Herzberg Two Factor Theory applied to Games-as-a-Service

GDC Online 2012 — Steve Gaffney, Armin Ronacher
Fireteam Ltd – http://fireteam.net/

Who am I

- Armin Ronacher
- Software Engineer at Fireteam
- Multiplayer Fanatic
- Open Source Evangelist
- Not a Psychologist

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Who are We?

- We do Online Services
- Spin-off from Splash Damage, a multiplayer focused Studio
- Not Psychologists

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Games as a Service

- Continuous revenue from existing player base
- Primarily multiplayer (but not necessarily competitive)
- But not necessarily multiplayer
- Keep the player engaged with the game

Mirror of Human Behavior

- People exhibit largely the same behavior in game they do in their every day lives
- Practical example: Valve's Exploration of Economics
- With a game as a service you can feed back alterations and evaluate the result

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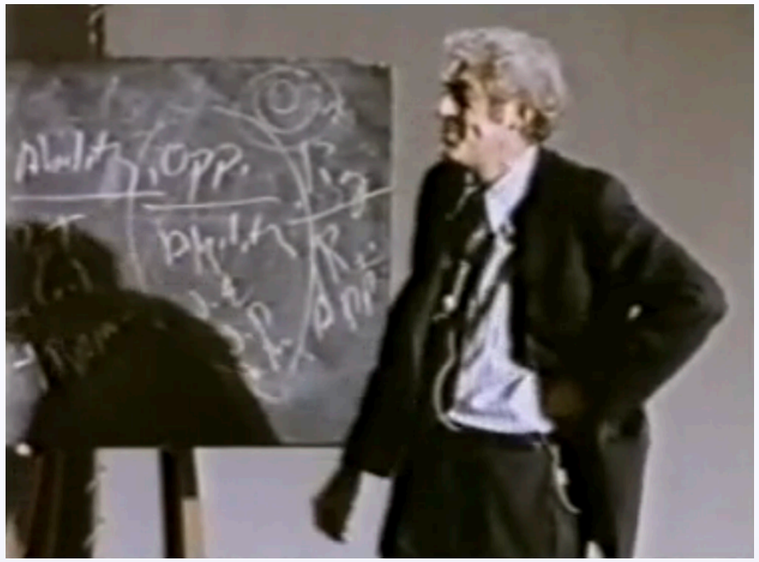
Who is Herzberg?

- Frederick Herzberg
- Lectured at University of Utah



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Herzberg's Two Factor Theory

- Humans have two basic needs:
  - **As animals**: avoid pain
  - **As persons**: act and grow psychologically

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Herzberg's Two Factor Theory

- **Hygiene Factors**
  - Working Conditions
  - Pay
  - Human Relations
  - Company Policy
- **Motivation Factors**
  - Achievement
  - Advancement/Growth
  - Recognition
  - Nature of Work
  - Responsibility

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Absence of Hygiene Factors

- Lower Productivity
- Complaints
- Absenteeism
- High turnover rate
- Lack of higher level motivation

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Absence of Motivation Factors

