

Game on! How HR can use 'gamification' to recruit, train and engage employees

Candy Crush, meet the corner office. Online games aren't just for playtime anymore.

Small and midsize businesses can take a cue from their large competitors, who are increasingly using online games to recruit, educate and energize their staffs.

By the end of this year, more than 70% of global businesses will utilize at least one gamified application, according to the Gartner Group. And a panel at last year's Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) conference named "gamification" one of the top 10 HR technology trends for 2014.

The trend involves using video-game techniques—including points, badges and leaderboards—to make your HR connections more interactive and to reward staff and applicants for their contributions. Gamification taps into the social desire of humans for self-esteem and desire to interact.

Free and low-cost games are available from a growing number of sources. Some tips on taking advantage of the trend:

Use recruiting games to assess soft skills and personality. *Examples:* Wasabi Waiter puts employees in the title role in a busy sushi restaurant. The game promises to "embrace the psychology of play to reliably predict job performance." It claims to reveal key skills such as:

- Efficiency: How well do candidates process, prioritize and respond to information?
- Social intelligence: Do they respond well to social cues?
- Conscientiousness: Do they try hard to get things right?

Another game, Balloon Brigade, assesses how users make decisions. [Both are free.](#)

Personal wellness games can engage employees to become healthier. *Example:* The Proof! game at [Mindbloom.com](#) allows users to create a personalized seven-day get-in-shape challenge. Mindbloom's Life Game encourages users to keep a tree green by building personal habits that improve their lives. Both are free.

Peer recognition games engage employees, and foster teamwork and competition. *Example:* DueProps gives points and recognition for meeting goals. It's available at [Dueprops.com](#) for \$29 per month for 20 users.

Some tips on using gamification:

- Games that eventually provide peer or social recognition, financial rewards or career advancement are most effective.
- Change games one or two times a year to prevent boredom.
- Use gamification as a supplement. Don't replace traditional recognition and rewards.
- Gamification works best with jobs and activities that are repetitive and have measurable results.

Online resource: Check out a [list of companies](#) that supply gamification software for hourly and use-based fees.

More benefits of gamification...

Better training. Onboarding new employees is difficult. Gamification can lighten the mood and help newcomers enjoy themselves. By offering rewards and prizes to workers who ace their training programs, you can help new personnel feel welcome.

Higher morale. Seeing your name at the top of any leaderboard is a big self-esteem boost. By offering employees the chance to be winners in their offices, you're keeping them happy and motivated. The morale boost should work for both top and bottom employees.

Reinforcement. With any game system, the goal is positive reinforcement. Employees don't want to be told what they've done wrong—they want to be encouraged when they engage in behaviors that benefit their companies and themselves.

Source: Ceridian