



Lorem

Gamification **All work and no play, makes jack a dull boy**

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All work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy!

This saying had lost its significance in the past few decades but has rediscovered its true meaning in the past few years, especially, in the corporate set-up which is known for its strenuous work life.

With the changing demographics in the working population, companies are finding it very difficult to engage and involve their workforce. A Gallup study indicates that only 13% of employees are fully engaged with work [1]. This, in fact, has become one of the main pain points for the management in the current era of corporate world. The old, conventional policies of companies do not work anymore as the employees know that they are in a position to call shots. This has happened due to the following reasons

Tremendous increase in the job opportunities across the globe

The disruptive force of technologies in our daily lives

Inclusion of new generation employees in the workforce

The above mentioned reasons have forced the companies to think differently and become flexible in their approach of engaging and motivating their employees.

One such innovation in this field has been the use of games in the workplace. This may sound very weird especially in the corporate work setting. But the fact is that many companies are now using this technique to engage, motivate and also test their employees for different characteristics. This feature is appealing to the new generation of employees and the companies are also finding it very productive. It has brought with itself mutual benefits which can be harnessed on both the sides.

What is Gamification?

Gamification is the process of applying game mechanics and design techniques to engage and motivate people to achieve their goals. For e.g., companies have used competitions among sales people to increase sales of their products. In some cases, companies divide employees into different teams (based on different criteria) and pit them against each other to achieve an objective. The teams then increase their performance to gain that incentive. This not only engages the employee but is very profitable for the company also. There are different ways by which the companies can handle this gamification piece depending on their objectives and end goals.

For employees, it is a different experience from what they do in work every day. It gives them a break from the monotony of doing the same tasks all over again. It brings a new sense of purpose coupled with the excitement of playing and competing with their fellow colleagues. More importantly, it brings FUN to the table. As human beings, there is always a tendency to do well when there is an element of fun and excitement associated with work.

Why Gamification?

This brings us to the question - Why would companies use Gamification as a tool to increase engagement and motivation? How would it benefit them?

The answer to this lies in the psychology of human beings. The very basic nature of human beings is the want to attain fame in a public setting. Competitions have always been an important part of human society. The want to excel and achieve something significant has always driven individuals to perform to their best abilities. This drive still remains and continues to foster in our modern societies. By gamification, we are just serving old wine in a new bottle. The will to compete and fight is what gamification caters to in a very positive and controlled manner.



We have umpteen examples around us that show the impact of games and competitions in individuals. Social media which has captivated the minds and times of individuals uses this tool to the maximum benefit. Games such as Farmville, Candy Crush etc. are nothing but pitting one person against another to gain maximum benefits. The success of these games is well known to everyone. In fact, a simple feature such as “Like” in Facebook has become gamified with people vying for their posts and pictures to be liked by maximum number of people. All these examples show that people do invest their time in such gamified models and are attracted by it in large numbers.



Gamification has been widely accepted by organizations to address various business and HR problems. Analysts claim that gamification will be used in 25% of redesigned business processes by 2015 and will grow to about \$2.8 billion business by 2016 [2].

As with every initiative, there may be arguments that this would breed unhealthy competition and people would compete against each other unnecessarily. This can be handled if the management implements proper gamification policies and also gives a thought as to which type of gamification would suit the work environment. There is no initiative which is perfect but it all depends on what the management wants to achieve and statistics have proven that gamification does help companies in their endeavour to motivate and engage employees.

Where can gamification be used?

Gamification is a multi-faceted tool that can be used in different areas especially from the HR point of view. It is true that the biggest area in which gamification has been put to use is in Motivation and Engagement. However, there are other areas in which this innovation can be used effectively with considerable amount of success.

a. Leadership Development

One of the major problems faced by organizations in the current tumultuous times is developing leadership within the company boundaries. This option is always better than recruiting someone from outside, both with respect to finance and culture. The major step involving in developing or identifying leaders is to evaluate the potentials for their problem solving ability and emotional intelligence. Simulation games can be used very effectively for such exercises. Many famous companies use this feature to identify top potentials for future leaders. This exercise will not be the sole criteria but will be an important test for identifying and developing future leaders. It will have to be used in conjunction with interviews and other processes. The analytics involved in simulation games can give a detailed insight into the characteristics of different potentials. It is a very potent tool in the arsenal of management.



b. Promoting a culture of Excellence and Productivity

Gamification is generally coupled with rewards and incentives. These rewards can be monetary and non-monetary. Social Recognition among peers is one of the major incentives associated with gamification. In this process, an employee is competing with other employees for achieving an objective. This drives the employee in performing to the best of his/her abilities and improves productivity without actually micro-managing anyone. It breeds a culture of excellence and enhances the productivity by multiple folds.