- Stagnation
- Low retention

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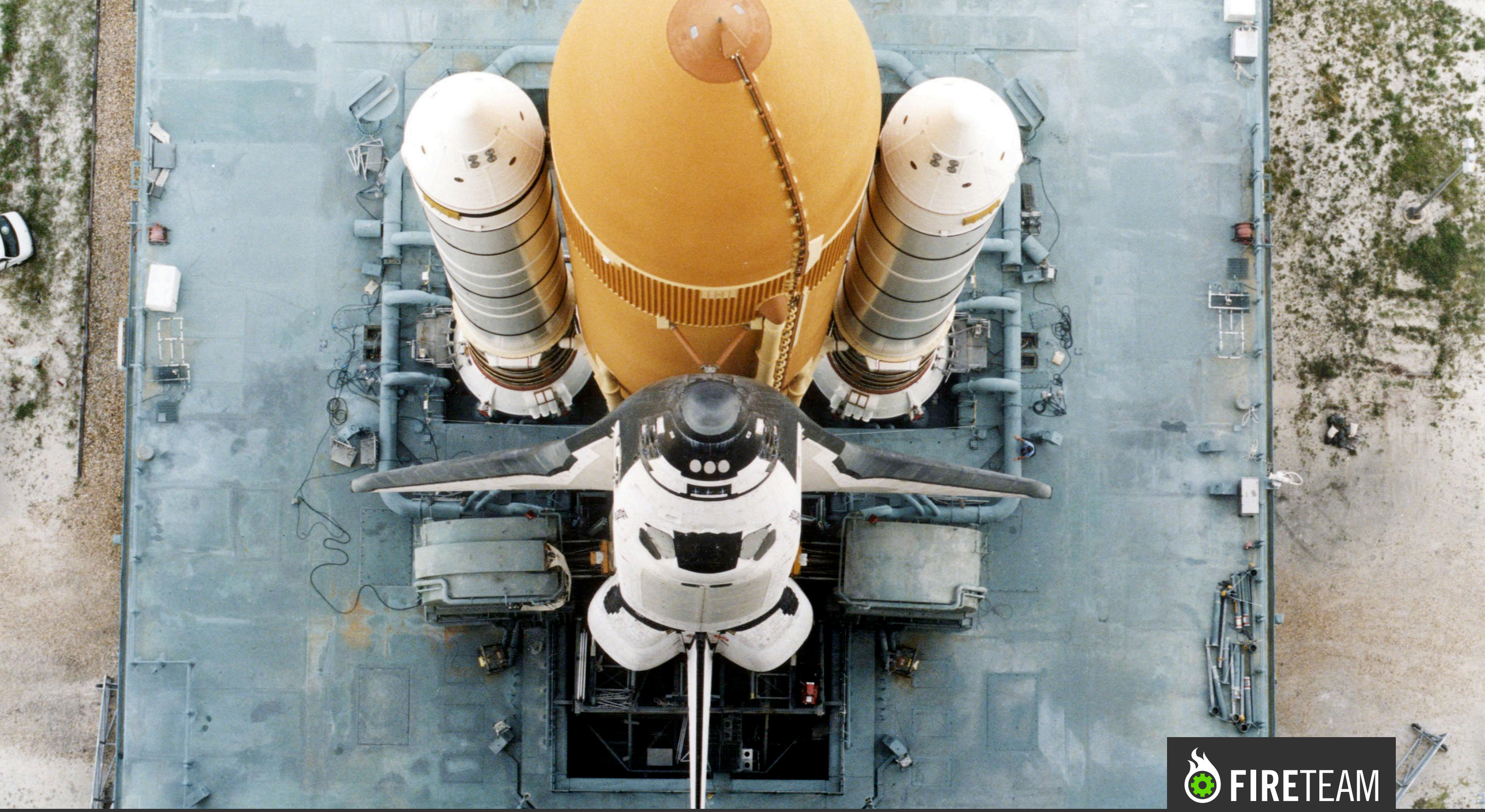
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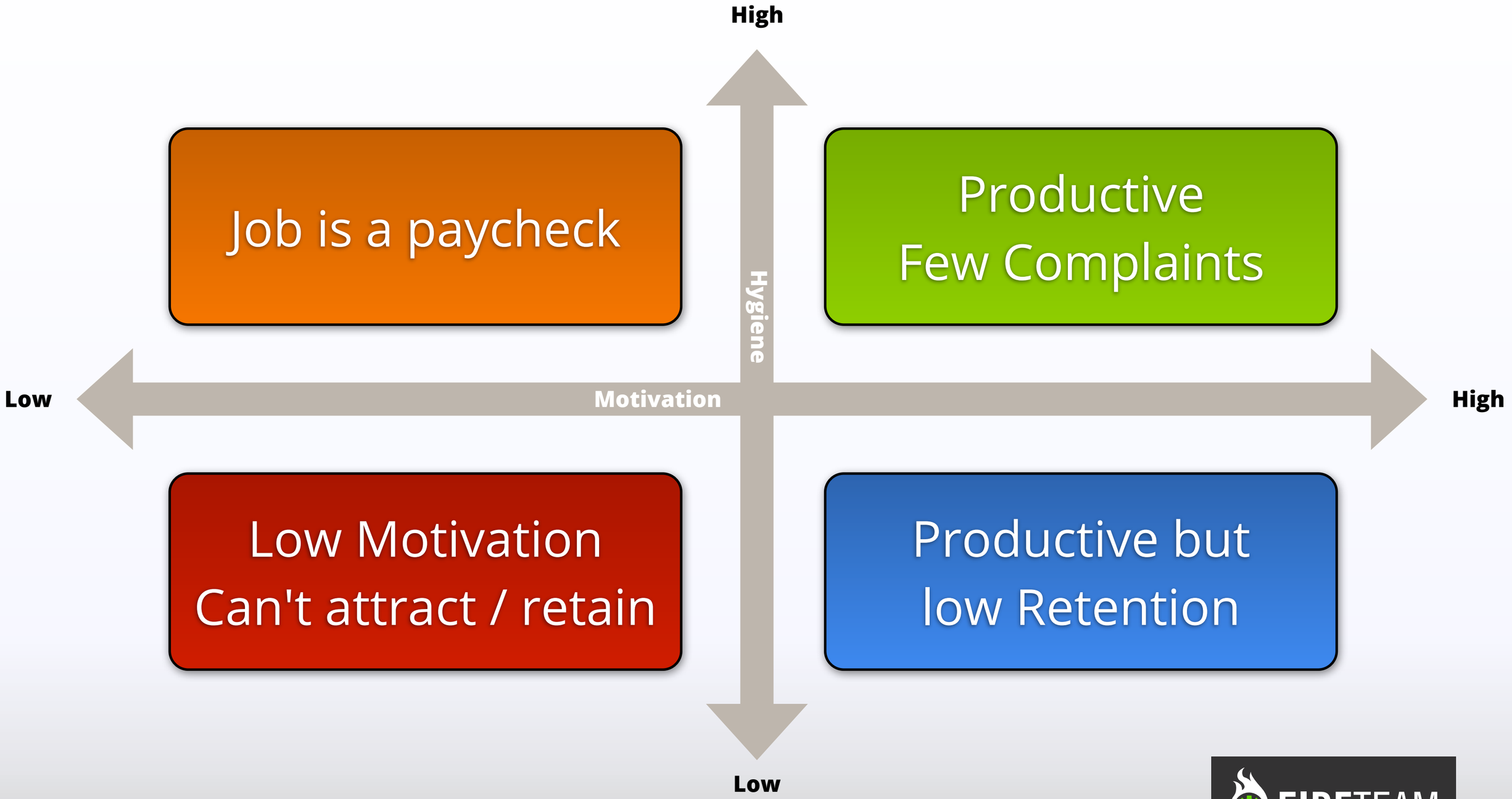
High
Hygiene
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Job is a paycheck
Productive
Few Complaints
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low Retention

