Better Teams Through Game Design

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Lets Play

The attendees played a game which illustrated how games can teach powerful lessons to teams

Several Examples

Audience Participation

Guiding Framework

Closing Notes

Structure

- Look at a management challenge
- Re-frame it as a game design challenge
- Explore what game design can teach us
- Compare that to what management theory would say

Challenge: Providing Feedback

- Without feedback you can't improve
- Without feedback the manager and the team may or may not be on the same page
- But giving good feedback can be difficult...

What do games tell us about providing feedback?

Effective Feedback: Game

- **Timely**

> *Immediate feedback better than delayed feedback*

Effective Feedback: Game

- Timely
- **'Mappable'**

Player should know what they did that resulted in the given feedback

Effective Feedback: Game

- Timely
- 'Mappable'
- **Nudge towards progress**

Know when someone is stuck and provide clues about what they might do next

Effective Feedback: Game

- Timely
- 'Mappable'
- Nudge towards progress
- **Proportional**

The impact of the feedback should be appropriate, as compared to the action and other feedback

Effective Feedback: Game

- Timely
- 'Mappable'
- Nudge towards progress
- Proportional
- **Celebrate in Public**

Let people show-off to others

What does Management tell us about providing feedback?

Effective Feedback: Management

- **Timely**

> *The closer to the event the feedback can be given the better*

Effective Feedback: Management

- Timely
- **About Specific Behavior**

Behavior is something we can change, but only if the feedback is precise about what behavior the feedback is about, so the right lesson is learned

Effective Feedback: Management

- Timely
- About Specific Behavior
- **Proportional**

The tone/significance of the feedback should match that of the behavior the feedback is about

Effective Feedback: Management

- Timely
- About Specific Behavior
- Proportional
- **Praise in public**

Let everyone know when something is done well

Effective Feedback: Management

- Timely
- About Specific Behavior
- Proportional
- Praise in public
- **Coach in private**

Ensure there is no shame in being coached

Effective Feedback: Management

- Timely
- About Specific Behavior
- Proportional
- Praise in public
- Coach in private
- **Provide a path to improvement**

Corrective feedback more likely to lead to success

Side by Side

Feedback: Game

- Timely
- 'Mappable'
- Nudge towards progress
- Proportional
- Celebrate in Public

Feedback: Management

- Timely
- About Specific Behavior
- Proportional
- Praise in public
- Coach in private
- Provide a path to improvement

Lessons Learned

- Significant overlap between good game design and good management theory

- Even if you never read a management theory book, you already know a lot about how to give good feedback

Challenge: What is the best management style?

- 'You mean I can't just order people around?'

- 'Its not working, what do I do now?'

What can games tell us about Management styles?
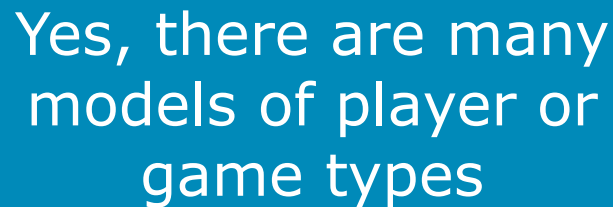
Management Styles: Game
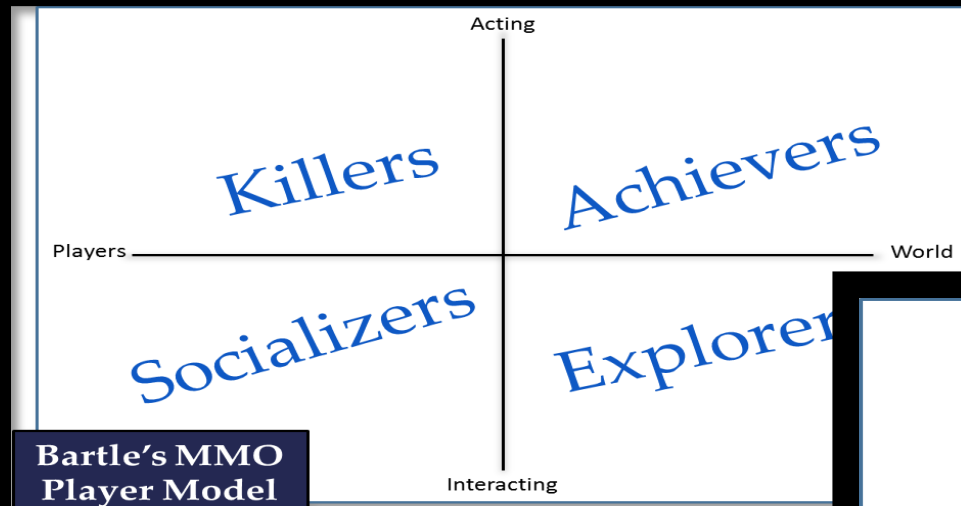
What is the best kind of game?

