

Are You Game For ‘Gamification’ In HR?



It's play that makes people unafraid to fail and confident to try new things. It's play that helps us do serious things better because we enjoy them and feel a sense of joy in our achievements.

— Jake Orlowitz, Head of the Wikipedia Library, Wikimedia Foundation

Gaming forms an integral part of our lives, starting from our childhoods. It's not uncommon to find adults engrossed in playing games on their smartphones either! Tapping this innate desire for games, corporate HR departments have also decided to inculcate this wave into their management through Gamification – the latest buzz in the HR domain. **With research indicating that only one in ten employees are ‘engaged’ in their jobs and the remaining are ‘not engaged’ or ‘actively disengaged’, many companies are turning to gamification to engage their employees actively.**

The Gartner Group (a global research and advisory firm) defines Gamification as: “The usage of game-thinking and game mechanics in non-game scenarios such as business environment and processes, specifically in recruitment, training, and development, and motivation; in order to engage users and solve problems.”

Gamification can be a real game-changer in that it increases [employee engagement](#) and makes the job process more exciting and enjoyable for the employees.

Many organizations such as Deloitte, Cognizant, etc. resort to gaming to enhance workforce skills, solve various issues, and bring in new talent.

Here Are The Different Kinds Of HR Gamification!

According to Karl Kapp, professor of Instructional Technology at Bloomsburg University, gamification can be divided into two categories. One is structural gamification that requires gaming elements to be added to existing content to aid people to move through it. The features might include points, badges, leaderboards, etc.



The second form, which is content-based gamification, transforms the content itself into a game form but with business objectives at its center. These are also referred to as “serious” games.

How Does Gamification in HR Work and Benefit the Company?

Gamification uses the natural competitive attitude in people to trigger them to perform better. It helps employees engage themselves better in the organization, ward off malaise, and creates a fun-filled entertaining condition that allows employees to address their obstacles with intensity. It also fortifies group effort and synergy.

*Gamification is **75% psychology** and **25% technology** –
Gabe Zichermann*

Well, the answer depends on how well it is executed. A poorly designed gamified solution will not succeed. Hence, one must be clear about the objectives and the desired behavioral outcome.

The primary objective of introducing gamification for an employer is to encourage a particular kind of behavior suited for the company. **For the specific behavior to be exhibited, Professor B.J. Fogg, an experimental psychologist at Stanford University, says three things must converge simultaneously: viz. motivation, ability, and trigger.**

Gamification tools will succeed when they:

- Motivate employees to perform a specific activity (chance to win rewards, fame recognition, incentives, etc.). For example, HR teams can internally reward top recruiters by giving 'Referrer Of The Year' badges, to motivate employees to refer top candidates, and play an active role in talent acquisition, thereby aiding the HR department. It is necessary to focus on motivation instead of the mechanics of the game.
- Facilitate employees to perform a task by breaking them into sizeable chunks as per their capacity.
- Boost or trigger their competitive attitude to complete the tasks. For example, mundane tasks like participating in a training compliance program of filling up forms like expense sheets, benefits forms, etc. will have little takers. These can be made more interesting by giving credit to persons performing these tasks through tangible incentives. This will create competition and employees will voluntarily come forward to perform these tasks.

Gamification, when it meets the above factors of motivation, ability, and the trigger, will definitely help in achieving the desired behavior and give the required benefits.

Prerequisites For A Good HR Game!

Here are the different factors that characterize a good HR gameplay!



1. Ease of Access Across Various Devices

Gamification should be accessed conveniently across multiple devices. Employees should be able to quickly access gamified tools whenever they get free time, and it should also be compatible with multiple devices so that they can use whatever device they have in hand at that time. If used correctly, gamification makes the learning and training process easy in a company.

2. Cater To Employees' Interests

[Know what motivates your employees](#) and configure gaming structures and techniques accordingly as per their interests. For instance, profile badges that recognize employee contribution may be motivating for technically interested employees, and hence, such badges may be used in constructing games.

3. Meet The Strategic Objectives

Gamification should gel with the business strategy of the company. Investment in gamification apps in crucial areas like onboarding, training, etc. should be made accordingly to aid in accomplishing the strategic objectives of the company.

4. Have A Clear Gamified Objective

It must be clear as to what objective is to be achieved through the game developed. The design must be clear in order to obtain a proper Return on investment. For instance, PwC wanted prospective employees to have a clear understanding of the company before applying.

Traditionally, these prospects were surfing for less than 15 minutes on their company website's career page to know about the company. The result was a game called **Multipoly** that allows candidates to test their capacity for working in PwC. Candidates collaborate as teams to solve real-world problems and tasks undertaken by PwC like building acumen and digital skills. **The result was a 190% increase in prospective candidates and more than 70% of candidates becoming interested in learning more about engaging themselves at PwC.**

True to what Bill Roberts says, 'Game mechanics cannot be sprinkled on learning programs like nuts on ice cream.' One has to be clear about the objectives for the game to succeed.

5. Conduct Proper Analysis

All the data from games should be analyzed thoroughly to better understand the employees and know what motivated them and learn their behavior.

Customized Platforms and Apps For Corporate HR Gamification

Various flexible and customized platforms like eMee, MindTickle, etc. assist in HR and Gamification in organizations.

Ketchum, a global communication consulting firm, uses an app named **LaunchPad** to gamify its recruitment process for the junior level, predominantly for its Summer Fellows program. The company receives more than 2000 applications for 15 positions during its 10-week internship program. To avoid the cumbersome process of going through all applications, it uses an interactive game through Launchpad where applicants not only play against a bot but also get to comment and vote on other gamers' responses and earn points. The game involves two challenges, and it is open for two weeks and can be done on a mobile device. Gamers earn 10 points each time another participant votes for their challenge or comments. Top gamers are then selected for the interview stage.

