



ELearning and Enterprise Gamification - The Perfect Match

How to combine on-the-job learning in any gamification project and how to use gamification for training and onboarding

A guide by

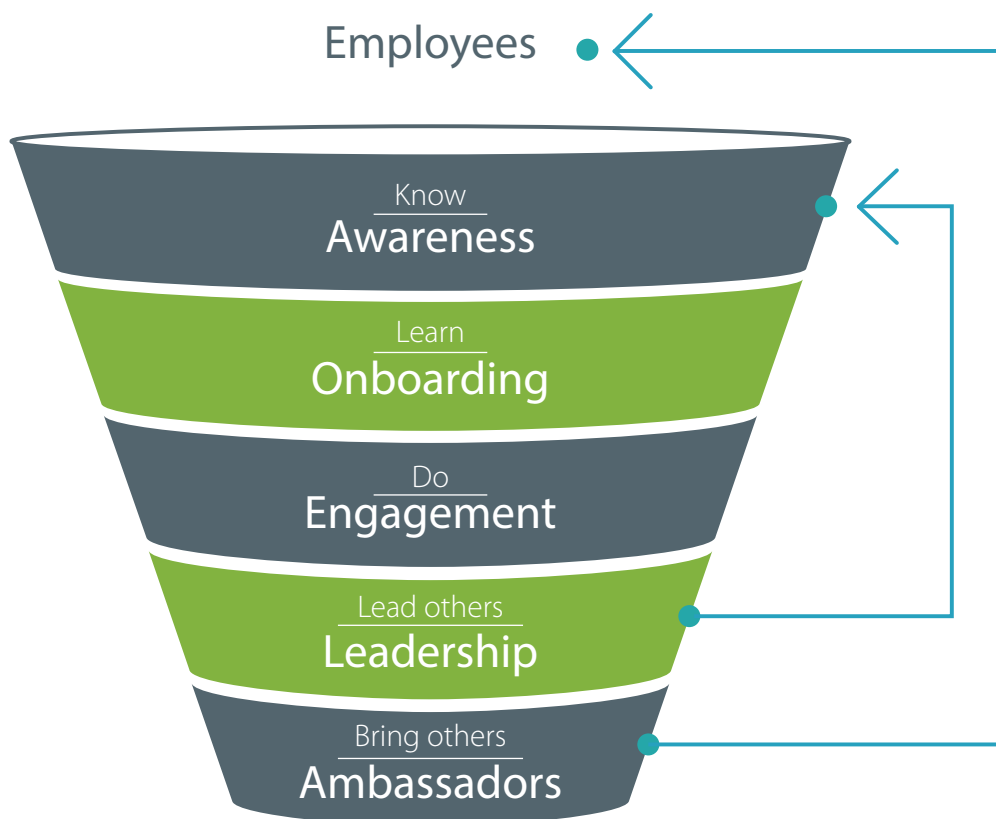
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Introduction

Everything we do in life involves learning - from when we say our first words, through school, and eventually, at work. Technology adds the “e” to “learning”, and specifically, it is gaining popularity in the workplace, from virtual classrooms, through on-the-job e-training, employee onboarding as well as interactive and personalized education.

Learning via “e” mechanisms, as opposed listening to a lecture, allows the learner to choose courses or learning morsels, pace themselves and do so when they’re ready to learn. When eLearning is done well, research shows that information is better retained by the employee.

So, what does eLearning have to do with Gamification? Well, in order to make learning in a work environment an enjoyable, memorable and practicable experience, we suggest gamified eLearning. This guide will show why and just how to make it work.



The Employee Engagement Funnel visualizes how learning leads to better engaged employees

Why eLearning Gamification?

Once upon a time, when one arrived at a new job you were most likely presented by HR with a huge, fearful manuscript that constituted your training and had to be learned fast.

Today it makes perfect sense to use modern technology to educate employees. Elearning and onboarding are important since they make employees better at what they do, regardless of whether it is combining two product offerings (pre-sales), demonstrating product knowledge, resolving customer support issues or receiving emotional intelligence training.

