even World of Warcraft Achievements.



The interesting thing about these achievements is that there is no reward for getting them other than to be recognized for doing them. A player's gamer score cannot be turned in for anything and there is no direct reward for getting achievements. Yet millions of gamers out there will do these tasks for achievements no matter how ridiculous they are. This evidence challenges the idea of physical rewards and gives much weight to the idea of recognition and intrinsic motivation as a motivator. People want to feel special for something that they do, and this system provides that.



2.2 Achievement Component

The achievement component is the main feature of the system. The regulation of this component of the system will be determined by the company or organization. The regulation mainly depends on the type of company and what data the company has on their employees.

Companies with a lot of statistical data on their employees such as in sales fields can often create and regulate achievements automatically through the software. When employees have goals such as “Sell X amount of product” these can easily be translated into numbers that a computer can read and track on a daily basis. This way achievements can be awarded to employees automatically by the system.

Other companies might not be able to track their employee’s progress through numbers. These companies are more than likely jobs that require imagination or innovation. In these fields achievements can be regulated by a manager, administrator, or even a human resources department. This allows the company to tailor their achievements according to the goals of the company and how they want to see their employees grow.

The achievement component allows companies to see results from their employees that they would not normally see. Employees can be guided in the right direction while they stay motivated and have fun in the workplace. This can allow for both rewards for the company and employees alike, while progressing towards common goals. There are plenty of unique and innovative ways achievements can help companies:

- Giving employees achievements for “going the extra mile” can cause employees to push themselves to work towards earning that achievement
- Achievements can push employees in a different direction. By rewarding employees for doing something they would not normally do it can change employee behavior
- Change management is often a long and tough process. Introducing achievements for employees who welcome the changes can often speed up the process
- Rewarding employees for working on projects can inspire group work and collaboration that would not normally occur on projects
- Employees might think twice about leaving a job if they see all of what they have accomplished at their current job
- New employees will have more drive and fervor when they see the achievements of others. The display of recognition can inspire them to be like others in the workplace

2.3 Recognition Component

Recognition is certainly proven to be one of the most motivating factors in the workplace, even above monetary rewards. Being recognized is a good feeling for most employees and can often give them inspiration and a good sense of worth to the company. This achievement system will allow for constant recognition that is usually not provided for in the workplace.

In a software implementation the achievement system can provide for employees to be recognized by the entire company and even more. Their rewards can be displayed to all the employees in the workplace after they log in to the intranet and even more with the power of technology. Achievements can be displayed on monitors spaced throughout the workplace or even on the company's web site. An organization can even go as far as getting physical badges to be made on pins or patches that employees can wear around the workplace. This kind of recognition can greatly increase motivation in the workplace.

2.4 Data Tracking Component

The greatest thing about the achievement system is that companies can track their employee's progress while the employees have fun with the tracking system. If the achievements are created in alignment with the company's goals then the amount of achievements an employee has received should show their productiveness at the company.

In a software implementation this can allow managers to pull up the progress of an employee quickly through the system. By looking at the list of achievements an employee has received they can see just how well an employee is fitting in at a company. They can even allow employees to spend the points they receive from achievements on different things in the company. This allows a company to track what an employee is interested in out of where they work as well. If implemented correctly the system can be a powerful tool for employee performance records.

2.5 Reward Component

The reward component of the system is the final piece to the puzzle. This component can be tailored to fit a number of different requirements. Employees who do not respond well to recognition might respond well to rewards. If achievement points are allowed to be spent on days off or free lunches an employee might be even more inclined to go for the achievements worth the most points. The point system can also work much like a monetary reward system however which can make productivity worse however, so it is not an integral part of the system. Rewards should be kept to "bonus" rewards such as days off and should not be an integral part to the workplace.

3. Risks / Assumptions

“Take calculated risks. That is quite different from being rash.” –George S. Patton

3.1 Employee Risk

In any organization there are always people who are unmoved no matter what lengths a company might go to. For one reason or another they simply do not accept the way a company does things and cannot be convinced otherwise. This is a risk with any motivational system. There are simply some people who will not care.

The design of the system allows for many different motivational factors. From recognition to reward the system should be able to fit the needs of most people in the work place. There will always be people who will turn their backs on the system and not care enough to work with it however. The best way to approach this is to integrate the system into the corporate culture. If the system becomes a daily part of life for most employees it might change the minds of others who are against this sort of system.

