

Leveraging gamification for learning in the Indian tech industry

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Learning methods need to keep pace with learning styles.

The pace of technology today is unpredictable and accelerating. That's why it's more important than ever to invest in learning. It is imperative that learners keep pace and understand the new technologies. Learning also needs to evolve to keep up with the learning styles of today's workforce. With the increasing adoption of online learning, infusing technology into learning can help create hyper-personalized learning experiences and make them more interesting for learners.

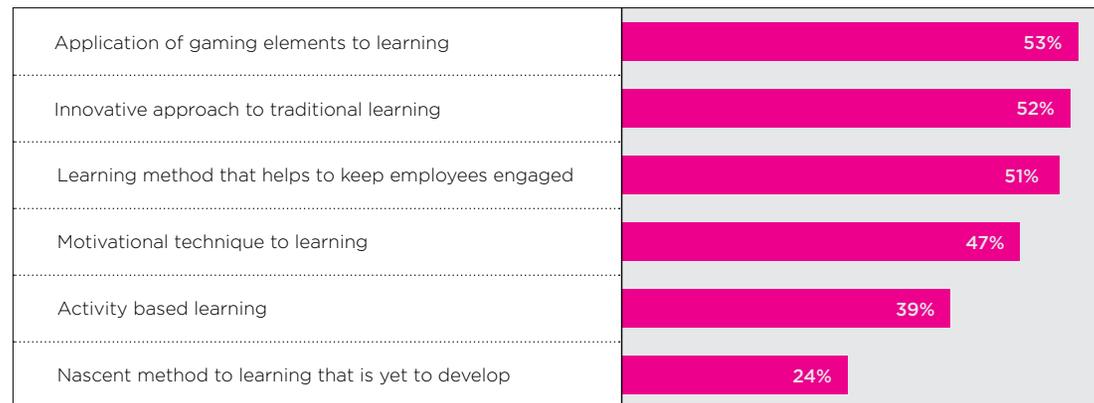
Gamified learning is an innovative approach using application of gaming elements. It fosters innovative learning and drives employee engagement.

In order to see how gamification improves learning at companies across India, we recently conducted a survey.

About the sample

We interviewed 106 technology companies spread across both the services and the product space. 92 percent of the companies interviewed had a well-defined learning and development function. All respondents interviewed had learning and development responsibilities for their organizations.

How the industry defines gamified learning:

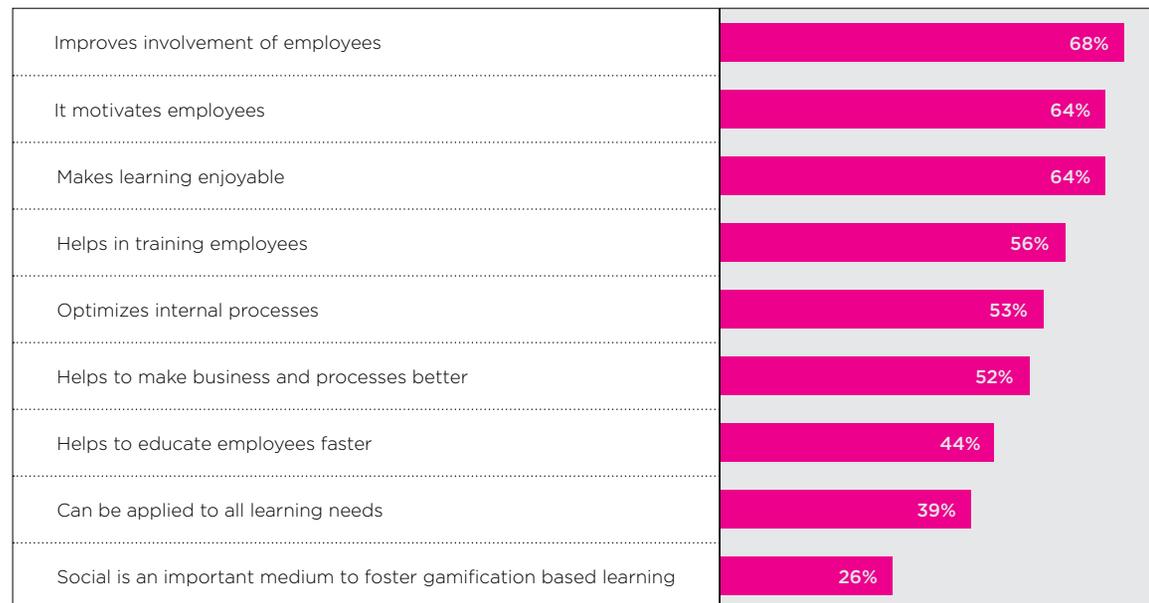


Gamified learning advantages for employees

Gamified learning has a host of advantages. It ensures increased participation by motivating employees through a novel learning approach.

