

GAMIFICATION - A REVIEW ON TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS FOR TALENT DEVELOPMENT & ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT:

Dixon, Khaled, & Nacke (2011) explained gamification as the execution of gaming techniques in the non-game environment. Google (2014) says that though gamification was initially highlighted in the year 2008, it could not get great acceptance; later in 2010, it was displayed on Google Trends. Gartner (2011) predicted that after a year, about 70% of the world's Fortune 2000 companies would utilize gamification for at least one business operation. This paper reviews the existing literature available on gamification and its strategic applications in Talent Development and Management. The paper has also tried to understand different strategies for the HR team to use in order to apply gamification in their process of acquiring and managing talent. The paper has used a qualitative approach and drawn conclusions on these bases.

Keywords: Gamification, Technology, Talent Development, Talent Engagement.

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of technology is to humanize HR, and collectively we need to spearhead and champion this cause. What used to be referred to as the Personnel Development Department in the early 1970s became known as the Human Resource Department in the late 1990s; today we refer to this department as the Talent Development and Engagement Department. Over the years, technology has played a vital role in contributing towards this paradigm shift every time. Initially HR leaders were spending time and money on consultants for hiring talent; now technology is helping them hire talent from job portals. HR leaders are also integrating job portals into their own websites to meet their talent acquisition needs. Today HR managers are comfortable with social media recruitment and mobile recruitment.

It's time for HR leaders to think about the increasing popularity of gamification. Made popular by the addiction that users have to social gaming, gamification is about taking gaming principles and applying them to design (Mas, Mesquida, Rout, Connor & Dorling, 2012). Gamification uses a virtual environment where real time techniques with simulation support the users in managing challenges. Everything from talent acquisition to progress management can be gamified within the purview of HR management. HR is often discussed more at social media and marketing oriented events than at HR-specific events. Not only are HR leaders talking about social media usage, marketing, and branding, but conversations are also steering to how social media and gamification can be used for recruitment, performance management, and learning and development (Gopinathan, Suri, 2016). More than recruitment and development of talent, gamification has been identified as one of the most important technological tools for human engagement (Majuri, Koivisto & Hamari, 2018).

OBJECTIVE:

- a) To understand the concept of gamification
- b) To understand the difference between gamification and simulation
- c) To strategize gamification for talent development and talent engagement

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Gamification has evolved as a present-day trending technique that utilizes game techniques and game design as components to impact, measure, and recompense target user conducts. Game physiognomies such as feedback, promotions, goals, recompense, rules, features of fun, and playfulness are executed in this technique in order to solve trade complications. Gamification also helps in improving communication practices and engaging users effectively. It permits companies to instill valuable awareness into consumers, improve staff conduct, and enhance actions across other significant platforms like mobile applications,

social inter-connection applications, and websites. By utilizing these facts, organizations would become capable of monitoring the content that is broadcasted, top-standard encounters, and even consumer reactions in connection with trade outcomes. With the aid of gamification, companies can engage their staff members, acknowledge their motivation levels, and continue to involve them with apt gaming techniques. Gamification works like an extra surface on top of social co-operation software to acquire important, much needed insights into customer behavior, views, and employee actions and responses across various touch points.

Gamification creates an exceptional environment with curiosity by addressing aspects such as teamwork, emotions, fun, continuous reflection, challenges, game narrative, pleasure, rewards, and competitiveness. These aspects stir and develop positive competitiveness among staff members towards encountering challenging tasks every day. As per Pereira (2018), in the view of educational methods, the capability of gamification is great and exact, because it solves complicated conditions, contributes to participation growth, evolves autonomy and creativity, triggers desires, and fosters dialogue (Koivisto & Hamari, 2017). The observation and examination of Koivisto & Hamari (2017) states that the present surveys on gamification literature figure that learning and education are the top general situations for the study of gamification.

