

Bringing the best educators and retaining them- A strategic approach

About the company

Unacademy is an ed-tech platform with a freemium business model. The plus subscribers can avail several additional benefits like access to full catalogue of live videos and personal attention from the instructor, live test session and feedback sessions. Unacademy's message to educators is that Unacademy was created with an intent to develop world's largest educational repository empowering great educators and making it accessible to everyone. When educators create videos on unacademy, they create impact and make a difference in the lives of learners.

Educators-

Much of Unacademy's success is attributed to the excellent quality of lectures in the platform and that too, accessible for everyone. The platform can attract a large number of new learners through great educators who, with their charisma, domain expertise and experience impart knowledge in a way that's effective and beneficial for the learners. Considering the fact that Unacademy wish to become the world's largest repository for quality educational contents, there are several educators providing lectures on same subject which means unacademy as a platform can provide different perspective for the same problem/issue and therefore ensuring that the learners have multiple viewpoints/ approaches to cater to. The educators are not provided salary as such though financial incentives are offered as a token of appreciation. According to the firm, the biggest motivation for educators is the inner sense of satisfaction they get out of making an impact on the lives of learners through education.

The biggest motivation for an unacademy educators should be the inner sense of satisfaction they get out of creating an impact and making a difference in the lives of the learners across the country by delivering high quality lectures. The challenge is to acquire those aspiring educators who fits well into Unacademy's vision and mission.

Major challenges for unacademy wrt to educators.

Following are the major challenges that unacademy face when it comes to educators-

- **Types of challenges- managerial, user support, motivational.**
- **High attrition** due to dissatisfaction/ poor user experience/ fallout with management/ ambiguity over management policies/ constantly changing unacademy agreements & conditions. –(managerial/system)
- Poor reviews by former educators – lack of support from ERM. – (User support)
- lack of engagement from student community/ low subs-views/- (Low motivation/engagement)

In order to do deep dive into these challenges and overcome them, it is crucial to important the persona, values and aspirations of educators.

Aspirations of a typical unacademy educator.

- **Social aspiration-** wishing to be highly respected in the society and also seeks validation from the student community. Traditionally teacher community are under appreciated in the society though their contribution in building students' career is huge. Therefore, the educators often

feel the need to be a part of the platform where the educators are valued for their output and also assert their individuality.

- **Career aspirations**- develop new skills and techniques for imparting knowledge better to a large audience. Build networks to promote their classes and improve social proof to gain better career prospects.
- **Financial aspirations**- although unacademy does pay salary to the educators, it's natural for a category of educators to see financial incentives from the platform as a token of respect or as a proof that their work is appreciated.
- **Impact aspirations**- the educator wishes to impact the lives of the students and also feel the need to witness the progress of the learners who availed their service.

Role played by the educator in unacademy-

For an unacademy educator to get the best out of the platform, he/she needs to don multiple roles- researcher, editor, presenter, marketer, promoter which is quite a challenging task

Unlike traditional educational system where the educators are either on contract/ employees whose sole mission/task is to teach the learners, the unacademy educators have to don several hats in order to get the best out of the platform. They are-

- **content creation**- identify high impact areas that are relevant to the learners, create a knowledge dump & prioritize, condense the study material to absorbable form for the learners.
- **Editor**- visual cues, aesthetics, highlighting, ppt preparation,
- **presenter**- understand the learner's psychology and make the teaching/lessons engaging through literary devices and anecdotes.
- **Councillor**- address the problems/ queries of the learners.
- **Marketer- promoter**- appeal to the learner's community through social media and other channels to increase subscribers

User segmentation-

Educators in Unacademy come from diverse backgrounds. This information is crucial because a 'one fits all' model may not be helpful or efficient for unacademy as the needs, aspirations, strengths and weaknesses of these diverse groups of educators are very different. Following are most common user segments are-

- **Coaching classes teachers/ experienced teachers with proven track record**
- **Highly qualified domain experts/professionals – no teaching experiences**
- **Intermediate qualified individuals- part time.**

In order to develop an effective strategy, it is important to prioritize among these groups of educators. The prioritization must be based on the long-term goals of the firm and also to nurture those educators who are deemed as the best fit for the business model.