Another critical aspect of gamified learning is that it helps foster a more socially inclusive culture. It helps learners share their experiences with each other and caters to better workplace collaboration. It also enables learners to take responsibility for their personal training, inculcates a spirit of healthy competition and also supports continuous learning.

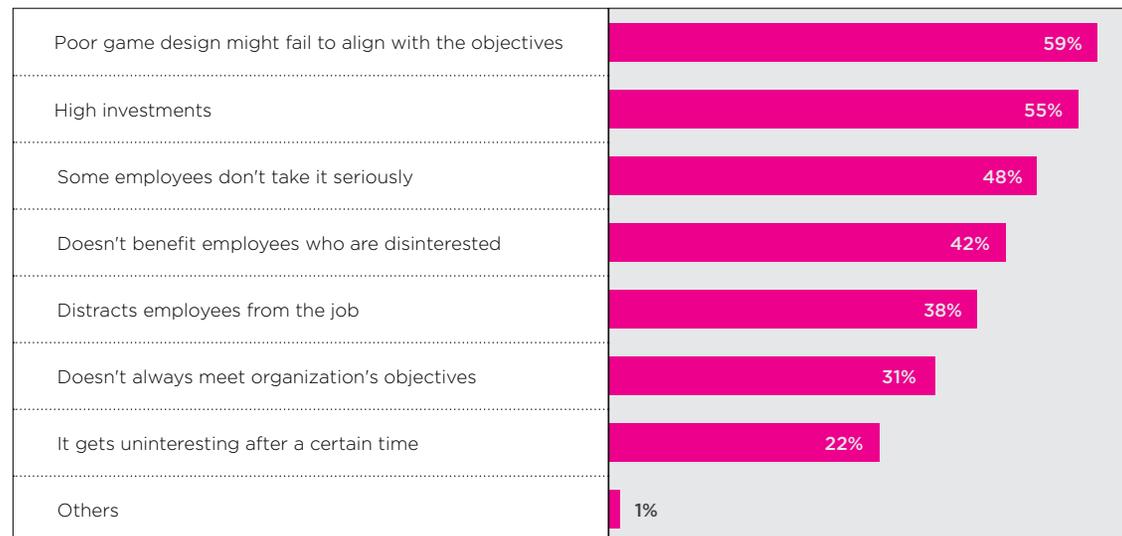
Top advantages of gamified learning:



Impediments to gamified learning

The advantages of gamified learning as a tool to foster greater acquisition of skills and technical know-how hinges on the design aspect. Hence, poor game design might often fail to align with the desired objectives. The investments made are also high and when some employees don't take it seriously enough, the return on investment won't be there. Sometimes it can also distract employees from their job and gets uninteresting after a certain period of time.

Top shortcomings of gamification:

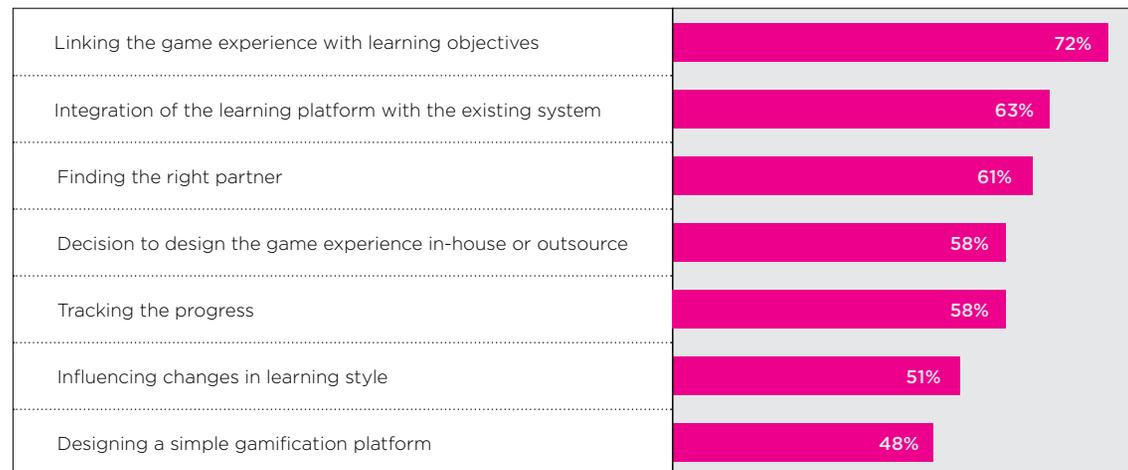


Implementing gamification

Around 90 percent of organizations in the interviewed sample of 106 are implementing gamification with 70 percent having implemented already and 19 percent being in the process of implementing. On the relevance and importance scale, 78 percent of organizations confirm that gamified learning is of both high importance and high relevance.