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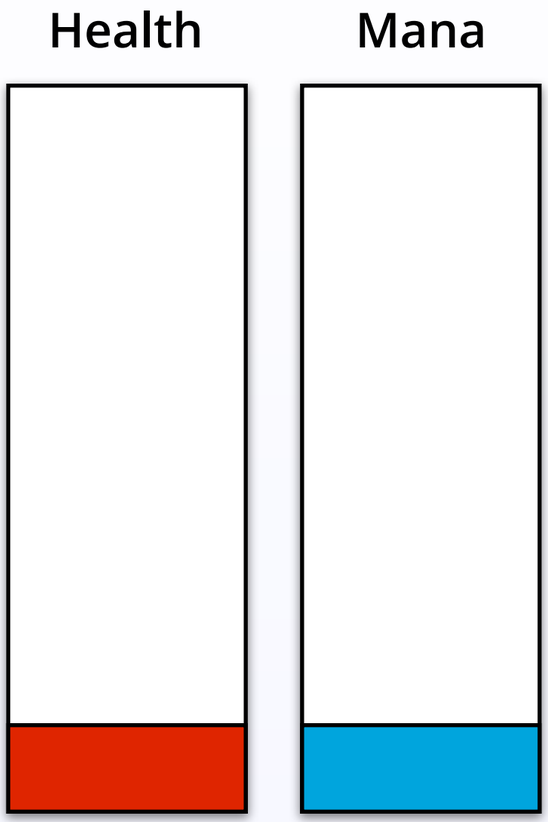
What does any of this have to do with Games?

… and how do we know it applies?