Advantages vs disadvantages – prioritization technique.

| User segment | Advantages | disadvantages | Impact score |
|---|--|--|--------------|
| Experienced tutors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proven track record - Understands learner’s psychology - Expertise in study material preparation - Large social media may be present but not guaranteed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the craving to educate large number of learners is already fulfilled. - May prioritise financial incentives instead of joy for teaching and learners engagement. | 7/10 |
| Highly qualified domain experts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unique teaching methodology and perspectives. - Highly values Unacademy’s large user base and other facilities in the platform. - Prioritises social impact over financial incentives. - If satisfied, network effects may lead to more acquisition with zero cost. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No previous experience in teaching large audience & prepping teaching material - Need to be kept highly motivated/engaged in order to become a regular user. | 9/10 |
| Intermediate qualified – part time job seekers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly motivated to create large number of content /months. - Can be acquired organically-low/zero acquisition cost. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less or No experience in tutoring. - High output rate may result in low quality study materials. - May prioritise Financial incentives over other social impact benefits | 7/10 |

Based on the impact score, the educator’s groups can be prioritised in following order

- 1) Highly qualified domain experts- no teaching experience
- 2) Coaching class tutors
- 3) Intermediate qualified – part time job seekers

Challenges-Highly qualified domain experts/professionals.

- **Pre awareness-** They are highly dissatisfied with the kind of opportunities/alternatives they have. Their permanent job doesn’t permit them to indulge in teaching activities and therefore the frustration among domain experts in private/govt sectors is very high.
- **What are the problems in their current channels for outreach/ teaching opportunities?** - own blogposts/ websites/ social media accounts (Facebook, YouTube) have poor traffic, zero to minimal interaction/ engagement which again leads to frustration and low motivation.
- They feel the need to impart their domain knowledge to learners all over the globe.
- **What are their needs?** - reach- wide user base to consume the knowledge & to be a part of community that strives for a great cause.

A highly experienced domain expert who wish to become an educator seeks a platform with wide user base to address and also wish to be a part of a community which strives for a great cause. Financial incentives are a non-factor for this group.

User journey- Domain experts with no teaching experience

| Stage | User needs | Challenges |
|--|--|--|
| Awareness | Know What are the features in unacademy that would make teaching impactful? Know what is being offered for this role. | The incentive model & terms and conditions for the educator may keep changing leading to frustration and mistrust. |
| consideration | Wants to know if joining unacademy would be a rewarding experience. Understand whether a teaching role in unacademy is suitable for their personality, strength / qualification. | The aspiring educators have no info regarding the expectation they need to set, time & attention they may have to commit to have a fruitful teaching experience. |
| Activation- prep demo video | Understand what is the basis on which the selector evaluates an aspiring educator. Know if the video prepared is the best representation of his/her talent, personality and knowledge, expertise etc. | The instructions and suggestions for developing demo video in the website may not be sufficient as aspiring educators are diverse in terms of strengths and weaknesses. "One fits all" is not efficient. |
| Selection – accepted/rejected | If rejected, the candidate wishes to clearly know why he/she was rejected. The rejection reason and criteria must be objective, logical and measurable. | Educators often complain about ambiguity in criteria employed to evaluate the demo video and left frustrated & disappointed. Perceived fairness in the process is an issue |
| Preparation of study materials | The educator wishes to know the best industry practice for Collection of relevant info, prioritising, editing and presenting the ppt. | Domain experts with no teaching experience may not be able to prepare high quality study materials without technical assistance at least in the initial phase. |
| Progress within the unacademy ranks | The educator also wants clarity on how to acquire the verified tag and require an action plan | How the algorithm determines whether to award verified tag or not to an educator is not known to the educators. Transparency is an issue. |
| Promote the videos | The educator wants the learners to take notice of his/her videos and also communicate the unique learning methods/ info incorporated in the lecture, if any. | The educators with low/no social media following or no access to large user base outside of unacademy finds it difficult to increase subs/views. Educators with large social following have |

| | | |
|------------------------|--|---|
| | | unfair advantage. This leads to friction among educators. |
| Support system | The educators may need support from unacademy/educators' community for motivation, new ideas, strategies, insights, teaching techniques. | Currently there is no proper system in place to meaningful engagement among the educators. |
| Time Commitment | The educator wishes to evaluate how much time to commit to Unacademy's activities & find ways to be more productive. | As educators progress through the ranks, quality& expectations that they set for themselves may increase leading to burn out. |
| Feedback | The educator wants to know areas for improvement from the learner's community | - |