3.2 Change Management

Integration and change management can be the hardest part in any organization. People are naturally resistant to any change in their daily pace, especially at something they do every day of their lives. There are many methods to manage change and the achievement system can also intrinsically help in changing the corporate culture.

Creating achievements for early adopters in the workplace can help speed the process of change management up. Also, working with the younger audience who commonly plays video games might give the company a pool of early adopters that will promote the new system. Once employees see the fun and exciting aspect of the system and see the benefits of it they might start changing their minds. There are plenty of ways the change of adding this new system can be alleviated to allow for a smooth transition.

3.3 Operational Cost

Developing a large scale system such as the one detailed in this writing is no easy task. Organizations should not think about implementing a system like this without weighing the benefits against the costs before even beginning implementation. As shown, building a dynamic system such as this can take a lot of time between design, development, implementation, and integrating into the corporate culture. Only companies who are serious about making the system an integral part of the corporate culture should think about building the system and integrating it into their organization. If a

company is seriously committed and has the budget to do so, only then will the system produce the desired results.

3.4 Technical Assumptions

Building software of this caliber requires a web server capable of serving dynamic web pages. This is commonly found in most organizations today. There are differences in the flavor of system used in organizations however. Each organization has their own system set in place built on top of their own framework, but a few of the most commonly found systems are detailed here.

3.4.1 Web Application Technology

Web application technology allows users to interact dynamically with an organization's server. Common types of web application technology are:

- **PHP** – A popular application technology that is free for use on any system. PHP has been tried and tested for many years and is currently on stable build 5.3.3. The application also has several frameworks for use including Zend, Code Igniter, and Cake. These frameworks allow PHP to be both a scalable and cost-effective solution.
- **ASP** – Also a popular web application technology built and maintained by Microsoft. ASP has been tested and integrated into countless large scale organizations today, including Microsoft. The application can be used with Visual Studio to make a scalable solution. The framework can be pricy however as all Microsoft's tools are proprietary.
- There are tons of different applications that can lend themselves to this software. Everything from C# to Java can be used to implement this piece of technology.

3.4.2 Database Technology

Database technology is commonly found among organizations as well. If an organization has some sort of web application technology they will more than likely have a database technology to accompany it. Common database technologies include:

- **MySQL** – One of the most popular and free solutions for database technologies. This technology is commonly found in conjunction with PHP as well. It is scalable and cost-efficient.
- **Microsoft SQL Server** – This is the Microsoft side of database implementation that is found with most ASP configurations. Like ASP this is also proprietary software and can be costly to implement, but the tools and features provided can be a powerful tool to any company.

4. Operational Design

“Goals are the fuel in the furnace of achievement.” –Brian Tracy

4.1 User Types

The main users of the system will be the employees and the administrators, often a manager or human resources department. Both parties should have at least some technical knowledge to work and operate the system. Each party would have some way to identify the user and a way to login in to the system uniquely. Each party also has a unique function in the system:

- Employees can look at their achievements and possibly the achievements of others in the organization. They might also have a task list where they can set the current achievements they are working for and how much progress they have made on their goals.
- Administrators are the main people who edit the achievements and set goals in the system. They have a large number of functions that they are allowed to perform:
 - Administrators can manage the current achievements. They can add, change, and remove the current achievements that are available to employees
 - The opportunity to change the way achievements are tracked can be set by the administrators. They can either have achievements be updated automatically or manually reward users with achievements themselves
 - If achievements are given out automatically, an administrator might need a way of inputting the current technical data for the system to process and reward achievements. This includes data such as number of items sold per employee and more
 - Administrators can also pull up the achievements of multiple employees at once. They might want to group employees to see how they are doing on a project, or look at all their employees comparatively to see who is the hardest worker on the job

4.2 Scenario

The system will consist of at least five to six different states for different functionalities. These can be separate web pages or forms that open up after the user clicks on certain links from each page. The flow of the entire system from start to finish is as follows:

- Users will start on a dashboard or login page. This might integrate with a current login or dashboard page that already exists within an organization. The dashboard page should allow employees that have recently earned achievements to be recognized for all employees to see.
- Upon logging in, employees will be taken to their employee page which details out the current achievements they have received and possibly the ones that they are working on

- Administrators will login to an administrator page that can detail out recent achievements of a subset of employees they manage or show the current achievements that are in the system
- Employees could potentially have a way to view the achievements of other employees in the organization
- Employees might also have a reward component which allows them to spend the points they receive from achievements on certain things given by the organization
- Administrators will have a page for editing the current achievements as well as how the current achievements are tracked
- Administrators will have a page for the current achievement data on employees where they can see and compare the achievements of current employees

4.3 Dashboard

The dashboard is possibly one of the most important parts of the motivational system. A functional dashboard should allow for recent employee achievement to be displayed for the organization to see.

