

Gamification: a manager's new best friend?



By [Bruce von Maltitz](#)

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Games have been used to motivate and engage people since the dawn of time. They speak to one of our most basic instincts: the desire to play, compete, achieve and be part of a team.

Gamification, or the use of game-like mechanics in a non-game environment, like a business, has gained popularity in recent years, particularly in the world of marketing and customer loyalty. SuperBru, Pick n Pay smart shopper points, Discovery's Vitality programme and Codecademy are all examples of how game-like experiences are helping South African brands build lasting relationships with their customers.

Now businesses are starting to leverage game dynamics internally, to guide employee behaviour and boost motivation and performance. In the same way that video games get players to complete certain tasks by unlocking rewards, businesses can reward employees when they behave in positive ways. In a contact centre, for example, employees could advance to higher levels by completing a certain number of training modules, resolving calls within a set time, or even just by taking the time to share their knowledge with junior members of the team.

With each advancement made visible to the rest of the team, an employee could soon build up a positive reputation within the business, which will boost his motivation and engagement. From the business' perspective, the results can give management a snapshot of how each employee is faring, how engaged he is and can even help identify negative trends or address potential problems very quickly.

In essence, gamification gives management a set of tools for measuring and rewarding progress. And a sense of progress is vital for building motivation and confidence.

Measuring and giving employees real-time feedback on their performance communicates their value to the organisation. It enables people to take pride in the things they're good at, and to work on the things they aren't so good at - turning what is traditionally a once-a-year, top-down assessment into an ongoing performance improvement conversation.

But while gamification can make a manager's job easier in many respects, it takes true leadership to make it work. Leaders must commit to using the data and insights gathered to help their workforce grow and excel - something that is often overlooked in favour of looming sales targets and other long-term business goals.

And like any long-term strategy, it's vital that the results are measured and the data generated is used to continually fine-tune the approach.

ABOUT BRUCE VON MALTITZ

Bruce von Maltitz is currently the MD of 1Stream, a cloud-based contact centre technology provider. He has over 20 years experience in the service industry focusing specifically on contact centres for the last twelve years. He has a detailed understanding of how to design, build and operate contact centres having worked in the industry in SA, Africa and abroad.

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