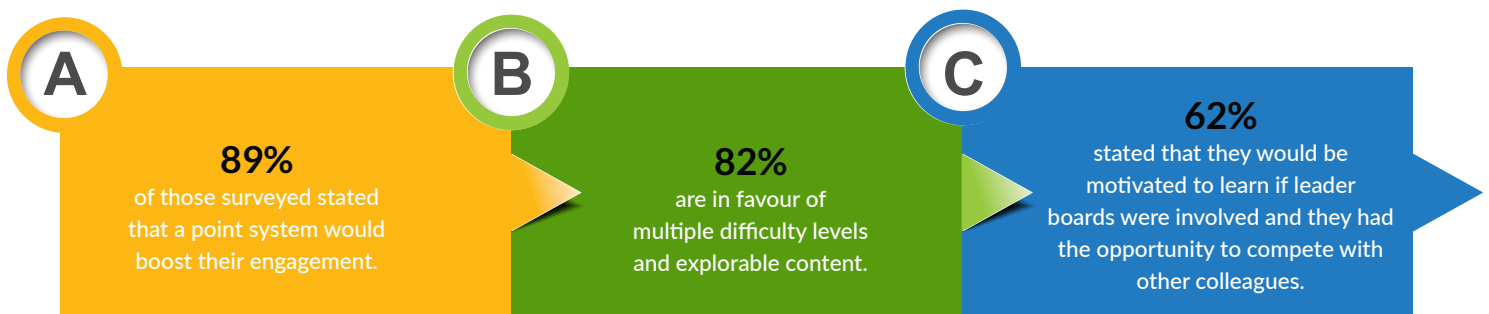
c. Career Development

Gamification can also be used in assessment centres to check if employees possess specified competencies. These results can further be used for developing an employee to equip him/her with all the resources required for career development. Many companies use the gamification process to identify individuals with specific competencies and then mould them into future leaders or managers, depending on the requirement.

d. Learning

Learning is not only an important function of HR but also the lifeline of any organization, especially for those involved in technological services. One major objective of any employee is to move up the career ladder and not stagnate in the same position. For this to happen, learning is inevitable. There are multiple methods of learning that an employee can undertake. Classroom sessions have always been popular but with time, resource constraints and monotony of the process, they are losing their significance. With advancement in technology, E-learning became the next big thing in this field. It is convenient for people to take up courses from anywhere and anytime provided they have connection to the internet. However, this method involved a lot of self-reading which again had its drawbacks. E-learning also included video lectures but there was a lack of real time feedback and interaction in this process. With the idea of including “fun” concept in learning,

Gamification has been successfully adopted in this field. With the advent of simulation and strategy games, learning is not only made a fun activity but also very effective. The responses of individuals are captured instantaneously and feedback is provided at that moment. Also, with the help of analytics in gamification, a person’s characteristic such as problem solving capability can be captured by his/her responses. By gamifying the learning process and attaching rewards to it, an employee’s motivation to learn can be increased and made effective. A survey conducted by TalentLMS [3], showed that



Hence, by gamification, learning can be made an effective and productive exercise. With this sort of interactive learning, employee experience becomes enjoyable and the organization’s purpose of developing an employee is also fulfilled.’

How can gamification be used in organizations?

Gamification is a broad term and encompasses many aspects. There are different types that can be used by organization depending on what is required of them.

- i. There are organizations which would want to promote individual work more than team work. They can use simulations and strategy games that are catered to only one person. Here, that person is rated with his colleagues and this sense of competition fuels the individuals drive to perform
- ii. Certain organizations would want to promote team work and not individual competition. There can be gamification techniques designed for that purpose also.
- iii. Different rewards, badges and incentives can be used by organizations to drive this process
- iv. There can be games designed to capture the behavioural aspects of employees. This information is gold mine for large organizations especially in current times when retention and engagement have become big challenges



Word of Caution

There is no one size fits all approach to this technique. Different organizations have different objectives. Organizations must carefully choose as to what suits them. At the end of the day, gamification needs to be an asset to the organization in fulfilling its objectives and not something that just exists for the sake of existing.

Organizations should not implement gamification without any clear vision and plan. They should not use it just because it is being used by other organizations. The management should make sure that proper benefits are reaped out of the gamification technique.

There should be a good business case backing for gamification. It will not only enable to get a buy-in from the top management but also give a clear road map for the managers on how to use this feature to obtain the required benefits.

From the perspective of employees, it is an exciting feature that would engage them and enable to increase their performance by significant proportions. We need to remember that the world is changing, and so is the lifestyle and demands of your employees. If an organization needs to keep its best talent and develop them to lead it in future, different techniques and innovations are required.

Gamification is one such innovation and a very interesting one too. It is important to understand that conventional methods are no more capable of serving the purpose.

For HRs around the world, these are exciting times to try new methods for making the organization a better place for employees. If the organization faces issues that can be addressed by this technique, take the plunge and reap the benefits!

After all, it's no more only Work and Work! Play can be serious work too!

References

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