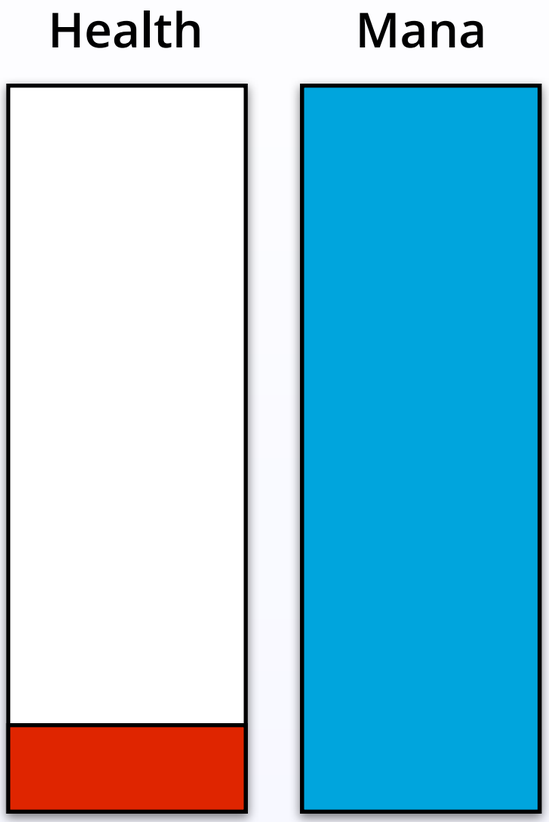
Game Analogy

- Hygiene = Health
- Motivators = Mana

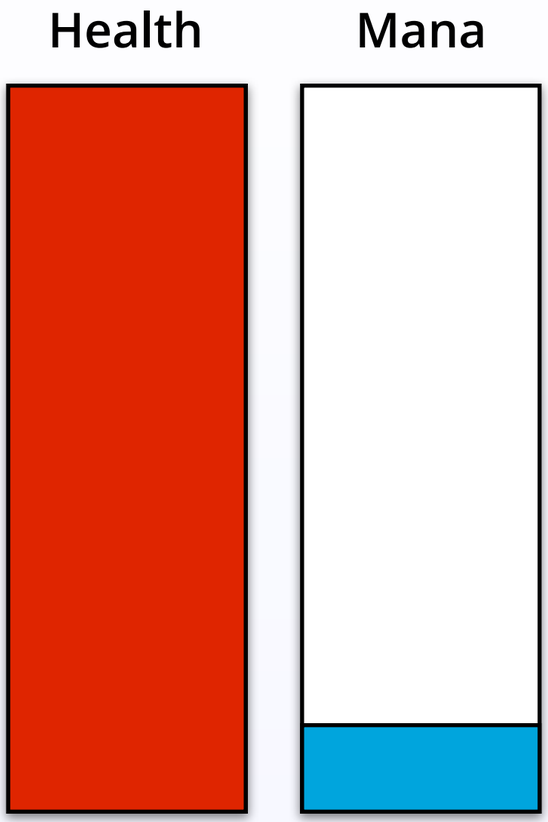
- Two independent resources, both are required



= “I give up”



= nowhere to go



= ineffective

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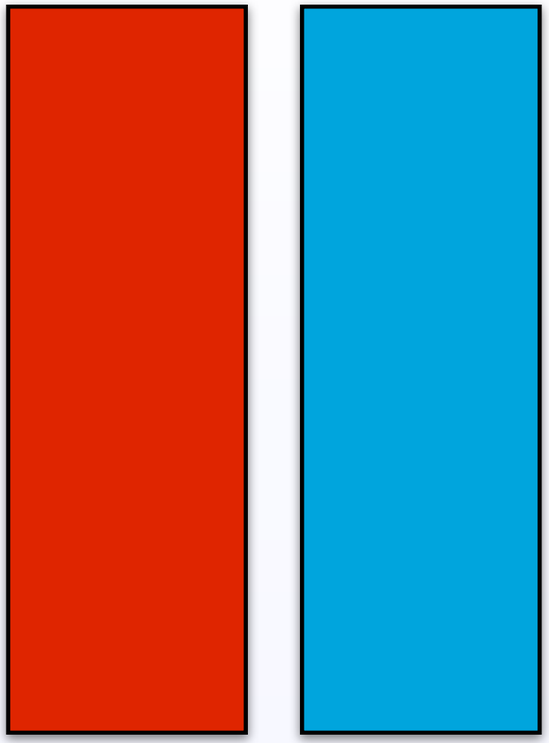
Health

Mana



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Nature of the Game

is it really fun?

DayZ
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Dota 2
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League of Legends

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Call of Duty (Modern Warfare 2)

