



Play at Work: How Games Inspire Breakthrough Thinking

By Adam L. Penenberg

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Do games hold the secret to better productivity?

If you've ever found yourself engrossed in *Angry Birds*, *Call of Duty*, or a plain old crossword puzzle when you should have been doing something more productive, you know how easily games hold our attention. Hardcore gamers have spent the equivalent of 5.93 million years playing *World of Warcraft* while the world collectively devotes about 5 million hours per day to *Angry Birds*. A colossal waste of time? Perhaps. But what if we could tap into all the energy, engagement, and brainpower that people are already expending and use it for more creative and valuable pursuits?

Harnessing the power of games sounds like a New-Age fantasy, or at least a fad that's only for hip start-ups run by millennials in Silicon Valley. But according to Adam L. Penenberg, the use of smart game design in the workplace and beyond is taking hold in every sector of the economy, and the companies that apply it are witnessing unprecedented results. "Gamification" isn't just for consumers

chasing reward points anymore. It's transforming, well, just about everything.

Penenberg explores how, by understanding the way successful games are designed, we can apply them to become more efficient, come up with new ideas, and achieve even the most daunting goals. He shows how game mechanics are being applied to make employees happier and more motivated, improve worker safety, create better products, and improve customer service.

For example, Microsoft has transformed an essential but mind-numbing task—debugging software—into a game by having employees compete and collaborate to find more glitches in less time. Meanwhile, Local Motors, an independent automaker based in Arizona, crowdsources designs from car enthusiasts all over the world by having them compete for money and recognition within the community. As a result, the company was able to bring a cutting-edge

vehicle to market in less time and at far less cost than the Big Three automakers.

These are just two examples of companies that have tapped the characteristics that make games so addictive and satisfying. Penenberg also takes us inside organizations that have introduced play at work to train surgeons, aid in physical therapy, translate the Internet, solve vexing scientific riddles, and digitize books from the nineteenth century. Drawing on the latest brain science as well as his firsthand reporting from these cutting-edge companies, Penenberg offers a powerful solution for businesses and organizations of all stripes and sizes.

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Editorial Review

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Games and game design are all around us, from crossword puzzles to computer games to Wii and Xbox. But games permeate our lives in more subtle forms, too, like Powerball lotteries, eBay, social media sites, and even the mileage and rewards points that we win. Games provide feedback loops that stimulate dopamine, rewarding the brain's pleasure center, but playing games can also improve our reaction time, ability to multitask, and creativity levels. Investigative journalist Penenberg examines how games can be used to modify behavior, train surgeons and military personnel, aid physical rehabilitation, transform boring repetitive tasks into fun, and even harness the computing power of human intelligence across the globe to digitize old books and translate the entire Internet into other languages. Learn how cutting-edge companies are embracing game integration to make workers more satisfied, better trained, and focused on their jobs. Penenberg's work has appeared in the New York Times, Forbes, Wired, Playboy, and Mother Jones. He may be best known for unmasking Stephen Glass of the New Republic for journalism fabrication in 1998 and is currently a journalism professor at New York University. --David Siegfried

Review

"Adam Penenberg's excellent new book persuasively demonstrates the power of gaming to motivate work. Filled with great stories of companies who have made the leap into playful productivity, it should be useful and inspirational for anyone looking at how to leverage the spirit of competition."

—**DOUGLAS RUSHKOFF**, AUTHOR OF *PRESENT SHOCK*

"In this great and often funny book Penenberg shows how everyone from entrepreneurs to scientists is using gamification to create the future today. Don't be left behind. Read this book to learn how the rules of business and life are changing."

—**GABE ZICHERMANN**, CEO OF GAMIFICATION CO.

"It's happening all around us, but if you're not paying attention you may miss it. Adam Penenberg provides an insightful guide into how gamification is infiltrating the marketplace and, more important, how it can be leveraged to make experiences more immersive and addictive. Read it, and prepare to see your everyday experiences through new eyes."

—**TODD HENRY**, AUTHOR OF *DIE EMPTY* AND *THE ACCIDENTAL CREATIVE*

"From Tom Sawyer's fence-painting scheme to *Angry Birds*, games have a unique knack for tapping the heart of engagement. Adam Penenberg takes you well beyond Zynga and through the countless, inventive ways games can be designed to bring out our best thinking. This is a fascinating and entertaining exploration of that most basic of human proclivities: play."

—**DANIEL H. PINK**, AUTHOR OF *TO SELL IS HUMAN* AND *DRIVE*

"Gamification is a hot topic but few truly understand it. Engaging and filled with incredible stories, *Play at Work* explains how games can make us more efficient and creative. Drawing on copious research and interviews with an array of game designers, scientists, mathematicians, entrepreneurs, inventors, and

government officials, Penenberg offers a new perspective on how to make play work for you.”

—**ERIC RIES**, AUTHOR OF *THE LEAN STARTUP*

About the Author

ADAM L. PENENBERG is the editor of PandoDaily, the site of record for Silicon Valley, and has written for the New York Times, Forbes, Fast Company, Slate, the Economist, the Washington Post, and Wired. He is the author of *Viral Loop: From Facebook to Twitter, How Today's Smartest Businesses Grow Themselves* and a journalism professor at New York University.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Vera Gates:

Reading a guide tends to be new life style with this era globalization. With looking at you can get a lot of information that can give you benefit in your life. Together with book everyone in this world can certainly share their idea. Textbooks can also inspire a lot of people. Lots of author can inspire their own reader with their story or their experience. Not only the storyplot that share in the publications. But also they write about the information about something that you need instance. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your young ones, there are many kinds of book that exist now. The authors on earth always try to improve their expertise in writing, they also doing some study before they write to the book. One of them is this *Play at Work: How Games Inspire Breakthrough Thinking*.

Jennifer Rogers:

A lot of people always spent their own free time to vacation as well as go to the outside with them family members or their friend. Are you aware? Many a lot of people spent they will free time just watching TV, or even playing video games all day long. If you would like try to find a new activity here is look different you can read the book. It is really fun for you personally. If you enjoy the book that you simply read you can spent 24 hours a day to reading a reserve. The book *Play at Work: How Games Inspire Breakthrough Thinking* it is quite good to read. There are a lot of people who recommended this book. We were holding enjoying reading this book. Should you did not have enough space to bring this book you can buy the particular e-book. You can m0ore very easily to read this book through your smart phone. The price is not to cover but this book has high quality.

Brooke Callender:

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Rosemary Robinson:

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