The one shown to the right was implemented by a software company named Panic. On an interview with Gina Trapani in her blog “Smarterware” one of the company’s employees was quoted on the success of the board saying:

“Les, one of our support guys, said it best after a week: “That board is like magic.” Our support turnaround time is faster than it’s ever been. Just the simple act of “publicizing” those numbers — not in a cruel way, but a “where are we at as a group?” way — has kept the support process on-task and, I think, made it a bit more like a video game. (It helps that when all the boxes are at “zero”, a virtual bottle of champagne appears on-screen, and a physical one is likely removed from the fridge.)”

The dashboard for this system should allow for exactly the same thing. Publicizing employee achievement should allow for not only recognition for employees but also a sense of self-worth to and worth to the company.



<http://smarterware.org/5424/panics-envy-inducing-project-status-board>

4.4 Login

The system will require authentication for both employees and managers in the system. User authentication is common among organizations with each organization having their own ways of identifying employees uniquely. Login pages are often basic or and can even be integrated within the dashboard of the system. Authentication is detailed out in part 6.3: Security.



4.5 Employee Page

The employee page will allow employees to track their current achievements as well as search for the achievements of others. This allows employees to track the achievements of their close coworkers and friends making employees more competitive and cooperative. This will increase the motivation for employees to do better than their friends as well as try and work with others towards a common goal. The employee page could also show their current point score as well as provide a link to an online store to spend their points that they have.

4.6 Administration Page

The administrator's page is much more complicated than the employee's. Administrators from their main page can search for employees, edit the current set of achievements, set the current settings in the system, and finally look at the current data on the employees and achievements in the system.

Searching for employees can work much like the search function for employees. Searching can be done by name or even by achievements, seeing all the people that have earned one achievement. The system will allow for administrators to look at the achievements of others and when they earned each achievement.

Editing the current set achievements can be achieved by what is known as the CRUD method. CRUD stands for create, read, update, and delete. This is a common system found in programs that allows users to edit and work with a set of data. The set of data would most commonly be the achievements in this system. The administrator would be allowed to create, edit, and delete the current set of achievements available to the employees. The ability to reward achievements to employees could potentially be added to this page as well.

There are other global settings in the system that can also go on a separate page or state in the program. These settings include the automation settings for achievements as well as the possibility to upload the latest statistics for employees in the system. Other settings could include user management, themes or displays, and anything else the organization might need an administrator to edit.

Finally the administrator should have a place to see the current achievement data from their employees. This would be different from the employee interface in that an administrator could compare the performance between different employees and potentially different groups of employees. This would provide data that assists in employee evaluations and also evaluations on the progress and productivity of employees in the organization.

5. Technical Design

“To climb steep hills requires a slow pace at first.” –Shakespeare

5.1 Development Schedule

The development of the system could take a group of five to seven people about five to seven months to complete. This would allow for testing and debugging of the system and also for the system to be robust enough to include all the features detailed out in the document.

The required team for development is a team of both programmers and artists. Programmers will have to be skilled in both the software language that will be used by the organization and the database language that the information for the system will be stored on. Artists will more than likely be two-dimensional artists that are skilled in user interface development. They will be drawing the medals for each achievement as well as the overall layout of the pages in the system.

An example development process is as follows:

1. Understand design and setup requirements
2. Develop dashboard and login system
3. Implement employee and administrator user groups
4. Implement employee pages
5. Implement administrator pages
6. Design and draw achievements
7. Design goals and point-based rewards
8. Perform user testing to ensure system reliability
9. Release system to employees
10. Train managers and employees to use the software
11. Use change management practices to integrate the system into the corporate culture

5.2 Installation Requirements

The system when fully developed would more than likely be integrated on a server that is owned by the organization. As detailed in section 3.4: Technical Assumptions, the application will require some type of application software to display the achievements as well as a database system to store the data for employees and administrators. Most larger organizations already have a system like this in place and will have IT professionals on site to implement this software.