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Eve Online

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World of Warcraft

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Games are not Fun

Most games we play we don't play because they are fun

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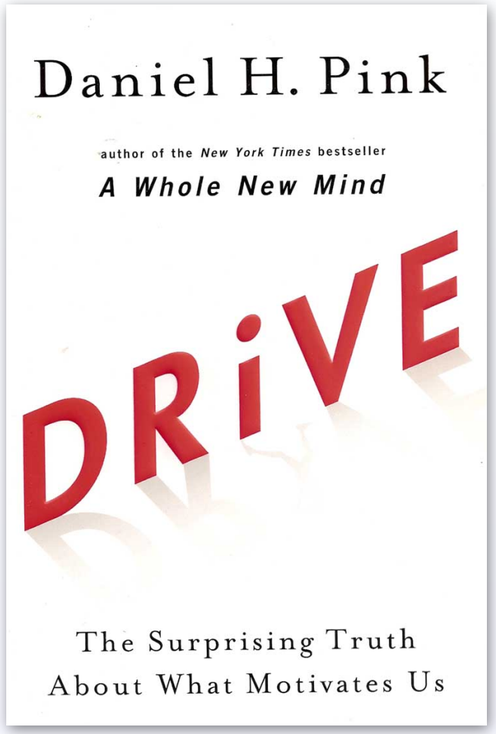
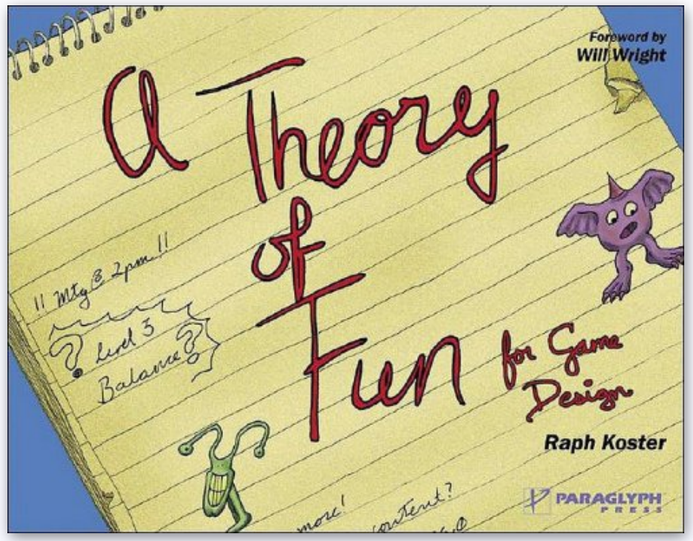
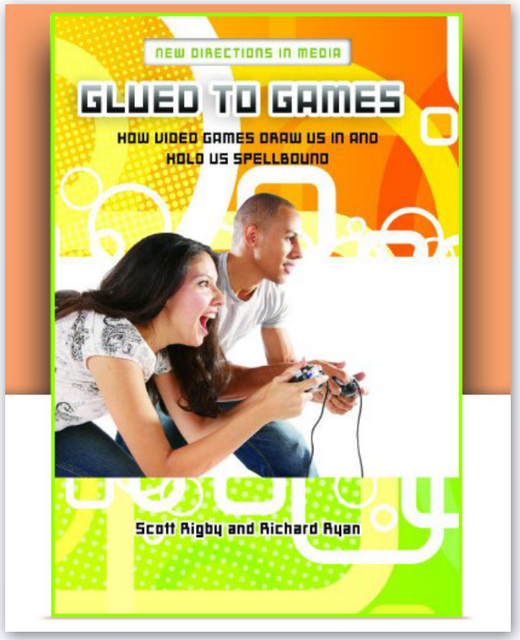
So why do we go back?

What motivates us playing such games then


Daniel H. Pink
author of the New York Times bestseller
A Whole New Mind
DRIVE
The Surprising Truth
About What Motivates Us


A Theory of Fun for Game Design
Foreword by Will Wright
Raph Koster
PARAGLYPH PRESS


NEW DIRECTIONS IN MEDIA
GLUED TO GAMES
HOW VIDEO GAMES DRAW US IN AND HOLD US SPELLBOUND
Scott Rigby and Richard Ryan

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Too Long; Didn't Read

- Why play people games?
  - Direct feedback on success and failure
  - Recognizable growth
  - Sense of achievement
  - Possibility of Mastery

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Work = Play = Activity

There is not that much of a difference

Let's apply Herzberg to Games

Motivation in Games

Motivation at Work

- Achievement
- Advancement/Growth
- Recognition
- Nature of Work
- Responsibility

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Motivation in Games

- Achievement
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Achievement in Games