Gamification is basically the application of game mechanics (such as points, leaderboards, narratives, completion achievements, and many other forms of recognition and feedback) in order to encourage behavior or actions - in this case, elearning. Think about a progress bar - which is a game element. If you apply it to eLearning the human drive to "complete" the progress bar will drive more completion and a far better rate of knowledge exposure and retention. Encourage people to complete learning tasks (view a presentation, undergo training, complete details) and they will experience that nice fuzzy feeling of a job well done.

If you reward an employee that has undergone much training with an "Expert" badge (a game mechanic) they may enjoy the social proof it bestows upon them. When they help others learn they can get "Karma" points - another game element - that demonstrates their mastery and goodwill.

The emotional drivers behind this are manifold: a sense of achievement, of completion, of social recognition. Within the choice of learning activities comes a sense of autonomy and self-worth. If assisting others in learning is also recognized, an entire new world of personal drive unfolds.

Applying gamification in order to transform training into a game-like experience can have incredible results - a higher percentage of program accomplishment; good grades and ranks; and vastly improved participation. After all, we're human and mixing learning tasks with game mechanics simply works.

Welcome to the world of gamified eLearning.

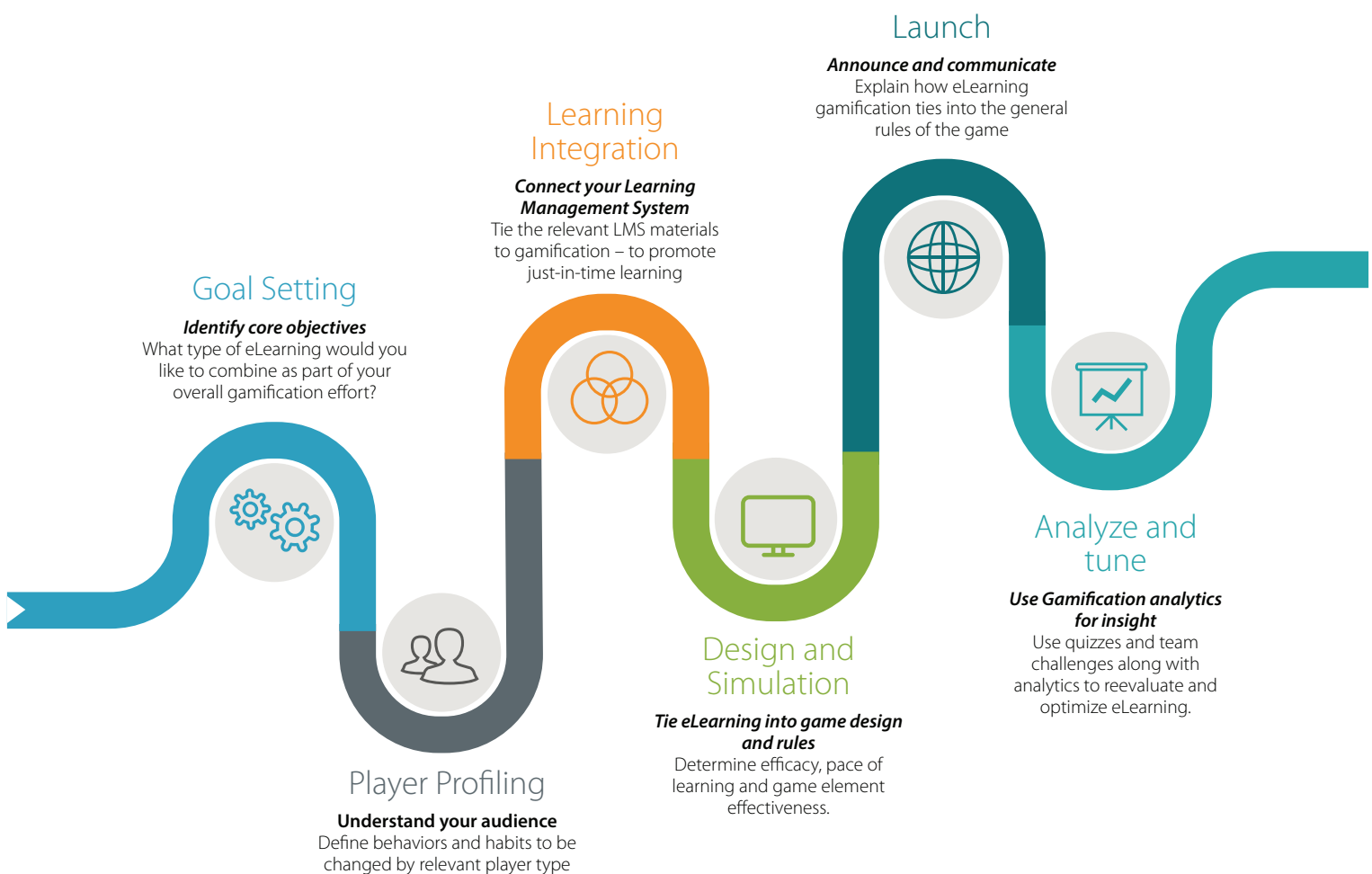
“Where my reason, imagination or interest were not engaged, I would not or I could not learn.”