DIFFERENCES IN GAMIFICATION AND SIMULATIONS:

Gamification is a unique idea different from other ideas like critical simulations and games. An important uniqueness is the time cycle on which it works. Simulations and games typically enclose a conclusive starting and ending. Simulations operators and game performers are characteristically known to be engaged in a simulation or a game, respectively. Both involve an innate result – a loss or win framework, or the finishing of a task or a bunch of tasks to complete the level. While in the environment of gamification, though gamified situations are added with other matters that are general to simulations and games, they are characteristically reasoned to develop long-term involvement and supply limited specified user paths not concentrating on the loss or win framework. Kapp (2014) found that rather than promoting a whole game, in gamification, the gaming matters are added over an environment or a live program to intensify the users' motivation to get involved in the environment. Although the number of concepts of gamification increase progressively, users are familiar with the fact that gamification influences the user involvement via many psychological techniques such as goal setting, competition, and innate motivation. Examining those techniques and implementing them in the work spot is left to I-O psychologists. Leader boards, badges, virtual goods, levels, progress bars, and points are the general components added, having been characteristically 'borrowed' from conventional

games and implemented in nongame environments. Muntean (2011) reviewed that the components stated above act to motivate users by furnishing status, feedback, ability to compete, and recognition.

GAMIFICATION AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT:

Based on brain science research, by integrating a variety of game elements and techniques in the existing training content, an adaptable gamified environment can be created, thereby making learning fresh, inspiring, and enjoyable. As learning and dissemination of information generally happens over a long span of time, and trainings are not designed to be conducted in a single day, gamification has helped engage people in learning at places and times of their convenience. For topics that are theoretical or non-engaging, and in environments where learner resistance is high, gamification is appropriate for training programs with its fun and challenging approach. Kapp (2018) has highlighted that gamification is the most suited approach for skills that require fortification over time, and need to be remembered vividly by employees.

The fact that gamification has been part of training is elucidated by statistics of Talentlms, which reveal that 61% of employees use gamification in training. In a study to understand what kinds of apps employees would want to see more game-like features in, results revealed that more gamification in communication and corporate training apps and software would be appreciated. However, both these areas were found to play no role in the subjects' everyday activities or in repetitive tasks at work; instead such software were largely used to complete additional projects and side activities in order to improve work outcomes (Apostolopoulos, 2019).

Below are a few reasons why gamification should appeal to learning and development professionals. Gamified learning is well suited to deliver micro learning in short, effective bursts each day. Gamified learning allows better knowledge retention with the power of the spacing effect, while job disruption is minimized. In addition to this, consistent exposure to information to be acquired, helps learners in keeping their fresh ideas and allows them to use it in daily discussions, which can be critical when it comes to safety procedures or customer service practices. Gamified learning is found to be effective when practiced every day for duration of 60 seconds to 60 minutes. Including fun game elements, use of proven research-based techniques, and incentivizing learning are important means for value addition to employee training programs.

While deciding whether or not to merge gamification into development and learning master plans, developers realized that there are some significant features that need to be

acknowledged for developing appropriate gaming content. A proper structure and framework need to be outlined to employees for effective participation in the gamification effort. This can be achieved by clearly describing the problems in front of them, and explaining the demands and standards of gamification, thereby creating transparency. These initiatives can help develop better conduct, increase retention, promote better learning, and finally, help in achieving desired results. The quashing of ordinary stories of gamification is a good beginning to introduce in any learning plan. For subjects that require regular reinforcement and are relevant to employees' day-to-day activities, training through gamification can be implemented based on the concepts, practices, and techniques involved in the retrieval of learning after specific tenures to make sure a strong scientific foundation is at the base of the gamification efforts. The main focus must be on the anticipated result and learning of the educational meeting. Thus, gamification can contribute the desired advantage in learning if incorporated, developed, and structured with exact accuracy.

The attempt must not be aimed only at leaderboards, points, and badges. As a fundamental phase of a greater plan, learning leaders should acknowledge desired learning results and constructed gamification attempts.