Arming the Bomb

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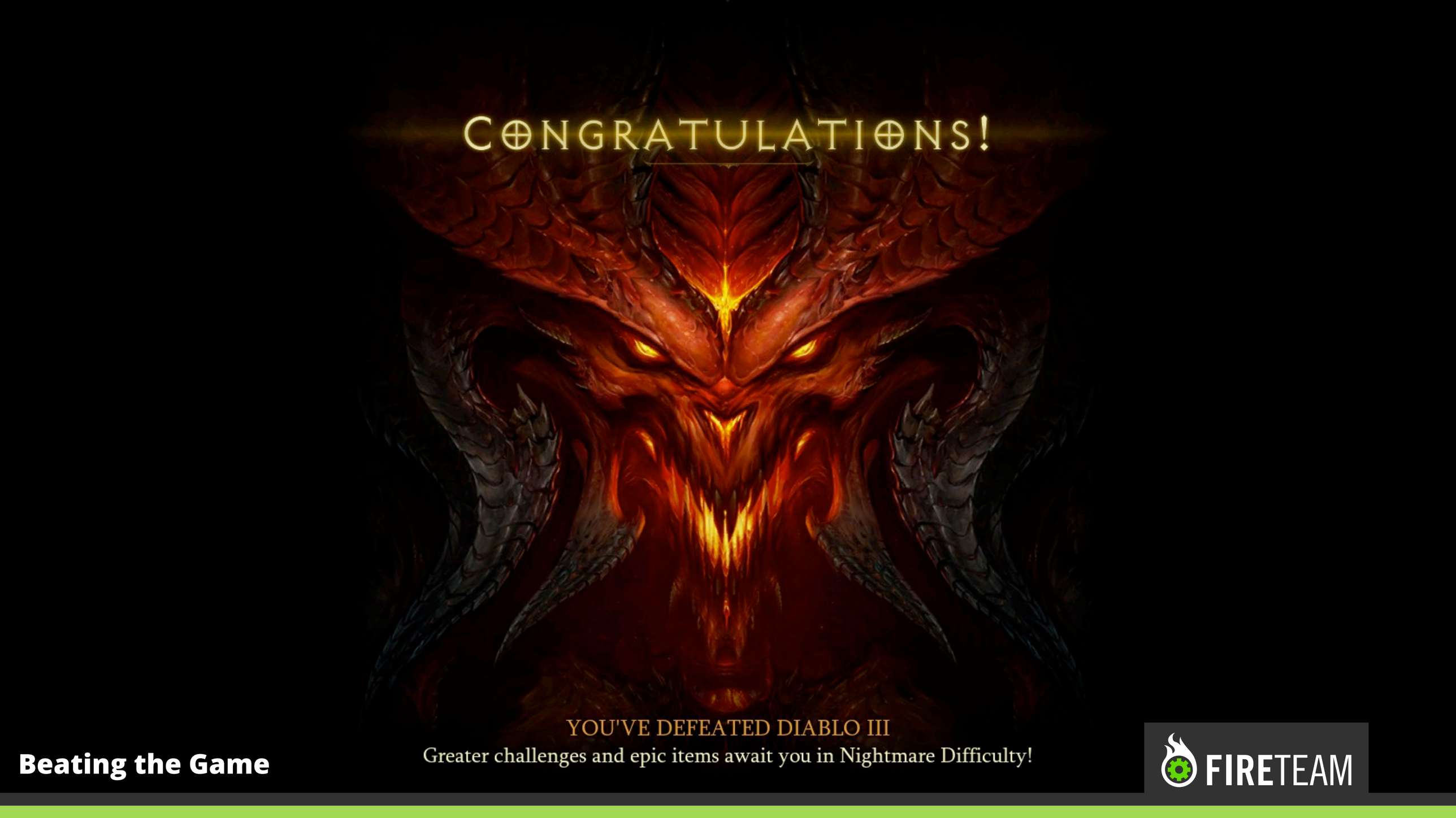

Beating the Game

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DIFFERENCE IN XP EARNED
+14000
+12000
+10000
+8000
+6000
+4000
+2000
0
+2000
+4000
+6000
+8000
+10000
+12000
+14000
The Radiant
The Dire
00:00
13:03
26:07
39:11
52:15
TOTAL XP EARNED
The Radiant
116030
The Dire
101360
0:56:02 / 0:57:14
1x
Camera View
Free Camera
Audio Channel
None
Fog of War
Both Teams
Copy to Clipboard
SHOP
Turning it Around
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Advancement, Growth, Mastery

- Unlockables / Levels
- Easy to pick up, hard to master
- Exploration of unintended game mechanics

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Recognition

- Other's recognize your achievements
- **Achievements in the game**:
  - Abilities others can witness
  - Montage videos
- **Achievements in the meta game**:
  - Trophies, XBox/Steam Achievements

Nature of Play

Provided motivators

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Responsibility

“My team sucks”

Responsibility

“I am part of this game's success!”

Hygiene Factors in Games

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Hygiene at Work

- **Hygiene Factors**
  - Working Conditions
  - Pay
  - Human Relations
  - Company Policy

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Hygiene in Games

- **Hygiene Factors**
  - Online Experience
  - Rewards
  - Gamer Relations
  - Developer/Publisher Policy

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Online Experience

- **Negative factors:**
  - Latency issues
  - Server load issues

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Rewards = Pay = KITA

- Kick
- in
- the
- Ass

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Carrot and Stick

- **Negative**: the stick
- **Positive**: the carrot

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KITA in Games

- World of Warcraft: grind
- Diablo 3: grind
- Call of Duty: grind

- Counter Strike: in-session power growth
- Dota 2: in-session power growth, random rewards
- Team Fortess 2: random rewards

Relationship with Operator

Do you appreciate me as a customer?