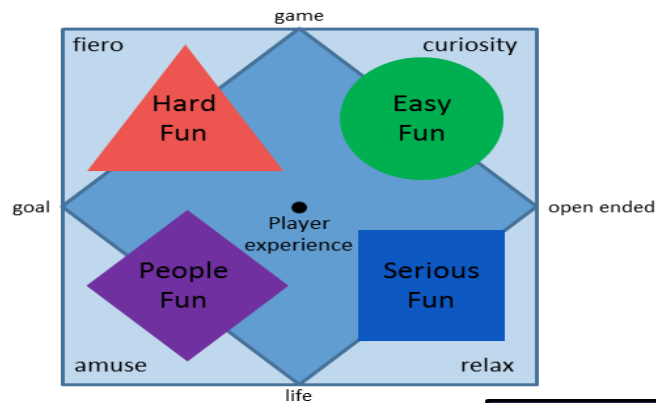Its different for different kinds of players

Can anything in games tell us about different kinds of players?

Yes, there are many models of player or game types

Game designers have models to help them understand players

Bartle's MMO Player Model

Acting

Killers

Achievers

Players ——————————— World

Socializers

Explorer

Interacting

The 4 Fun Keys © XEO Design

game

fiero   curiosity

Hard Fun

Easy Fun

goal   open ended

Player experience

People Fun

Serious Fun

amuse   relax

life

Lets look at what Management tells us about management styles

Management Styles: Management

- Not all employees are the same
- Different employees need different things from management
- Models exist to understand this
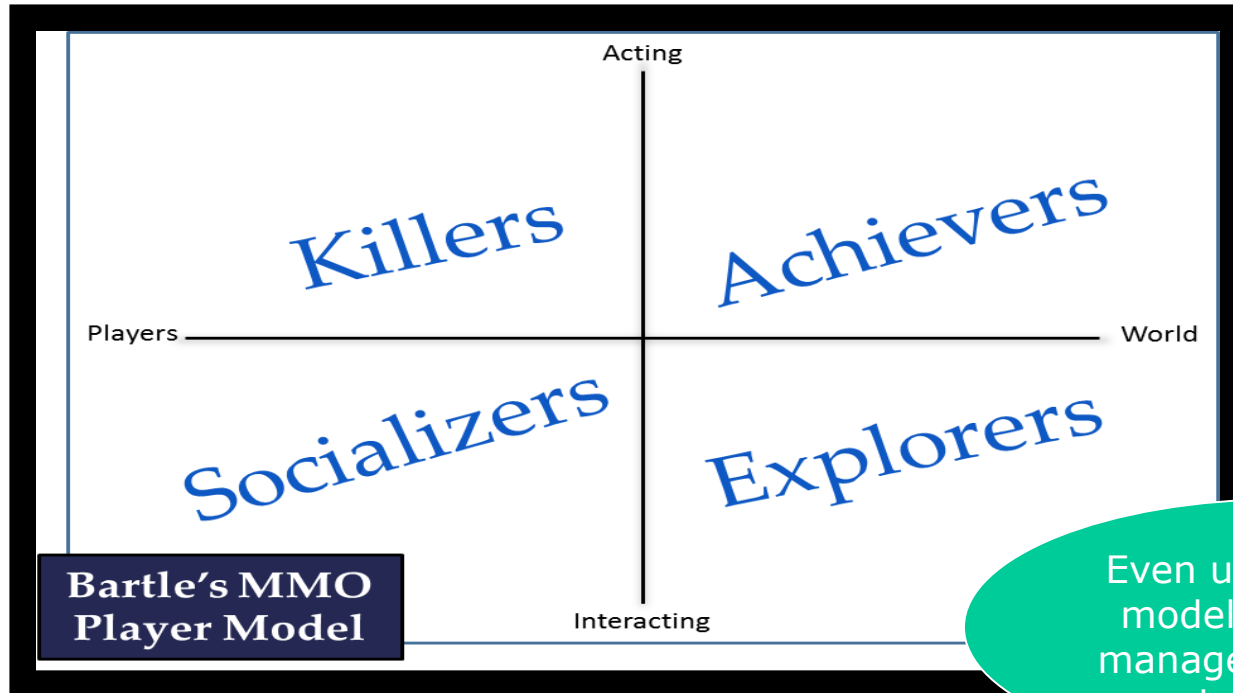

