



How Community Managers Can Use
Gamification to Create Sustainable Engagement

Introduction: Gamification and Your Community

The Internet has become social. More and more conversations – both business and personal – take place online, and users expect digital experiences to reflect the interactivity they enjoy in online communities. Businesses that build and nurture online communities create deeper connections that in turn increase engagement, loyalty, and revenue.

Engagement is Essential

The success factor for any community is engagement. The more time users spend interacting with your site and other community members the deeper the relationship they build with your brand. Gamification is a key element in ensuring user engagement. It allows you to optimize your community and get you closer to your customer. Simply put, Gamification means applying the principles that make participating in games fun, interesting and rewarding in non-game contexts (like your online community).

Gamification = Engagement

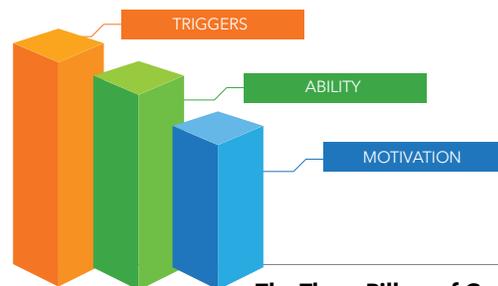
Gets you closer to your audience.



KNOW THIS...

Gamification helped Autodesk raise trial usage by **40%** and conversion rates by 15%.¹

The Science Behind Gamification



The Three Pillars of Gamification

Gamification is about much more than simply rewarding points and badges, but rather understanding and influencing the human behaviors companies want to encourage among their users. Gamification is founded in the fundamentals of human psychology and behavioral science, and rests on three primary factors: motivation, ability level and triggers.

- **Motivation** is the foundation for gamification to succeed; a person must want to engage in the tasks or activities at stake. Properly maintaining motivation requires community moderation, as it is hard for users to maintain motivation for long periods of time. When gamification is applied correctly by surprising users with rewards and points,

high levels of motivation can be achieved on an ongoing basis.

- Ability** is another key factor for effective gamification. Psychology tells us that people are driven to perform behaviors they have the ability to carry out, but will become bored if these tasks are too easy. Gamification seeks to identify the right mix of motivation/ability: to identify things that users want to achieve, to identify things that users want to achieve, and that are sufficiently challenging to be interesting while not so difficult that their interest peters out.
- Triggers** are the final key to driving actions with gamification. The user needs to be provided cues or reminders, to encourage them to take actions.

There is the fine balance of motivation, ease of ability and the appropriate triggers to find the "happy path" for users - the perfect amount of

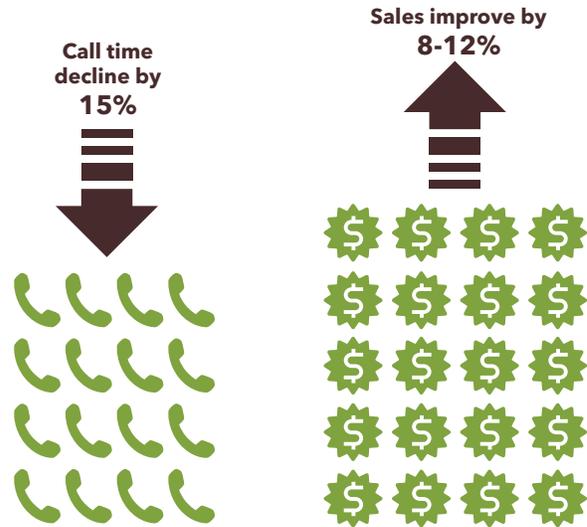
KNOW THIS...

DevHub saw the **number of users** who completed their site experience **increase from 10% to 80%.**²

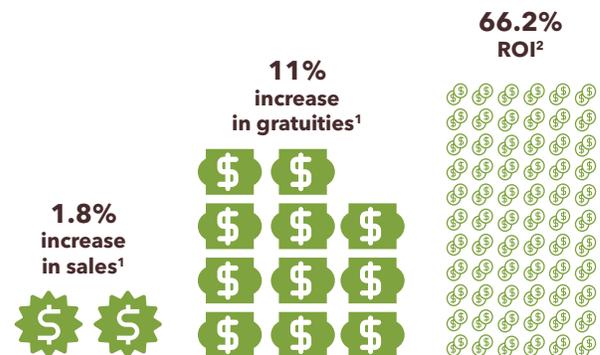
challenge to keep them interested while keeping boredom at bay.