Relationship with Operator

- Do you take advantage of me?
- Am I being listened to?
- Do you care what I think?
- Are you going to give us players what we want?
- Why are you nerfing this gun?
- Do you keep my data secure?

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Relationship with Gamers

Human relationships are best two-way

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Relationship with Gamers

- Recognize the community
- Act on griefers and cheaters
- Control anti-social behavior

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Meta Game

- People engage with the game outside of the game
- Discussing strategies, creating art, sharing experiences
- With a good relationship that does not have to be enforced
- Players are glad to become part of the game and provide the missing bits and pieces

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Iteration

- How often is the game patched?
- Dota 2: bug in patch that allowed an invulnerable unit to be used as ally.
- Fixed 4 hours later — faster than the larger community was to actually exploit it.

Competitive Space

- With free to play titles people can just leave at any point
- You won't be able to retain players unless they are happy
- Competition can end up with your players

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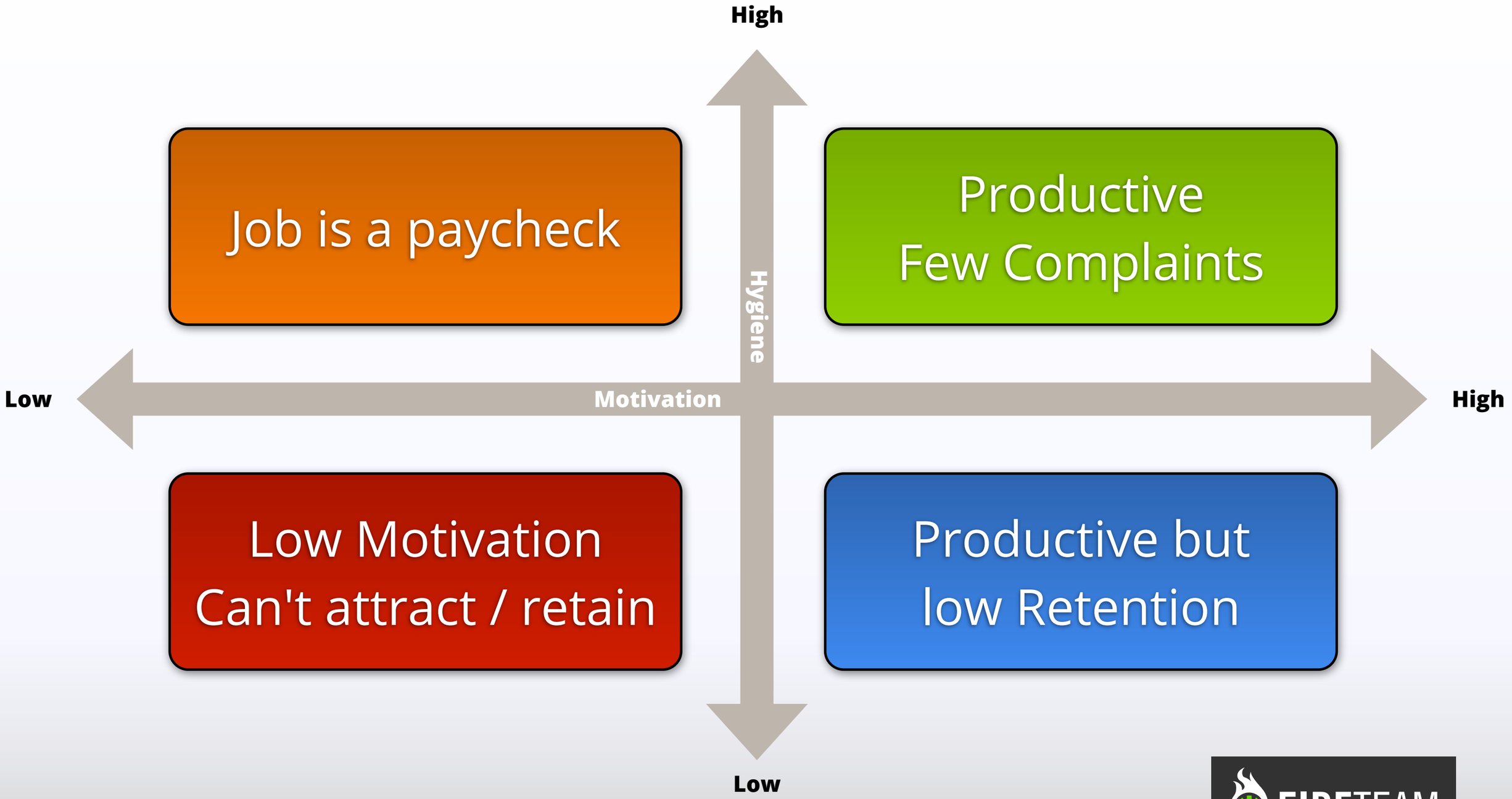
Herzberg applied to Games