GAMIFICATION & TALENT ENGAGEMENT:

As per Pontiggia (2015), the prime and foremost target of gamification is to develop the involvement of users by utilizing 'game-like mechanisms'. It is observed that involvement is a great standard in gamification, and it demands differentiation from simulation. Involvement defines a person's desire towards something which he/she is actually interested in. In this instance, we are referring to the open interest of people in taking part in these games. In any matter, the involvement can never be generated by itself (Pontiggia, 2015); the organization needs to inculcate it into their employees.

Employee engagement signifies our ability to relate and contribute to a workplace. This includes our ability to relate to the actual work or role itself, our acquaintance with our managers and leaders, our connection to associates in the work place, and the mapping of self-goals to those of the organization. The state of flow popularized by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (2013) may be experienced by employees when they are optimally engaged. Flow generates intense and focused concentration, a sense of balance in challenge and talent, a confluence of necessary action to be taken, an ability to do, a sense of personal control, extending efforts unminding of our sense of time, and an experience of an activity as naturally rewarding (Hoang, 2016). Gaming platforms are integrated with the above mentioned factors to make the experience of gaming more engaging for the player or participant. These four underlying traits need to be

remembered while designing the framework of gamification as there is a possibility of getting lost in the complexity of gaming and losing sight of the fundamental attributes that initiated the engagement. Gamification in the workplace appears to be the present trending buzzword and is sometimes seen as a brand-new concept; but that is not true. The principles and practice of gamification have been around for a while; however, platforms have evolved from a black board to multiplayer online games. In the early 1900s, the practice of gamification was outlined by Charles M. Schwab, the American steel magnate in *Succeeding with What You Have*. He recounted the following story.

Schwab, who was worried about decrease in production in one of his steel mills, asked the foreman for the production numbers, or “heats” produced, in the day shift. The foreman replied saying that six heats were the count, and Schwab wrote a big six on the floor with a piece of chalk. The night shift workers saw the number six and asked about it. They were informed that Schwab had put down six for the productivity of the day shift, the workers of the night shift competed hard to increase their productivity and by morning they achieved seven heats. So they erased six and put down seven on the floor. The day shift workers, getting into the ‘game’, were able to complete 10 heats. And this practice continued day in and day out thereby making the mill — once reckoned for poorest production — the most productive mill, compared to the others nearby. This nearly century-old story reveals that with minimal application of gamification traits such as a goal, some rules, a feedback system, and voluntary participation, the productivity of the workforce can be greatly enhanced. This story brings to light that actually Schwab was an early work-gamification designer, though he never used the word ‘gamification’. The importance of knowledge of progress and setbacks and its underlying correlation with engagement and disengagement of workers is explained in *The Progress Principle*, by Teresa Amabile and Steven Kramer (2014). They discovered that to motivate workers and engage them optimally, progress might be the single most significant influencing variable. Like a product innovation, gamification has been displayed primely in self-optimization software such as fitness trackers with motivational scores, competitions, targets, and such.

At first, gamification was greatly steered by executing a points-based badge system, economy, and leaderboards to encourage and involve talent. The present-day fashion in gamification involves evaluating trade complications. It has diverse features of gameplay, which promotes effective outcomes. For instance, the performance evaluation process is one of the main fields of constant concern for most companies. An effective performance management system is the need of the day, which has been highlighted in a *Forbes* blogpost by Edward E. Lawler III:

"Performance appraisals are one of the most frequently criticized talent management practices. The criticisms range from their being an enormous waste of time to their having a destructive impact on the relationship between managers and their subordinates. Criticizing performance appraisals has a long history. For decades, the literature on talent management has pointed out the flaws in most performance management systems and in some cases recommended completely abandoning them. The problem with abandoning them is that they are vital to effective talent management."(Lawler E. Edward, 2017)

The gamification of performance management system provides employees with an opportunity to display and prove their skills, achievements, and contributions. Data and outcomes of games can help employees earn appropriate recognition, take necessary corrective actions, and move towards requisite recommended behaviors. Analyzing the staff by looking at all employees' game statuses, their performance in the game, their master plans, and their ranks in each level of the game will allow us to understand the performance of an employee at every instance continuously throughout a year. These evaluations are otherwise made in the course of just one week during the appraisal cycle. Though most of the organizations are in their incipient phases in terms of internalizing social media, gamification will improve the incorporation of social media and increase employees' involvement, thereby contributing towards an effective performance management system.

