# Marketing and game design

By Megan Hughes , issued by Red & Yellow

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Those who were lucky enough to attend this year's Net Prophet would probably have been quite curious about finding two game designers in the list of scheduled speakers. What could marketers and entrepreneurs learn from people whose job it is to sell play?

A lot, in fact. Aside from the fact that Danny Day and Marc Luck have founded a successful game design company, OCF, and released an award winning title to international acclaim, there's a great deal about what they do every day which can be **applied in marketing** and work environments.

Long touted as the solution to many of the problems facing marketing (such as information overload and a lack of brand loyalty) and business management (including employee morale and loyalty), **gamification is the intersection between marketing and game design**. It's a curious niche that attempts to bring all of the benefits of games, the reasons that people play for hours, into the work environment or the products and services companies sell.

In its purest form, it is meant to make **engaging with the brand a positive experience** for the consumer or the worker and is ultimately meant to make people happier. Consumers and workers are meant to feel like winners. And Garner predicts that by the end of 2014, more than 70% of the world's largest 2,000 companies will have deployed at least one gamified app, with the overall market for these tools and services being projected to be $5.5bn by 2018.

The problem is that many people are **getting it wrong;** 80% of current gamified enterprise applications will fail to meet their objectives, due largely to poor design (Gartner). Game design is not an exact science and even the most experienced and talented game designers get it wrong on occasion. Applying game mechanics - the underlying rules of a game that produce fun results - to marketing campaigns, apps and business tools or services without a solid foundational understanding of their implementation and the implications for consumers and employees can have catastrophic results.

The most notable of the historical **failures in the application** of gamification include Disneyland's laundry leadership board - a tool which was eventually called The Whip by employees who grew to loathe the system. Even Google managed to implement a beautiful badge system to Google+ pages for those who read Google News pages which - sadly - doesn't provide users with much value.

Thankfully, we can keep those badges hidden from page visitors' views.

To better **prepare our students** for an industry where gamification is becoming increasingly more relevant, Red & Yellow have introduced a module on game design to their third year designer and art director students. With a strong focus on understanding game elements, mechanics and themes students were also given a lecture from QCF's other employee, Rodain Joubert, on game design UI.

The top projects will be taken to the next MakeGames SA community meeting to show to the local game designers in South Africa.

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