

BOOST EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY WITH GAMIFICATION

LEADING THE WAY

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Each organisation is different, but what makes some better than others? Products, technology or even strategies can be copied over time. But one thing that is very hard to copy, and is a key success factor, is talented people. It's up to companies to see how they can bring the best out of their people. Employee engagement is the answer. Many studies have shown that companies with an engaged workforce are outperforming those without one.

Engagement is a combination of involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm and dedication to the work role. So what can organisations do to boost employee engagement?

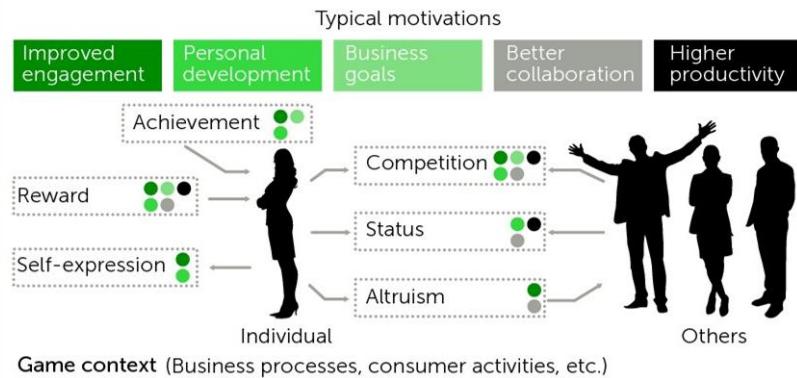
Gamification is one answer. This is the practice of applying game mechanics and game dynamics to non-gaming contexts with the aim of engaging users to achieve a certain objective. Gamification is based on the fact that humans have a natural desire for achievement, status, and competition. When people are given tasks in gaming or competitive scenarios, they are more motivated to complete the tasks, with a better outcome too.

In a working context, some common gamification techniques used to motivate employees include points, badges, levels, leaderboards and rewards. Points and badges are awarded when people achieve something. They showcase a person's talents, expertise and accomplishments. Levels can entice people to move up the levels and unlock more advanced challenges, while leaderboards use the concept of competition to drive people to compete with each other in a healthy fashion, thereby completing more work.

Simply put, gamification increases engagement through psychological techniques. It simultaneously gives employees motivation to perform a task, plus the ability to complete it.

Below are some of the examples of how organisations use

CONNECTING GAME OBJECTIVES TO BUSINESS GOALS



Source: PwC

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HUMAN DESIRES

Game mechanics	Reward	Status	Achievement	Self-expression	Competition	Altruism
Points	●	●	●		●	●
Levels		●	●		●	
Challenges	●	●	●		●	●
Virtual goods	●	●	●	●	●	
Leaderboards		●	●	●	●	●
Gifting & charity		●	●		●	●

Source: Bunchball, 2010

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gamification to improve their engagement and productivity.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Completing learning/e-learning courses might be the last thing on employees' minds, particularly for topics such as ethics, safety and compliance. So why not make it more fun to increase the feeling of participation? Wal-Mart is one good example that uses gamification for safety learning. It wanted to ensure that its 5,000 associates in eight distribution centres were adhering to the safety procedures, so Wal-Mart developed and delivered a three-minute gamified application to the workforce.

The result was spectacular. Not long after the game was implemented, Wal-Mart saw a 54% decrease in incidents across the distribution centres.

RECRUITMENT

Traditionally, PwC job candidates spent 10-15 minutes on the firm's website, studying the firm's vision, services and skills needed for success. Wishing to find ideal job candidates, PwC Hungary developed and launched a game called Multipoly. This game allows job candidates to test their fitness and readiness to work at the firm by solving real-world business problems. Instead of spending 10-15 minutes, the candidates were reported to have spent on average an hour and a half studying about the firm.

The result was that the candidates who had played the game did better during the interviews than those who had not. Additionally, PwC Hungary has seen 190% growth in the number of candidates since the launch of Multipoly.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Getting people to share their knowledge isn't easy. Most people will ask: what's in it for me? This is the first common barrier to building knowledge management.

What we've done to boost ours is to give points for each activity, such as 10 points for uploading knowledge, five points for answering questions and one point for clicking like or rating. Collecting points can identify the person's status, and later on they can redeem the awards. This is similar to the credit card points/miles collection and redemption concept. The status and points will make people feel privileged and motivate them to participate more.

CORE VALUES

Another popular use of gamification is to boost company core values. Many employees know what their company's core values are from the website or the bulletin board but don't really understand their meaning. Instead of sending a mass email to tell employees what our core values are, let's make a small interactive game. In a similar way to mini Angry Birds or Farmville games, we can create different stages to collect core values and use video clips to explain each one. We can also give an online badge to employees who demonstrate core values, as it shows they are recognised, and employees will understand more about core values in a real environmental situation.

So as you can see, there are many ways to apply gamification in the workplace. It can help boost engagement, learning, collaboration and productivity. With Generation Y coming more into the workplace, companies must find a way to engage them and get the most out of them. Building an engaged workforce with gamification can sustain organisational success.

SOURCES

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