Winston Churchill

Core Practices of eLearning Gamification

eLearning can be at the center of a gamification effort – as in employee onboarding – or combined with an end-to-end gamification effort such as on-the-job training. On-the-job eLearning can be used for refresher courses, new product introductions, or as a way to train employees throughout their workday. Taking eLearning out of the classroom and combining it with day-to-day work is a good practice to follow, letting employees choose when and what to learn.

Enterprise gamification – whether for sales, customer service or eLearning – is a great way to combine work (gamifying customer service, for instance) with eLearning.



This diagram shows the process of implementing eLearning within an enterprise gamification project

Here are 7 core practices:

1. Gamified ELearning is one of the most effective forms of **on the job training** there is. It should be combined into most gamification projects, as an additional activity to do, and an important metric to be tracked. Often, when individual performance doesn't shine, employees can be prompted to invest more energy in eLearning, giving them a realistic path to improvement and preserving their engagement.
2. Communication in an organization is essential. It can be extremely effective to use gamified eLearning as a way of **communicating objectives, goals and expected results**, such as the need to sell more of a certain offering etc. This, in turn, creates a line-of-sight between corporate objectives and performance, driving better engagement. To read more about the "line of sight" concept read this interview with Yahoo's ex-VP Customer Experience, [here](#).
3. It is important to integrate gamification projects seamlessly with the company's **Learning Management Systems** (LMS) to encompass the employee workday. This means that while metrics and activities on one app – the customer service desktop, for instance – are gamified, LMS activities can and should be brought into the fold, and "served" within the gamification project.
4. **Micro Learning** is the delivery of learning material broken down into small, bite-sized pieces that can be accessed when and where users want it. Micro-learning gives employees a sense of autonomy, control and satisfaction, because they get to choose what to learn and when. We've written more about that later in this guide.
5. Gamification can be used in events by **encouraging team participation**. Microsoft **used gamification** in a strategy event. The company managed to get 100% engagement in its Top Leadership Sales Strategy Summit – a meeting between the top 50 leaders of the group to bond, discuss strategy, learn more about changes to the company's offerings and products, and in general to bring management up to date on the vision, financial results and strategy for the year. Since no-one wanted to let their team down, engagement levels hit 100% almost immediately, participants answered questions about the presentations and discussions, corrected wrong answers and collaborated to increase their team scores. In general, employees seem to be more committed to team challenges as opposed to individual ones. For the full case study, go [here](#).
6. Another way to integrate eLearning into enterprise gamification is during the **on-boarding** process by enabling self-directed learning for new employees. Read more about this [here](#).
7. Learning in a work environment should never really end. Using gamification on the job for short **refresher courses** is efficient and engaging.

“You can't teach people everything they need to know. The best you can do is position them where they can find what they need to know when they need to know it.”

