

Gamification in HR

Nowadays, most businesses and brands are using gamification to drive greater engagement with consumers than ever before, yet most people in HR are just scratching the surface when it comes to applying gaming techniques and methodologies to traditional HR functions. Seeing people play games in a party, an informal gathering, school's play ground or clubs is a daily phenomenon but imagine going to an organizational training and being a witness to the vice presidents and the managers of the well-known organization playing games at a place where they should ideally be sitting on a chair with a booklet and pen in hand to take active notes. Astonishing! Isn't it? It might be surprising for a lay man but for the corporate these days gamification is 'the mantra' for optimization of employees' performance.



The concept is uncomplicated and includes redesigning of routine tasks that is not restricted to a single kind of work but everything from employee training and development and recruitment to testing the product and management of sales force to be more desirous and interactive, resulting in more participative, rewarding, amusing and industrious work experiences.

Gamification has a wide range of exciting applications. It can be in retaining valued employees & cultivating corporate culture, here, gamification can be used to promote the exciting work culture by rewarding employees for contributing to company-wide volunteer programs, cross-departmental collaboration and providing process improvement suggestions. It can also be used to improve talent acquisition and management. The hiring process can be easily turned into a gamified experience by

rewarding prospects with both acknowledgment and tangible perks for completing each step, from application to start date. The referral programs also encourage the active participation of the existing employees in hiring new talent. Gamification can act as an aid to creating a more interactive, rewarding and attentive workforce. According to 2017, Gallup poll, 71% of American workers report feeling not engaged or actively disengaged in their work.

Gamification also boosts enthusiasm to deal with the administrative works. No one likes to complete the paperwork, especially when other tasks are more exciting and pressing. Thus, rewarding employees for completing the required task by announcing the title like best reporter or quickest to complete the forms can create a friendly competition. Nevertheless, gamification plays the most significant role in training and development of the employees. Every adult thinks he/she has enough competence and skills. They do not like to learn while the other is speaking and giving instructions but if taught in disguise they would happily comply. Gamification can be understood as a thinly veiled attempt to lure employees into doing what they should already be doing, without realizing they are being told to do so.

In 2013, a study by Aberdeen Group concluded that organizations that use gamification see better outcomes such as work performance, employee commitment and retention. Gamification is a boon that in a way helps HR to attract, induct, train, develop, engage and retain employees. But on the other hand, gamification will only appeal to certain personality types and so the concept is inconsistent. It is also difficult for the organizations to espouse it frequently. Additionally, some of the employee might not react well to a gamified system, making it a step too far for the HR. Yet, with the rising awareness and tailored design many reputed organizations have implemented gamification in HR, some of the examples being Marriott International, which is one of the earliest implementer of gamification in the recruitment and selection processes. Tata Consultancy Services also implemented gamification in industrial training and simulation to initiate better team play and greater collaboration. Another example for the same is Accenture where gamification is implemented to aid employee engagement.

There are number of options for the firms to get access to a variety of games. Maximally, used are the free and low-cost games which are available from a growing number of sources. For example, a game, called 'Balloon Brigade' assesses how users make decisions. Another game known as the 'Broken Square' is used for inculcating the team spirit in the employees. Many other peer recognition games are used for increasing the 'we' feelings in the groups and teams.

Gamification can change the outlook and working strategy of HR in most of its designated functions. However, Gartner also says that 80% of gamified applications will fail if not designed correctly. The organizations should take a few cautions before gamifying. Gamified modules, based on performance, work best for roles that are

relatively repetitive in nature. It also works well for roles with clearly measurable outcomes and well-defined metrics. Gamification is over and above just games. It is a new way of looking at interactions. In 2014 Mollick and Rothbard studied that gamification isn't just about fun. It's about how companies engage enough employees to ensure they that the employees want to stay at work. Gamification is much more than just a craze, it can be a chief part of an organisation's strategic human resource management approach and can encourage people to do more of what organization want them to do and also get better at it.