Goal setting-

Short term goal-

- retain the top educators at unacademy through innovative means.
- provide necessary solutions so that the educators can focus more energy and attention on actual knowledge.
- retain the top educators at unacademy

Long term goal –

- acquiring educators who can impart high quality education and are reliable, engaging and can acquire new subscribers.
- Create strong community within the educators to increase stickiness.

Strategy for retention-

Retention of supply side in a marketplace is a crucial element in the success of the platform as perato principle of 20% of the supply brings in 80% of the revenue applies in ed tech platform as well. Lack of competitive differentiation, lack of student traffic, lack of supportive ecosystem & natural churn are common reasons for tutors leaving the ed tech platform.

The issue of supply attrition can be solved through creating competitive differentiation for the supply side, creating a supportive ecosystem, creating leadership opportunities and developing a sense of belonging in a community

This issue can be solved through creating systems where the tutors can showcase their competitive differentiation, provide them with leadership opportunities, creating a supportive environment for the well-being of the tutors. For Unacademy, the value offering for the tutors are different compared to other ed tech companies as in unacademy, there is no salary for the tutors but instead, there are several benefits that a tutor can acquire through their participation in unacademy. Therefore, in order to succeed in teacher retention, Unacademy may have to develop strong communities for the tutors to foster engagement and stickiness, apart from developing system that enables them to create differentiation, get leadership opportunities and receive support from the platform.

Developing communities through social engagement

-social element needs to be inbuilt and inseparable from the product. This social element must be critical to the overall product user experience for educators. The social feature must foster authentic engagement between the community members and not just passively consuming info/content from the creator.

Any product that has a social component baked in has fundamental and asymmetric advantages over competing non-social products in that category: better growth loops, better engagement, better retention, better defensibility. And because social+ companies are network and community driven, that advantage accumulates over time.

Designing interactional layer (appeals to emotional and cognitive side) and transactional layer (functional rational layer) must be mutually reinforcing.

Solutions

Solutions for long term challenges

Digital energy units-



Energy units (Digital token) can be awarded to fellow educators based on broad appeal/engagement within the community. – A pre-determined number of energy units can be allotted to each educator and this energy units should be allowed used for a variety of purposes within the platform. A platform/feature must be created where the educators can learn / collect insights from fellow educators and this can be done by allowing highly motivated educators to post relevant/helpful contents for the purpose of educating fellow educators who require guidance. Fellow educator should be provided an option to gift digital token to these educators as a gesture of appreciation and also to motivate them to create more such contents for educators.

An audience passively consumes, while a community engages with each other. Social+ products feature authentic engagement between the users in the network, not just with a single curator or creator.

Mentor- mentee partnership program- the star educators can be assigned mentees to groom and nurture them into star educators.

Use of digital tokens for obtaining technical support in order to prepare impactful promotions/ presentation preparations.

Priority support for editing / fresh templates- A/B testing - educators can test the engagements from the learners and identify the best practices and methods for that particular learners' groups through a/b testing.

The social element needs to be integral to the experience, not an afterthought.

Farm system- nurture/ groom the next star educators. - develop a farm system from where aspiring star educators must be groomed by experienced educators so that there will be a steady supply of star educators and ultimately motivate the existing rooster of star educators to raise the standards of presentation and study materials.

Peer to peer review and rating system – community engagement for educators. – create a discovery tab for educators where they are exposed to videos/lectures by other educators. The lectures are rated and feedbacks for each bucket (effectiveness/ relevance/ presentation/ insightfulness / overall appeal).

Transparent rating system- for promotion to star educators. (inequality aversion)- the algorithm/criteria based on which the promotion/elevation to star educators and then to plus educators needs to be transparent. The criteria could be a combination of view/subscriber target for a certain period to consistency of engagement/content creation etc.

Highlight video- Develop highlight video which is in a way, a trailer for the educator's lecture series. This video can be circulated in the social media and attract good traffic as the highlight video will contain interesting anecdotes/ funny comments and help the students get a feel of the vibe/atmosphere of the lecture.