Seymour Papert MIT

Core Gamified eLearning Features

Gamified eLearning platforms should feature - and achieve, the following:

- **Narrative** environments that provide context and a story, for example racing, sports, contests etc. For instance, in a car race narrative scenario, training occurs in the “pit stop” area, where drivers come to refresh their car’s ability and employees train for better work related knowledge.
- **Game-style elements**, symbolizing learning progress, the creation of team challenges, quizzes and more. Game elements track employees against a personal or team benchmark. Team based elements, such as karma points and rewarding knowledge contribution should also be included. In any case of failure - inability to pass a given unit of learning etc – failures should be safe, encouraging employees to try again.
- Game elements should be **individual-centric and learner-driven**. Even if learners have peers, they still feel as if they are the hero of their game and not belittled by the existence of star performers.
- **LMS integration**, together with **micro learning**.
- **Levels** from novice to master and their recognition through badges and quizzes.
- A focus on **awareness** - let employees in on the bigger picture of corporate objectives and performance goals, leaving lasting organizational change and improved communications.
- For workers with performance issues, replace failure with more training. In other words, **reinforce positive action** by enabling them to complete training tasks to “re-earn” missing points, stay in the game and improve their performance.

“By no means are the concepts of game and gamification universally accepted as valid learning strategies, so we have some work to do in terms of educating more learning and development professionals of the value of these tools.”

Karl Kapp

Gamified Micro-Learning

Micro-Learning, replaces or complements long-form training and learning - think of learning videos on youtube, TedX or the Khan Academy. Other examples may be a quiz about a company's sexual-harassment policy, a short video about a new product, or a presentation about how to overcome customer anger in a call center environment.

Gamification engages, ensures completion, and encourages retention. How? It allows employers to:

- Track the use of micro-learning and prove it took place
- Encourage the use of micro-learning through calls to action
- Provide much needed recognition for micro-learning

The benefits of micro-learning include:

- Micro-learning gives learners control over what they learn, when they access it, and where they do so. This sense of autonomy and self-directed learning increases motivation and engagement. The **autonomy of choice** also boosts information retention, since micro-learning is mostly accessed when users need of a certain piece of information and not as part of a more rote-based training curriculum.
- Micro Learning is for the malady affecting millennials - **shorter attention spans**. Regardless of the generation, the internet, smart phones and the digital age has changed how people pay attention and for how long they sustain it. It also affects how they expect to consume information - by accessing presentations, short videos, or other training/ learning materials, users can spend several minutes learning and then continue with their daily lives.
- **Just in time (micro) learning** is information delivered at a point of need, such as explaining how new product features affect a sales solution, or how to solve a certain technical support issue and more. Such learning can and should be integrated into sales, customer service and knowledge management. Access to micro-learning can also be tracked and assessed and using gamification to do so can motivate employees to use micro-learning more often and in certain situations, by driving a behavioral change.

“An organization's ability to learn and translate that learning into action is the ultimate competitive advantage.”

Jack Welch

- Don't underestimate the important offshoots of gamification - **communication and recognition**. Communicating completion of micro-learning is tied with recognition through gamification. It gives employees the satisfaction of knowing that their learning has been recognized and that it constitutes a form of social proof. Badges and completion bars of gamification can be a great addition to micro-learning as they are symbolic representations of skills, accomplishments or interests and they communicate between employees, peers, managers and the entire organization.
- Another form of micro-learning within gamification is the use of **contextual learning** that is triggered by external events. For instance, if an employee's customer retention score is low, they will be prompted to undergo micro-learning that consists of retention simulation practice.

Conclusion

There are many stories of some of the most famous corporations that have successfully implemented gamified eLearning - McDonald's use of a game-based eLearning system to launch a new till system to 1,300 restaurants; Sony Europe's creation of a state-of-the-art eLearning portal that delivered product knowledge to their dealers, resellers and customers in an enticing way; and Walmart's gamified eLearning platform to reduce safety incidents and improve compliance procedures and performance.

Moreover, as Dr. Eric R. Parks, Founder and President of ASK International and educational technology pioneer Bernard Luskin suggest, the "e" prefix of eLearning shouldn't just refer to "electronic," but to exciting, energetic, enthusiastic, emotional, extended, excellent, educational, engaging, easy, and, for everyone - just as successful gamified eLearning should be!

For more information go to: www.gameeffective.com

“Learning experiences are like journeys. The journey starts where the learning is now, and ends when the learner is successful. The end of the journey isn't knowing more, it's doing more.”

Julie Dirksen