5.3 System Architecture

The system is comprised of the main parts of any application. The users will log in through an authentication system which will then put them in one of two user groups. Both of these groups will edit the database through business logic and can be shown their results through a GUI. The responsibilities of both user groups are detailed in section 4.1: User Types.

The system will require some type of authentication system that can be decided by the organization. This is to ensure that employees cannot log in as an administrator and weigh the achievements in their favor or cheat the system in any way. Most technologies out there have some type of security system that allows users to send information over an internet connection without worrying about people trying to steal that information.

After the user is logged in, the technical side of things can take any shape or form the organization desires. Different programming languages lend themselves to different layouts in the system. More than likely an organization will have some type of programming framework available to them to use in making the software. The only requirements for the system architecture is that it has to be available for employees and administrators to work with and it also has to save the achievement data in a central location.

6. Miscellanea / Appendices

“No man was ever wise by chance.” –Seneca

6.1 Integration with Other Systems

The system can often find its place in between the existence of a company intranet. An intranet is a closed internet resource that most large companies provide for their employees. It allows employees to communicate, receive news updates, and collaborate across the entire company easily through an online resource. The achievement system can be built right into an already existing intranet system. Achievements can be displayed on the company news portal and also allow employees to look up and view each other's achievements.

6.2 Expandability

The success of this system does not always have to lie on the system alone. This system lends itself to integration with other forms of employee motivation. The points earned from achievements could be spent in ways that promote other forms of employee motivation and team building. The goals could also be linked to other motivation systems that are already in place in an organization. This system not only provides a new and innovative way of motivating employees but also opens the door for new possibilities to be created and expanded on in the future.

6.3 Security

The main security issues with an achievement system come from people who steal login information. The administration system should be handled with care and the appropriate security measures should be taken to not allow any non-administrators to log in under the administrator user group. If this happens, employees could potentially stack the achievements in their favor and reward themselves points giving them recognition for something that they have not completed.

6.4 Glossary

- **Achievement** – A task or goal that has a specific reward tied to it. Rewards usually include a type of unique badge or graphic associated with the goal as well as a number point value that is received when the achievement is earned.
- **Administrators** – Anyone who will be managing the software in the organization. Administrators will create, edit, and delete achievements as well as reward employees and manage the global settings in the system.

- **Dashboard** – A dashboard is commonly referred to as one screen that holds a broad overview of information. Company dashboards are often accessed through the company's intranet and display information such as latest news about the company and announcements.
- **Intranet** – An intranet is a private network that is only visible by one group of people. Users have to log in to the intranet to be able to view its contents and it is commonly customized to the goals of that group or organization.
- **Points** – Points are commonly referring to the numeric reward that is received by earning an achievement. Points are commonly numeric in most systems and reflect a form of currency for the system that employees can use to spend on rewards.
- **System** – The system refers to the achievement system as a whole. This includes the design of the achievements, the innovative concept, and the potential software implementation of the design.
- **User Types** – User types commonly define the different groups of users that will interact with the system. In this system, employees are considered one user type and administrators are considered another.
- **World of Warcraft** – World of Warcraft is an immensely popular game made by Blizzard Entertainment. The game currently boasts over eleven million players. It stands as one of the most popular video games out there.
- **Xbox** – Xbox is a gaming console that was created by Microsoft. It is one of the leading game consoles in the industry and is a nationwide success. The Xbox system also includes an achievement system which is immensely popular among video game players.

6.5 Additional Resources

There are plenty of resources on the internet on how to increase motivation in the workplace. People will always have their own views and methods and it is important to know and understand plenty of different methods before implementing one in particular. Here are some additional resources that helped in designing and understanding the contents of this system.

- **Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us** – This book written by Dan Pink is a great resource on changing the way people think about motivation and ushers in a new way to motivate employees in the workplace. This can start the basis for a lot of creative thinking about how to motivate employees
- **Leading Change** – This book written by John P. Kotter is a great resource for managing change in the workplace. It provides eight steps to manage change in an organization and includes plenty of details on how to exactly implement each step. It could be a great resource when trying to introduce a new system such as this one.