Conclusion and Recap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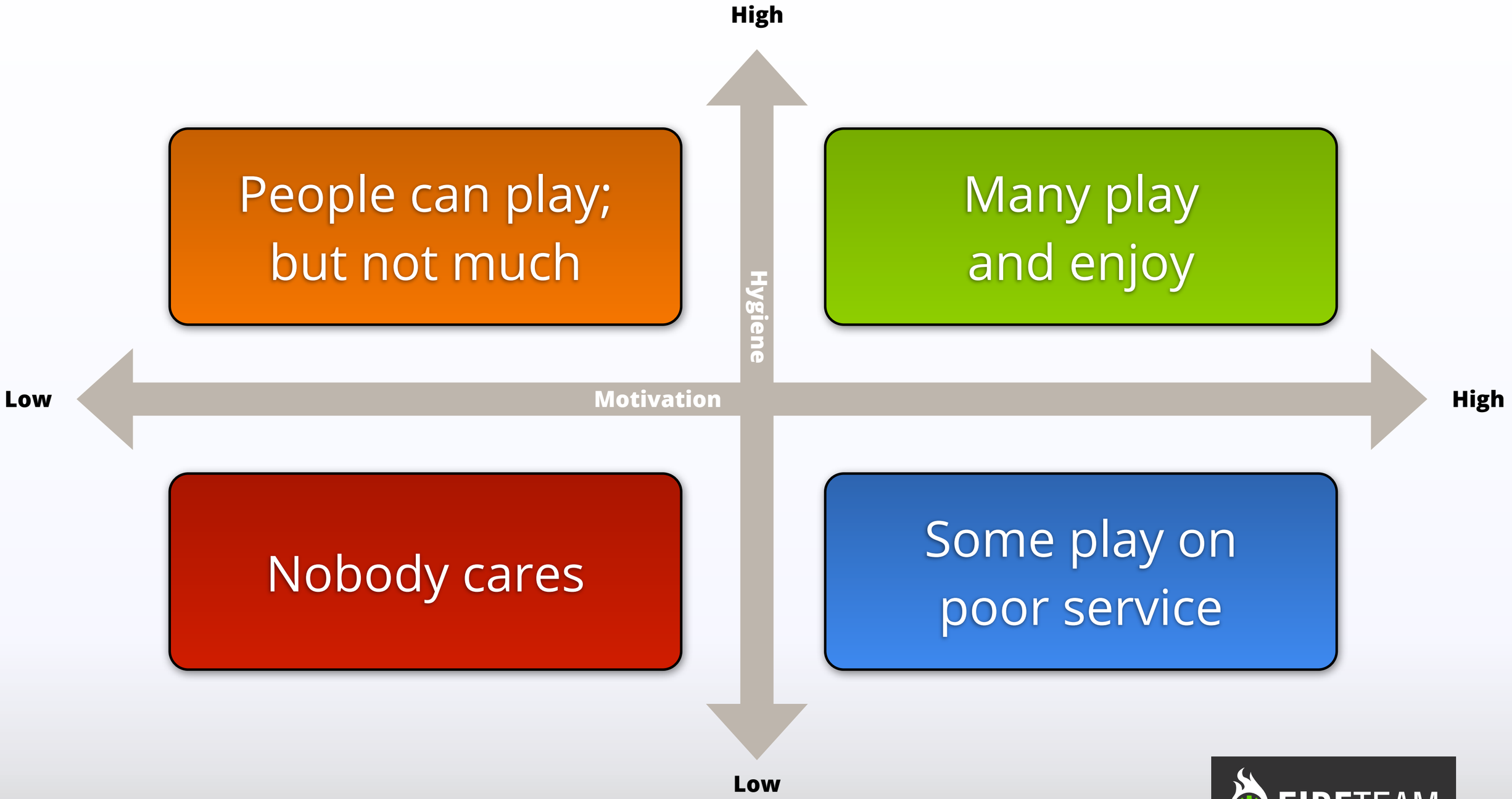
High
People can play; but not much
Many play and enjoy
Hygiene
Low
Motivation
High
Nobody cares
Some play on poor service
Low

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Q&A

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