GAMIFICATION CASE 1:

Below is a case with respect to gamification. Taskville is a city-building game similar to SimCity. The consummation of tasks prompts the development of buildings and urban communities in the game field. Every city implies a gathering of people in a major association. The play status of Taskville appears on huge display, players complete their genuine undertakings and present the consummation of an errand; simultaneously, a structure in their very own city continues to develop. PowerHouse is a web-based game, which follows individual vitality use in the genuine world. A home brilliant meter sends the data on close to home vitality use to the internet game framework, and afterwards this data impacts the capacities of players in a web-based game framework. Genuine vitality challenges give further focuses and prizes to game players. They likewise give numerous smaller than usual online games which propel the players to help other people to spare vitality. Roadwarrior is SAP's preparation answer for salespeople. In a reenacted gathering, an agent ought to pick his very own answer among various decisions to react to the client's explicit inquiries. Appropriate inquiries, answers, and meeting arrangements give new identifications and focuses to salesmen, and they can advance and open new levels. Plantville is an internet game, propelled by Siemens, which gives players a chance to find out about

mechanical plant through the gameboard. This product manages both specialized and business issues of the plant and issues related to their executives. The objective of Plantville is to improve familiarity with Siemens' innovations for future clients, workers, and understudies. Strip Hero is a product instructional exercise created by Microsoft. Utilizing Riboon Hero, clients investigate the key functionalities of MS Office while unraveling some intuitive difficulties.

One such example of gamification, done using the eMee platform, has been adapted successfully at Persistent Systems Ltd. (<http://www.persistentsys.com/>), a global company specializing in software product and technology innovation, with around 7000 employees. This initiative helped its' 7000 staff of Persistent to collaborate on various functional activities like performance management, recognition, leaning, social interactions and recompense. At Persistent, the method has been in execution for about 3 years and staff attrition has decreased by around 350 basis points every year gradually. In the year 2013, by clearing away the demand for a hard and time-consuming end-of-year evaluation method, the firm survived by a traditional approximate of over 28,000 individual hours.

The HR department wanted to improve employee engagement at Persistent. The eMee team worked with the HR department to design and adapt the eMee platform to its specific requirements. Persistent has been using this platform for over a year now and have revolutionized their appraisal process by adapting the continuous feedback mechanism provided by the platform. eMee also provides employees an innovative platform to showcase their skill set, expertise, and professional achievements to colleagues across the organization. eMee harnesses the power of social networking and collaboration to the fullest, boosting morale and productivity.

The Ninja club is another rendition of the eMee platform. The Ninja Club is an invitations-only, technical community at one of the leading global product development companies. At Ninja club, the employees can display their technical skills, and collaborate and network with colleagues. The platform provides a profile to each Ninja club member, where the member can display his skills, recent activities, and achievements. It also allows members to follow their mentors and keep them posted on their updates. It promotes the 'desired behavior' among the Ninjas by using points/badges/levels, and leaderboards. It encourages them to perform different activities, like participating in technical events, publishing technical papers, filing patents, and offering gifts/points for performing such activities. Ninjas collect points and get promoted to the next belt.

ADVANTAGES AND FUTURE OF GAMIFICATION:

We know that if an employee is motivated, his productivity also increases. Gamification helps in motivating employees by engaging them positively and collaboratively. Gamification actually increases creativity and innovation which in turn makes employees think innovatively. Also, it helps in strengthening the communication process across various levels, as users get chances to interact with their peer groups across various functional teams. This actually connects them better with the organisation and enables them to develop a greater affinity towards the organisation.