Write blogs- for student community- motivational for building personal connection and engagement.

Reddit model chat system for educators- where the star educators and experienced educators can invite fresh educators to form sub communities within communities. And the chat system design must encourage communication/ interaction among the educators. Highly active communities will be rewarded with individual attention from experts for promotion, new initiatives for learners for that particular topic, etc.

Solutions for short term challenges

Retention of top educators at Unacademy;

Enhanced support system for the top educators- dedicated team, software, tools for time management, knowledge collection. The use of dedicated software has its own advantages- automate reminders, planning for a crucial lecture. The software must be programmed to ensure that the tutors is given a timeline for research, preparing the study materials and be ready with lecture before the tentative date of lecture.

Competitive Differentiation- based on their core competitive skills, - The lectures can be categories into groups like most student friendly classes, most fun filled classes, best of study materials, veterans/titans/giants of the industry, most insightful classes, most responsive tutors in Unacademy.

Prioritisation- RICE MODEL

| solutions | Reach | Impact | confidence | effort | RICE SCORE |
|--|--------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Farm system- nurture/groom the next star educators | High | Medium | Low | High | 5/10 |
| Peer to peer review and rating system | Medium | Medium | Medium | High | 6/10 |
| Transparent rating system- for promotion to star educators | High | Medium | Low | Medium | 5/10 |
| Digital tokens. | High | High | High | Medium | 9/10 |
| Mentor- mentee partnership program | Medium | Medium | High | Medium | 7/10 |
| highlights video | High | High | High | Medium | 8/10 |
| Priority support for editing / fresh templates- A/B testing | Medium | Medium | High | High | 6/10 |
| Reddit model chat system for educators- | Medium | Medium | Medium | Medium | 6/10 |
| Competitive differentiation | High | Medium | Medium | Low | 7/10 |

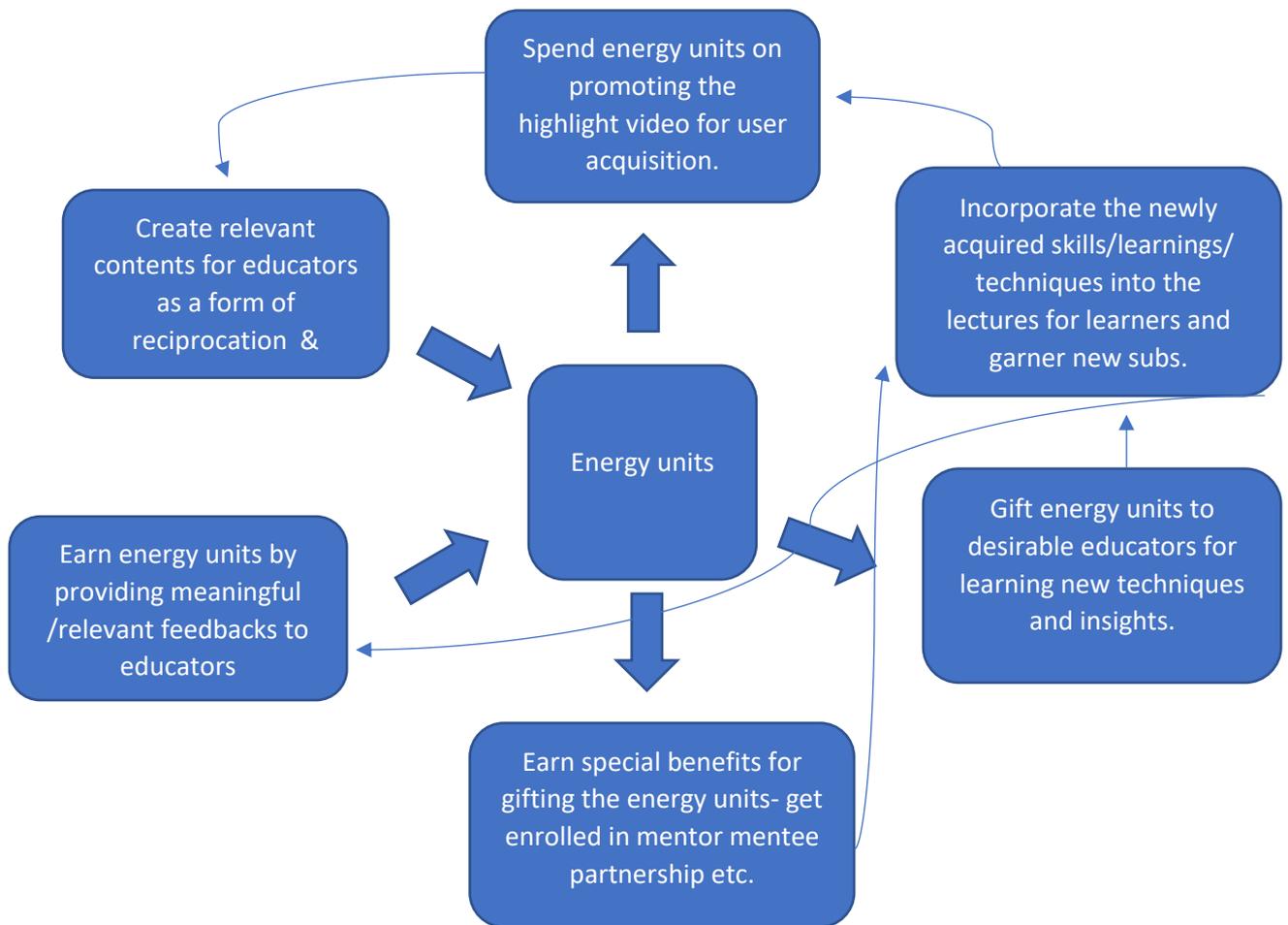
Based on the rice model, Digital token, mentor -mentee partnership program, highlight video, competitive differentiation can be implemented.

