

Gamification for Corporate Wikis with Karma 1.0

Even though the attitude in companies toward the Social Intranet and Social Business often varies, and is not always positive, things are clearly going in this direction. This is because the up-coming generation of workers is demanding it. The advantage is that these new employees want a Social Intranet and when they have it, they will use it actively. They do not particularly need extra outside motivation. Nevertheless it is certainly helpful to keep the usability relatively simple, and to integrate elements that an on-liner knows from their experience with forums and communities. But what does that mean exactly?



Gamification in Forums and Communities

In Forums, for example, it is already common practice to reward active employees with virtual awards. An active placement in a Community raises the status and the rank of a member and, in the eyes of the others, is more valuable. Beginners often turn to seasoned members if they need advice, since the opinion of a 'Heavy User' weighs rather more than that of a newbie. This 'Gamification' is found in many Social Mediums, and it often serves as a push for a lively network.

In Social Intranets and company wikis the picture is somewhat different. Here the surface is often low-key, and the motivation for intense use is hardly encouraging. If the employees themselves are not intrinsically motivated enough, then the whole expensive acquisition and installation of a tool for team collaboration and for knowledge management is all for nothing, simply because it will hardly be used.

Gamification in Company Wikis with Karma 1.0

In order to counter this, Communardo developed a small Plugin sometime ago for the Company Wiki Confluence, that goes under the name of "Karma". Karma represents exactly what users of forums and communities have already been used to for a long time: a virtual reward for activities and type of competition among the participants for badges and awards. ([New Features in Karma 1.0](#))

The Sense of Gamification

The System will only be used when

- a) it makes sense
- b) it offers additional benefits
- c) using it is easy and intuitive
- d) it is fun

And it just for this last point that Karma has been set up for Confluence. It raises the fun-factor, it offers motivation in the form of points, medals, and badges thus providing more activity and more intensive exchanges. Gamification is thus a decisive success factor for a Social Intranet or for a Company Wiki like Confluence.



And Why Shouldn't You Use It?

If you take an even closer look, there's no reason not to. Of course in the beginning there are always voices that fear that the employees will start to play around the system just to attain points, not using it for what it is intended. Our experience shows that this can indeed happen in the first few days. However this initial playful giddiness rapidly dwindles and Karma's potential can then start to be made use of. It is just like with a new Smartphone or a new piece of software. In the beginning everyone plays around with all the features to get the feel of things. When the initial euphoria then subsides, as it inevitably does, then the new device or system quickly becomes integrated into everyday activity and can be effectively used.