Gamification Increases Revenue

LiveOps used gamification in its call center and saw:



Restaurants that have incorporated gamification have seen:



The Community Manager Is at the Helm

The community manager plays a key role in the success of gamification. He or she is responsible for putting in place the proper mix of gamification elements to maintain the right blend of motivation, level of effort, and triggers. The community manager must continually monitor the community and keep



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Extraco Bank **raised** its **customer acquisitions** by **700%**³

the site relevant and requires the appropriate tools and metrics to do so.

Examples of required community management capabilities include:

- **Flexibility** to turn on or off gamification features to “adjust the volume” based on observed levels of member engagement and interaction.

- **Ability** to adjust the reward system and reputation levels received based on certain actions
- Discouraging, limiting, or encouraging participation by specific community members or populations (for example to limit the influence of a bad apple in the community).

The community manager requires an administrative tool to provide a window into the health of the community and dashboard to adjust all gamification features.

How to Activate Your Community Members

Gamification can be used in many ways but it is important to realize that you should not try to gamify everything. The following use cases describe

Gamification Use Cases and Features

	Crowdsourcing Information	Product Recommendations	Support	Q&A
Leaderboards	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓
Badges	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓
Real-time Interaction	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Flexibility				
Reputation Points	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Community Analytics	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Management Dashboard	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓

✓ Feature Supports Use Case

✓✓ Feature Strongly Supports Use Case

different ways gamification can be selectively used to make a community website more effective:

Crowdsourcing information: Crowdsourcing can be used for ideation, blogs, reviews, and more. Gamification provides an engagement and incentive system to encourage more active participation in crowdsourcing situations. Gamification can be used to reward contributors for contributing and identifying the best content. Product/services references and recommendations: Customers value other customer's feedback on products or services because they feel it is more credible than company-sponsored pitches, but the challenge is identifying users whose opinion is worthy of trust. Gamification can instill trust within the community by helping users identify community members who are power users. Identifying and building a relationship with these power users can benefit companies who are able to nurture these power users into superfans

 **KNOW THIS...**

Deloitte training programs **using gamification took 50% less time to complete** and kept more students involved.⁵

Support: Companies often spend a large amount of money, time, and effort providing customer support and yet it is often a source of frustration

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Playboy had 85% gamification participation rates and 60% increase in monthly revenue⁴

for customers. Providing support through social communities can greatly reduce support costs and - more importantly - increase customer satisfaction. Gamification introduced into support communities can turn it into a positive experience for all. The reward system encourages members to help with other members' questions and issues. For new customers, gamification can make it more interesting to learn about the company's products/services, which increases loyalty and knowledge.

Q & A: Questions and answers is another area where community members can provide valuable contributions. Q&A can significantly reduce your customer service costs while providing members with more "real" customer service. Gamification can be used to reward customers for submitting questions as well as answering and reviewing them.

Gamification Best Practices for Community Managers

5 Things to Keep In Mind

Know your users. By understanding and factoring in how people behave in a group dynamic, you

can better engage your users and anticipate your community's needs. You don't want to micromanage the community or have the experience feel too "big brother"-like. Instead, you want your community to trust one another and from that trust you will see greater levels of interaction.

Make sure that your point economy for behavior is rational and obtainable. This helps you avoid user frustration, encourages users to engage in the desired behaviors, and provides users with greater levels of satisfaction.

Keep a consistent look and feel throughout all areas of your site. It is important for your gamification features to be well integrated into your community site, and to avoid the look that they are being just "stuck on top of" your content.

Keep it fresh. You can do this by updating and customizing the site on an ongoing basis to maintain high levels of user interest and promote continued interactions.

Provide a "gentle interruption" login experience. Users not logged onto the site should be provided with the same community page they are when logged in, and when they begin using community features that require login such as responding to questions they should be provided a "gentle" login experience that minimizes disruption to their flow. Single sign-on should also be applied to provide a seamless experience between the "content" and "community" portions of your site.