Implementation –Solutions for Long term

Onboarding & marketing

Ambassador programme – Reach out to influential domain experts within the educator community and enrol them in the ambassador programme. Once a target expert community is identified where the ambassador is well known and respected, organise a seminar for which ambassadors will be the chief guest. The seminar can be used to communicate the benefit and impact of tutoring in the unacademy platform.

Energy units model



Reciprocation effect- the educators who receive tokens from the fellow educators may also feel the need to spend the tokens on those educators as a sign of appreciation and encouragement.

| Particulars | Method | Challenges: |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Acquiring digital tokens | Every month a fixed number of digital tokens must be credited to the wallet | Educators may spend all their tokens on promoting their videos. This practice won't continue too long as other educator will start releasing higher quality lectures as their skills/knowledge improved from their interaction with star educators. |
| | Receive tokens as gift from fellow educators for creating relevant contents / insights and | Educators may spend too much time creating contents for fellow educators and this may affect the quality of the lectures for learners. Although Fresh educators are unlikely to create contents for fellow educators and by the time, they feel confident to create educator's |

| | | |
|------------------------|---|--|
| | sharing with the community. | content, they must have garnered enough experience and time management skills to efficiently do required tasks. |
| Spending digital token | Gift fellow educators for motivating them to keep creating helpful contents. | Educators may not gift tokens to fellow educators as it is not mandatory to do so. This practice may not long as there are special benefits to be availed for spending tokens on fellow educators. |
| | Spend the digital tokens for generating highlight videos and for featuring in the unacademy social media handles. | The influential educators who have amassed large quantity of tokens (received as gifts) may spent heavily for getting featured more in the unacademy social media handles, nullifying the works/lectures of fresh educators. To prevent this, a spending limit can be deployed for promotions. |

step by step implementation:

| Steps by step | Expected result |
|--|---|
| Associate with a group of video editors and ERMs who will be creating the highlight video for the educators. | The fresh educators will be highly motivated to avail this facility as this highlight video can be used to garner new subs through social media platforms. |
| Credit a fixed number of energy units for all the educators. | The educators are likely to spend all of this on getting their highlight video and soon exhaust their energy units. The educators will then seek ways to earn more energy units. |
| Develop a feature where educators can post content that would be helpful for fellow educators- new ideas for making classes impactful, best online learning industry practices from other platform/ country etc. Also, instead of like button, create a gifting button where energy units can be gifted by the educators to the content creator if it is helpful/relevant. | The highly motivated/ domain experts educators will start posting contents which will be beneficial for the whole educator community and start earning more energy units. |
| The educator can also earn energy units by posting reaction to top contents and whoever finds the reaction helpful/beneficial can gift them energy units. | The fresh/inexperienced tutors who are exceptionally brilliant in their field & highly experienced tutors will start earning at a faster rate through creating contents and reaction posts. They are now armed with large amount of energy units. |
| Bidding facility for features in unacademy main page/social media handles. The tutors with large energy units can use it to bid for getting featured in home page of the app or in the social media accounts of unacademy. | This system ensures that the highly motivated/ knowledgeable educators irrespective of experience/ social media followers can make huge impact on Unacademy with small ramp up period. |

Highlight video – In order to enable the educators to focus more time and attention on the tutoring, it is important to remove the burden of doing the long- promotional speech within the lecture videos. Also, in order to enable the educators to market themselves better in other social media platforms, a highlight video of the lecture must be created for the educator. This video must be trendy., engaging with upbeat background score highlighting scenes where the educator said some amusing anecdotes / gyan. At the end of the video, the instructor can be shown inviting the learners to join his/her lectures at unacademy platform.

The educator can use the energy units as payment for developing the highlight video.

Mentor mentee partnership-

Programme where star educators can be assigned mentees allowing the mentees get access to best industry practices and regular course correction and monitoring by the senior star educator.

The mentee can use the digital token to get a mentor.

Implementations- Solutions for short term

Support for top educator

Time management tool for top educators- In order to avoid decision fatigue for the top educators when it comes to planning the next crucial lecture, how much time to spend on reference books for research, compiling the study materials and preparing the delivery note, insights for the lecture, a dedicated software within the unacademy app can be created. The software must be programmed to anticipate the date of next crucial lecture. For example, the software must track how many days are left for the release of next budget- economic, railway or when would a important law/ constitutional amendment will be discussed in the parliament. This can allow the software to provide a timeline that the top educator needs to stick in order to avoid last minute rush.

Core competitive differentiation- In order to allow the tutors, develop a unique identity in unacademy, the tutors can be categorised based on their unique teaching skills. The challenge with this idea is that a few categories may attract more traffic than other categories and the tutors in the less engaging categories may feel dejected. Therefore, less engaging categories must be filtered out through A/B testing. Once A/B testing is done, only selected most engaging, desirable categories must be retained and the tutors can select which categorise they believe fits best.

Partnership for lecturing

Educators can collaborate with other educators to create impactful lectures. As this model of lecturing will be conversational in nature, the learners can also get a glimpse of how to look/perceive a subject from third-person's eye. Those educators who believe that the skills/expertise of their peer is complementary to their strengths and skills can engage in such teaching model.

Timeline & success metrics

Solutions for long term-

- **Energy units' model-** 6-8 months may be required for the model to be fully functional.
- **Success metrics-** average energy units earned and spent by the educator, No of relevant content generated for the educators, average energy units earned per posts by the educator.
- **Highlight video-** 3-4 months required to be fully operational

- **Success metrics-** No of **highlight** video generated, No of average views per video in social media platforms.
- **Mentor – mentee partnership-**

Summary

The ability of unacademy to attract highly motivated educators with right attitude and intellectual horsepower is crucial for maintaining high standards of content and fostering engagement with the learner's community. Highly qualified domain experts, although bereft of any teaching experiences can be of great value to the platform, considering the fact their needs and aspirations complement with Unacademy's core competitive assets. The concept of stickiness of users to a platform is strongly correlated with the level/depth of social engagement involving authentic interaction within the community where the social element is critical and an inseparable part of the user experience. Digital currency model that has been suggested in this report triggers a series of endowment effect and reciprocation effect creating a network effect within the community where all the stakeholders have been provided with necessary tools to further their individual interest and also the overall interests of the community.

Appendix

Highly engaging interactive system

Priority lanes for the highly qualified professionals-

Blue tick verified tag selection algorithm.

Why does educators choose unacademy over other social media platform to educate the learners?
wider reach, better interaction with the learners, support from ERMs, financial incentives- (your work/knowledge/skill is valued& appreciated).

Present solutions- top performer verified badge- endowment effect, awards- motivation and recognition.