

How to Improve Worker Engagement Using Process Gamification

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Gamification is the use of game thinking and game mechanics in non-game contexts to engage users in solving problems and increase users' self-contributions. If implemented in the right manner, gamification can be a great tool for sustained engagement. Laura Lilyquist of Badgeville defines sustained engagement as "the kind of engagement that naturally occurs over the long term and becomes permanently ingrained into the culture".

In this Article, we are going to discuss what game elements can be used in business processes to improve worker engagement.

Points System

As humans, we seek recognition and acknowledgment for a job well done or for going the extra mile to help the organization. Games use a points-based system and recognize players' performance in various different ways such as unlocking new levels, giving additional "goodies" and awarding achievement badges.

A similar concept of points-based system can be used to reward process workers as well. Following list provides various activities that can be used to award points.

Challenges – task completion cycle times can be used as challenges for users e.g. different points can be awarded based on the time taken to complete a task.

- Task Completion Time < 1 Day = 3 Points
- Task Completion Time > 1 Day & < 2 Days = 2 Points
- Task Completion Time > 2 Days = 1 Points

Performance – points for initiating or completing a certain number of tasks over a specified period of time e.g. sales lead generation.

Feedback – this is an important one to measure and reward because this would normally lie outside of a workers job duties.

Share Improvement Ideas – providing process improvement feedback to process owner through the system.

Content Feedback – starting a discussion thread about a process feature or anything that could be useful for others working on the process.

Commenting/Answering Questions – participating in discussions by commenting or answering questions.

Reports & Filters – if there are ad-hoc reports, then sharing those reports and possible search criterion could be very beneficial for other users, increases collaboration and avoids reinvention of the wheel.

Rework – nobody likes rework, so just like games reduce points, there should be a negative impact on the user’s score for causing rework. Rework can be calculated based on process loopbacks, data hygiene, and data accuracy etc.

Achievement Badges

Points awarded to users become the basis for recognizing achievements. For instance, a user who consistently resolves 10 cases a day for a period of 30 days can be awarded the Case Guru badge. Badges are usually funny and quirky, something that people will enjoy and can feel proud of when displayed on their profiles.

Similarly, points can also be used to assign relatively simpler tasks to newbie’s as compared to assigning difficult tasks to more experienced users. In games, this can be seen as transitioning from Newbie to more Advanced levels.

Leaderboards

Leaderboards are perhaps the most popular gamification technique used in non-game contexts. Leaderboards are a motivational tool where users get to compare their scores or performance with peers.

Leaderboards should use a similar scoring mechanism i.e. rank users working in similar process areas ensuring we compare apples to apples and not apples and not apples to oranges.

Leaderboards bring out the competitive nature in humans and cause “shame” in losing. So, a recommended approach is to use team leaderboards as well, this encourages cooperation and creates a more collaborative environment.



Activity Streams

Live activity streams can be used to display user accomplishments to everyone as and when they happen. Accomplishments can include completion of a task, milestone or earn a badge. Unlike leaderboards which provide cumulative data, activity streams provide more visibility to individual achievements.



Goals

The concept of team games should be used i.e. all players on a team playing for the same goal. The goal should not be winning or obliterating the opponent, instead of in an organization focus should be on creating a more collaborative environment.

In games providing upfront goals such as how many points need to be scored, coins need to be collected or enemies need to be destroyed gives players a clear idea at each moment about what needs to be done in order to complete the level. Similarly, process works should have clear goals e.g. not working on easy cases, instead of working on the case with a higher dollar value and other organizational goals.

Progress

Process workers should continuously know their progress towards achieving their goals, this could be either displaying amount of dollars they have recovered for the organization or what stage are they in the process.

Helpful Hints

Complex and nicely designed games provide on-screen hints and guides which are extremely helpful for new players. Help, hints, and wizards should be included for process workers as well, these will definitely help reduce the training time for new

users and of course existing users can always refer to them in case they are stuck for any reason.

Conclusion

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, if implemented in the right manner gamification can significantly improve process worker's engagement.

- Gamification should not be forced on the users because that is not any different from the current stick approach. Gamification also should not be a carrot approach i.e. expecting to get more work out of user's just because they will be rewarded. It should be implemented with the user's consent, both carrot and stick approaches do not work in the longer term.
- Gamification should focus on individuals working to organization's goals, it should not be used to shame individuals with lower points/score/performance.
- The rewards system should be appropriate according to the nature of the job e.g. a salesperson closing new leads in time should definitely be called a Sales Guru, but it should not replace their monetary compensation.

References

- [6 Critical Game Mechanics to Consider in Leaderboards \(Part 1\)](#)
- [Employee Engagement Drives Optimal Business Results](#)
- [Psychology of High Scores, Leaderboards, & Competition](#)
- [Gaming for Reality – Can BPM be Fun?](#)
- [Gamifying processes: seductive, but proceed with caution](#)
- [OpenClipArt.org](#)

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