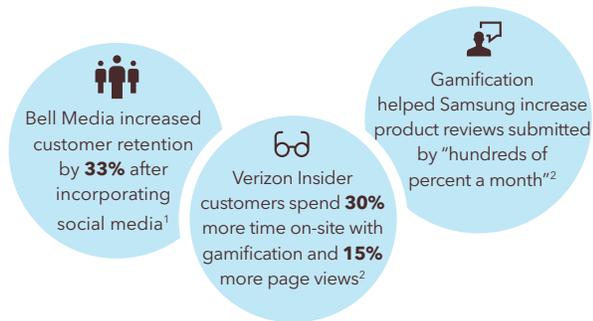
3 Key Mistakes to Avoid

Three critical mistakes to avoid when applying gamification include:

Don't make gamification the forefront or gamify for the wrong reasons. Gamification should be integrated into the core experience and overall community strategy; it is a means to an end. Developing gamification as the site's overall focus can cause adverse reactions, is hard to sustain, and can quickly undermine user motivation.

Avoid negative connotations. It is best to avoid using punishment as opposed to rewards, just like in the physical world. You want to be very judicial with removal of accomplishments such as badges, levels, and points, to ensure you don't decrease motivation. For example don't punish users who have not been to your site for a while by stripping them of points; instead, build a reward for them to return to and spend more time on the site.

Gamification Drives Loyalty



Don't be in the user's face. An overly aggressive approach to gamification can make people uncomfortable and reduce levels of cooperation. Avoid for example making the leaderboard the main focus of your site; instead it should be displayed in an unobtrusive fashion (over to the side) and the focus should be on the information that engages people.

Turn Connections into Interactions

Connections are the focal point of most social sites, but merely connecting a large number of users is not enough. Social connections such as accepting a friend request are easy to acquire but don't achieve the next level of engagement: communal customer experience and information exchange. Interactions have to be continuously kept up or the community becomes less engaged and the value of the community to you decreases. Gamification transforms simple connections into interactions, driving return visits to your site and increasing community health.

Bridge to Help Users Discover the True Value of the Community

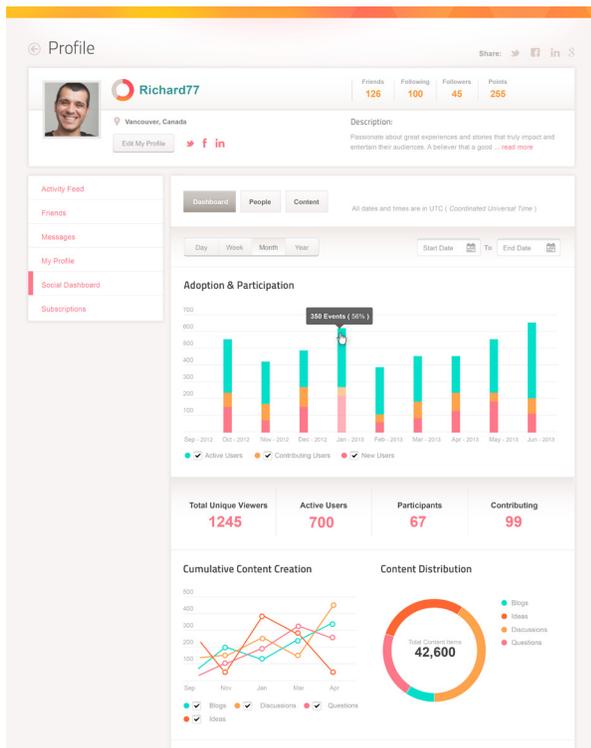
While increasing engagement is a worthy goal in and of itself, the true value of gamification is using its mechanics to entice community users to interact with your site to a sufficient degree that they become immersed and hooked on the "true" value of the community. Examples of desired interactions could include learning about products and services, providing feedback on products and services, or providing support for other members of the community. Gamification is a bridge, or stepping stone, to encourage users to become immersed in the deeper level of the value of the community.

Use Analytics to Drive Community Health

Gamification helps both community managers and members of the community understand what's valuable and important. Gamification analytics can provide a wealth of information on user behavior, which can be used to maintain and increase user engagement and activity. It can also provide a unique view into customer opinions and interest areas to help you understand your customer at a much deeper level.