There are various gamification platforms available today to suit multiple areas of HR. Whatever be the goals of the company, there are numerous software that can provide an answer. Below is a list of software that help with the various aspects of HR functions:

- **Cuckootech:** A gamifying code for time and attendance.
- **Employee connect:** An engaging program for improving communication among employees
- **Badgeville:** A comprehensive solution for keeping a record of employee, appraisal, overtime work, and so on.
- **Hyphen:** A platform for real-time mobile employee engagement.
- **Axonify:** It is a micro-learning gaming platform.
- **Bunchball:** It combines behavioral economics, big data, and gamification solutions. Bunchball Nitro was the first technology platform to integrate game mechanics into non-game digital experiences.
- **Mambo.IO:** Mambo.IO offers on-premise and Cloud-based software for gamification.

- **Spinify:** It is the customized leaderboard platform for the gamification. It is a TV and desktop-based solution.
- **Moroku:** It is a web-based gamification solution suited for SMEs. It is integrated with mobile banking and payment practices and also supports mobile gaming and social media.

How Gamification Succeeds In Improving HR Productivity!

Here are some applications of Gamification in HR management and success stories related to them!

1. HR Gamification In Sourcing Potential Recruits

Marriott Group of Hotels

Mission: To invite Millennials to apply for its vacancies outside the U.S.

Gamified Solution: The international chain of Hotel Marriott has created a game called ‘My Marriott Hotel’ where players play the role of managers in a virtual hotel kitchen and deal with hospitality issues and perform virtual hotel tasks. The players earn points and rewards. This helps the applicants get an idea about the work they would be involved in and help the company eliminate applicants who lack the requisite aptitude.

This game was primarily developed to multiply the recruitment by Marriott in the global arenas and invite more millennials. This gamification is an excellent example of attracting potential hires across the globe and engaging them better and also giving them a bird’s eye view of what the job would be like.

Result: The company was able to make potential recruits get a better understanding of the job before they decided to work for the company, and thereby ensure easy onboarding later.

Few more examples

NP Paribas Bank used two online games: one, a coding game for those in the technology stream, and another in finance with virtual bankers and clients interested in finance.

The global accounting firm KPMG ran a game for potential recruits named '80 days'. This was an adventure game that asked players to travel in a hot air balloon in the quickest time, encountering various challenges en-route. The potential recruits could be identified based on such competitive games.

2. Gamification In HR Onboarding

Gamification helps in easy onboarding of new employees in a fun-filled way. Many companies have started utilizing gamification for onboarders.

HCL Technologies sends out an interactive game to those who have received job offers about 30 days prior to their start to onboard them, check their engagement, and forecast the offer rejections.

ExxonMobil's Employee Orientation Program uses Scavify (an interactive app and platform for employee engagement and other HR solutions) to welcome new recruits and enable them to explore the campus, learn about the company's culture, and interact with co-workers during a fun-filled journey.

3. Gamification In HR Training And Development

Deloitte

Mission: To make senior executives addictive and take part in a leadership training program

Gamified Solution: Deloitte Leadership academy used Badgeville gaming app to impart training on learning, knowledge sharing, and developing brand value. Deloitte designed a leadership-training program for its senior executives but had problems in making them participate. Deloitte took the help of Badgeville to use elements like badges, leaderboards, and status symbols that measured employees' participation and completion of training courses.

Result: The result was a reduction in the time taken to complete the training program by 50%, and 46.6% increase in employees returning to the site daily to complete the program.

HR Gaming In Enhancing Performance And Learning

Gamification is also used for enhancing learning, thereby boosting performance.

Microsoft

Mission: Agent learning and communication across the globe.

Gamified Solution: Microsoft's Consumer Support Services uses gamification to drive their agents' performance and learning. Gamification was implemented to drive agent performance through rewards, enhance on-the-job learning, and also motivate its call center employees.

Result: It was able to impart knowledge across its scattered agent base and also motivate communication across its agent base.

Walmart

Mission: Using short games to bolster safety training.

Gamified Solution: Walmart used gamification techniques to offer safety training to its scattered workforce of more than 5000 partners across its

various distribution centers. The gamifying platform used various three-minute gamified applications that were integrated into the employee's workflow.

Result: This resulted in a 54% decrease in mishaps and also became a massive hit among employees who not only began talking about the games but also about the importance of following safety protocols.

Gamification In Employee Engagement And Collaboration

Qualcomm

Mission: Employee Engagement.

Gamified Solution: Qualcomm implemented simple gamification techniques over stackoverflow.com site for its internal Q&A system where employees pose various technical questions and anyone could answer. The employees received bonus points for answers which received the most votes. Further, there were unique badges for best performers like the Archaeologist badge for answering questions that have been unanswered for about 30 days. The employee also got recognition in the form of a badge appearing in their profile.

Result: There were fewer unanswered questions and better employee engagement.

Gamification In The Administrative Process

Google

Mission: Making employees submit their travel expenditure information regularly and on time.

Gamified Solution: Google employees receive an allowance when going on a work trip for each location. Google gamified this process by making employees who had an unspent allowance to choose how to utilize the remaining money with three options: integrating it with their next paycheck, saving for future trips, or lending to a charity of their choice.

Result: There was 100% compliance in submitting travel information within six months of launching the game.

Future Trends

Gamification will occupy a prominent place among HR tools in the future by enabling employees to balance the pressure of work with the creative medium. If played right, gamification is bound to engage employees well. While gamification is gaining popularity among big organizations, small and medium-sized companies will also join the bandwagon soon.

Gamification isn't just a game but a game-changer in HR. Are you ready to head forward in your quest for creativity and change the rules of the game with gamification?