Progression of Needs Model
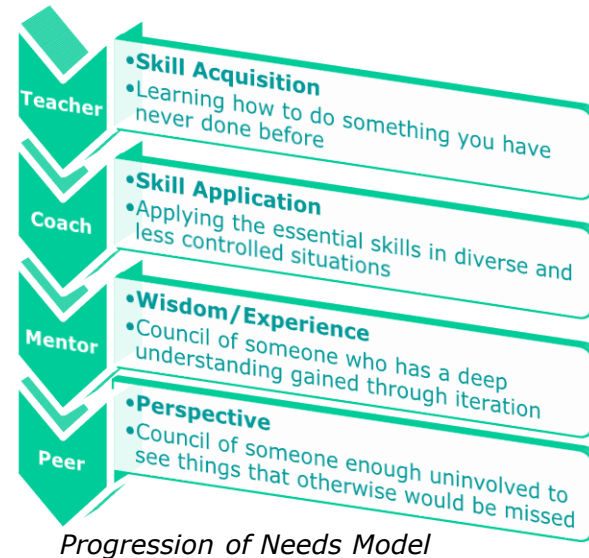
Side by Side

Management Styles: Game

- Different kinds of players want different kinds of game experiences

- Models exist to better understand this

- Designers decide which model works for their game and their players

Managements Styles: Management

- Different kinds of employees need different things from their management

- Models exist to better understand this

- Managers decide which model works for their game and their teams

Even the models have strong parallels

Acting

Killers

Achievers

Players ——————————————————— World

Socializers

Explorers

Interacting

Bartle's MMO Player Model

Even using Bartle's model, applied to management, could be useful

Lessons Learned

- Significant overlap between good game design and good management theory

- Even if you never read a management theory book, you already know a lot about why different management styles are important, and what they are

All Together Now

- Wherein the audience now participates

Challenge: Motivating a Team

- Work can be hard
- How do we keep people engaged and committed to doing their best?

Effective Motivation: Game

At this point the audience was asked to contribute what they knew about how to motivate players

Effective Motivation: Management

Then a quick summary of what modern management theory says about motivation was presented from D. Pink's book "Drive"

Side by Side

The audience list and the core principles from "Drive" were compared, and turned out to be very similar

Lessons Learned

Motivating players can teach us a lot about motivating employees

Managers moving faceless pieces around a board is the wrong way to use game design to improve teams

YOUR PARTY ENTERS THE TAVERN.

I GATHER EVERYONE AROUND A TABLE. I HAVE THE ELVES START WHITTLING DICE AND GET OUT SOME PARCHMENT FOR CHARACTER SHEETS.
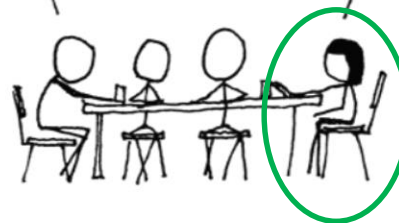
HEY, NO RECURSING.

The still above is from "ET the Extra-Terrestrial", during a scene where the kids are playing D&D, and the circled one is the Dungeon Master.

This is from XKCD, and the circled character is playing a Game Master.