Integrate Gamification into Your Community with Evoq™ Social

Evoq™ Social provides a wide set of leading-edge social capabilities to help you build, manage, and maintain a successful social community. These capabilities help drive real business outcomes -



increasing revenue, reducing maintenance and support costs, improving customer satisfaction and retention, and building brand advocacy.

Evoq™ Social includes a robust set of gamification functionality. It provides basic gamification features

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Joiz, a Swiss Television network, **increased sharing by 100%** and social referral traffic by 54% **with social infrastructure and gamification.**⁷

KNOW THIS...

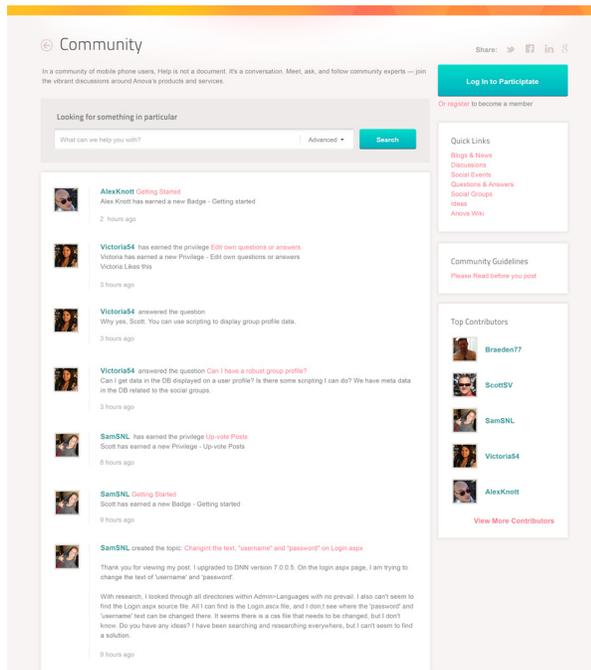
Nike is using gamified feedback to help consumers beat their personal fitness goals.⁶

including badges, points, and leaderboards, while providing the entire system needed to incorporate gamification into all areas of your community and web site. It also offers the tools required to monitor the health of your community and the flexibility to turn applicable gamification features on or off to help you maintain the health of your community.

Evoq™ Social Gamification Features

Evoq™ Social features provide the community manager many ways to create sustainable engagement. Some of the key features and ways they can be used to create engagement include:

Leaderboards. The leaderboard tracks users' points, reputation and site tenure on the community. A leaderboard can be used to motivate users to participate in the community by showing their current progress along with users just ahead of and behind them (as opposed to the perhaps unobtainable levels of the overall community leaders). It can also act as a trigger to drive additional actions.



Badges. Evoq™ Social comes with a default set of common badges, and new ones can be easily created to tailor to the community's particular needs. Like leaderboards, badges are used to motivate community members to engage and encourage certain types of behavior. The community manager can adjust the level of difficulty or ease for earning a badge to optimize the level of motivation in the community.

Reputation points. These are the motivation drivers used to reward people for different behaviors. This is important for building trust within your community users can see the standings and reputation level of other users to know whose opinions and feedback they can trust.

Real-time interaction. Users receive instant gratification by earning badges and seeing point totals in real-time as they engage in gamified behaviors on the site. Real-time support helps keep users' motivation levels high by providing them instantaneous feedback.

Community analytics. Evoq™ Social contains an analytics tool to measure key metrics such as user engagement and site participation. This enables the community manager to optimize community health by letting you can see how people are using your site.

Gamification management dashboard. The dashboard enables the community manager to create badges, add privileges, and adjust reputation points. This is another critical feature enabling the community manager to optimize community health.

Flexibility. Evoq™ Social lets you pick and choose what features you want to use and the reward level difficulty. You can ease users into gamification and it can grow with the size of your community. This helps you keep it fresh, avoid being in the user's face, and avoid negative connotations.

About DNN

DNN provides a suite of solutions for creating rich, rewarding online experiences for customers, partners and employees. Our technology is the foundation for 750,000+ websites worldwide and our customers include True Value Hardware, Bose, Cornell University, Glacier Water, Dannon, Delphi, USAA, NASCAR, Northern Health and the City of Denver. In addition to our commercial solutions, DNN is the steward of the DotNetNuke Open Source Project.

SOURCES

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