Predicting the future of gamification in the rapidly changing work environment may be difficult. Perhaps before 2025, managers in most organizations may be required to possess gamification proficiency as a necessary competency. There would be a need to intertwine swipe-cards in the corporeal identity with the necessity to navigate through the virtual elements of any organization. The rise of biological measures in conjunction with smartphones may well be the future trend for defining roles in employee engagement practices. Eliciting awe and 'wow' experiences may become more unswerving moment-to-moment measures of engagement than survey results. Alternatively, to enhance our experience of practices and engagement with work, using biofeedback within a game platform may become commonplace. It can be understood that it is time for managers to get off the seat and get ready to involve themselves in gamification practice. One need not have to become a gamification evangelist, but a better understanding of the nuances and use of gamification may go a long way in staying upbeat with the changing necessities of being a better manager, though none can boast of having a monopoly in the understanding and application of gamification in employee engagement.

DISCUSSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are studies which revealed that gamification has reduced the overtime work of employees and made employees feel high levels of responsibility and commitment. Gamification actually creates a competitive spirit among employees, which in general is healthy and inculcates the spirit of collaboration among them. There are also researches which found that there is a positive relationship between gamification and employee performance. Other than performance improvement, researchers have observed psychological gains as well. There is a drastic reduction of stress among engaged employees and an observable high level of satisfaction at work place. Thus, talent engagement specialists can look out for suitable gamification platforms, not only to improve the engagement level, but also to keep the employees intact within the organisation, while reducing their stress level to a large extent.

Even though we spoke about the application of gamification in talent development and talent engagement, one cannot ignore the futuristic applications in the area of talent acquisition, too. When discussed with human resource professionals of IT industries, the views came out realistically. They all felt that HR professionals would take advantage of gamification, which reduces a lot of manual effort. Now, IT and ITES companies recruit fresh graduates through campus interviews. However, this needs to be relooked according to the country head of a leading IT company. Gamification could help them in identifying few specific skills sets generally traced in interviews. By this, the researchers understand that gamification is used for different verticals in managing talents, starting from acquisition all the way through to engaging users.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

When there is a study required to furnish proof-type suggestions for launching gamification in the workplace, there is an abundance of guidelines for the usage of gamification. In other words, Huckabee and Bisette (2014) highlighted the complete significance of lining-up game components with trade skills and performance. The reasoning of gamification techniques, such as an unfurling technique, based on a long-period plan, is better than a short-period proposal. Nevertheless, Huckabee and Bisette (2014) emphasized that games should be stimulating for motivation; generating a stimulating encounter could be tricky in a development and learning environment, where the service of learning is a chief goal. They suggest splendid stability between stimulating learners and generating learning substances as approachable and feasible.

Even though some jobs have pointed to the recognition of many components, further in depth study is required to shift beyond effective responses to examine the inter-connections between many gaming components and many distal trade results. Kapp (2014) suggested that more research is required to proof and develop Gamification models as a successful tool for organisations to improve their operational excellence. In addition to this, gamification denotes the rising fashion that favours to boost study and execution inside the workplace. There is a great chance to guide the communication around gamification and form its necessity within companies where the area of I-O psychology has an important act to work.

CONCLUSION:

Subsequent to surveying in more depth, we can gather that the concept of gamification sounds as a narrowly surrounded effort to lure staff into working out tasks anticipated generally out of them. However, the originality is that to involve and generate staff in a more intense and way, the company can utilize gamification as a productive gadget. By utilizing

gamification techniques, the Human Resource (HR) group can bring together a more flexible, satisfying, and integrated workforce. At a time of decreasing gross revenues and churn costs, gamification can assist in clearing away bitterness among the staff, evolving out of the evaluation process. Gamification can furnish an innate positive motivation to steer preferable staff conduct and promote productivity and better return on investment (ROI).

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