Management
is the
Game Master

Management as the Game Master

- People are players not pieces
- Alignment around a single purpose
- Non zero sum game
- We want people to want to play

Management as the Game Master

- You scrum or waterfall the way you choose what roleplaying system to use
- You plan a campaign the way you build a development plan
- You define the goal, but your players/employees have tremendous say in how that goal will be met
- You challenge your players/employees, but are completely committed to their success

Management/GM are both Service Through Leadership roles

Conclusion

We can deliver positive employee experiences using what we know about delivering good player experiences.
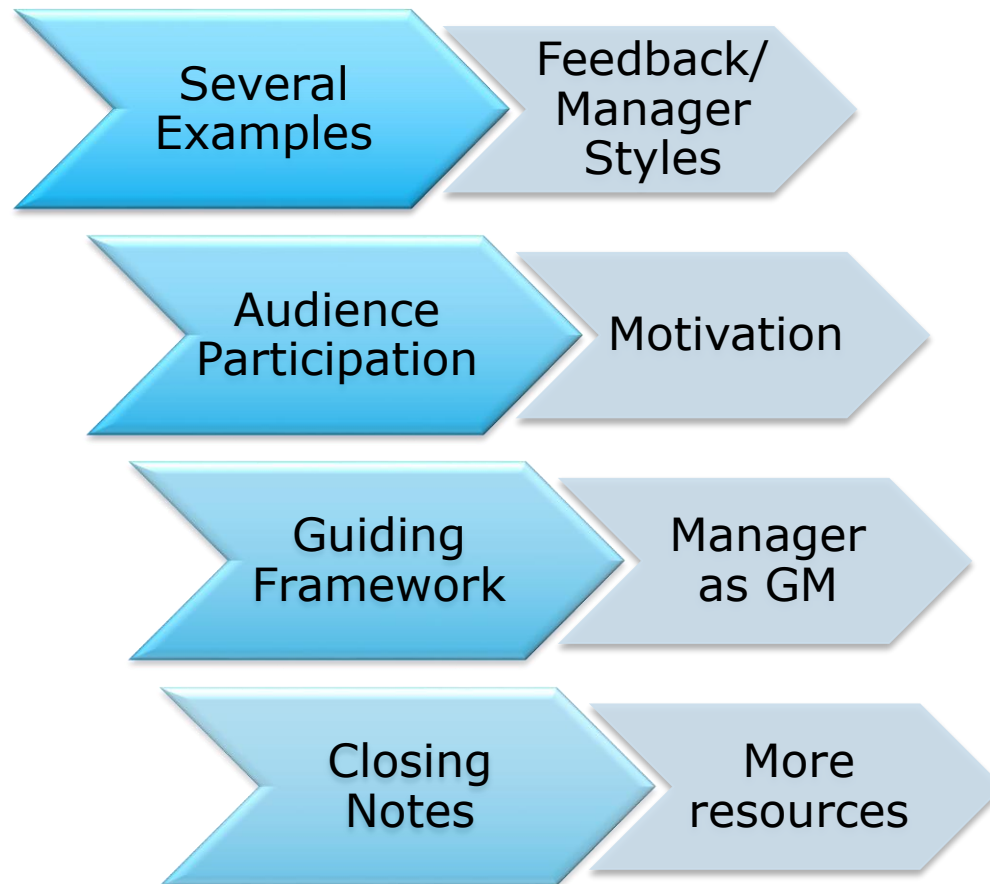
We can make our teams better because we understand game design.

Be the best GM for your team you can be.

"Being a true DM requires cleverness
and imagination which no set of rules
or books can bestow."

➜   Gary Gygax, The Dungeon Masters Guide, 1979

Several Examples

Feedback/ Manager Styles

Audience Participation

Motivation

Guiding Framework

Manager as GM

Closing Notes

More resources

Questions?

More Resources

- Situational Leadership
  - http://www.kenblanchard.com/Effective_Leadership_Solutions/One_to_One_Talent_Management/Management_Situational_Leadership_Training/
  - http://www.situational.com/
- "Drive" by Daniel H. Pink
  - http://www.danpink.com/drive
- Bartle's MMO Player Model
  - http://www.mud.co.uk/richard/hcds.htm
- The 4 Fun Keys by XEO Design
  - http://www.xeodesign.com

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