Implementing gamification comes with some base and essential requirements which are mandatory to ensure it is effectively implemented. The most essential requirement cited was linking the game experience with learning objectives. There are always specific learning outcomes that are associated with using gamification. When these are met adequately, the reasons for implementation become stronger. Also, linking the gaming platforms effectively to existing learning systems and finding an effective and dedicated partner all contribute to ensuring greater implementation.

Best ways to implement gamification successfully:





The challenges in implementing gamification

The challenges in implementing gamification can be broadly classified under three primary areas: technology, vendor and people challenges.

- **Technology challenges:** The games used to foster learning must truly cater to increasing the knowledge levels of the people using them; however, sometimes the games don't contribute to learning as much as they ought to, and people using them feel they haven't gotten much out of them. The gamification system must function smoothly, but this is not always the case—owing to technical glitches on and off and the complexity involved in managing the entire gamification system. These roadblocks hinder usage and, as a result, are the two most fundamental challenges on the technical front.
- **Vendor challenges:** Having an efficient vendor is also a key aspect concerning implementation. When vendors have a higher turnaround time for fixing issues that arise, companies or individuals are less inclined to use gamification. Games also often need to be tailored to meet specific learner purposes and when vendors

charge a high cost, they become more disinclined to use gamification. A lot of the challenges related to vendors are because of the difficulty posed in finding a reliable, committed and trustworthy vendor.

- **People challenges:** There are also challenges posed on the people front. It is often the case that some employees are disinterested in gamification-based learning, despite their organization investing money in it. Attitudes and perceptions are never easy to change and sometimes employees see this new approach to learning as just a game. In an age of never ending distractions, some employees see gamification as another one, failing to use it for intended purpose. There are also cases where senior employees find it difficult to understand gamification as they are not used to these learning mechanisms.

The technology and employee-related challenges pose a greater threat as compared to vendor challenges.

Decision making, investment and training

In most organizations, the human resources department (HR department) makes key decisions concerning implementation of gamification. Heads of the learning and development (L&D) unit are the second most likely people to make these decisions, followed by business leaders and then technical leads.

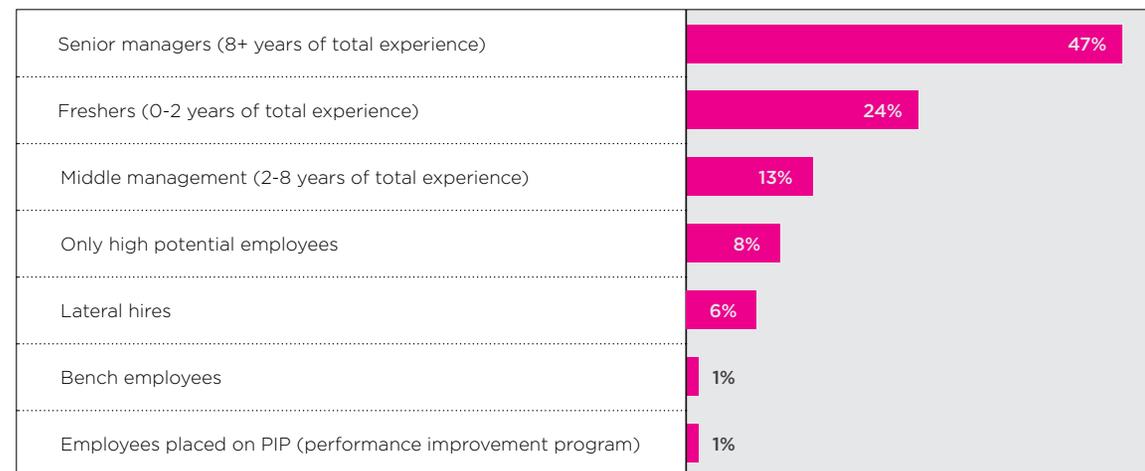
Around 40 percent of organizations take between one to three months from the time the decision is made to actual implementation. This group is followed by 38 percent of organizations that take three to six months from the date of decision to implementation.

Training constitutes an important aspect of gamified learning. When done effectively, this can go a long way in ensuring better adoption. In most cases, the training is usually done by a third party. The implementation process usually starts with organizations identifying and defining success criteria in gaming learning events. Then they undergo an introductory seminar and sample testing of interactive games. The decision to hire a third party for training is usually taken at this stage. During the training, the corporate trainer identifies and recommends employees who are performing well and

recommends them to take the program further in their respective organizations. Gamified learning is then implemented in behavioral, social and effective business communication trainings.

The target audience for gamification is shown in the chart below. While the popular notion is that gamification is only for younger employees, 47 percent of the industry considers employees with eight or more years of experience as the target audience while 37 percent considers employees with 0-8 years as the target audience.

Target audience for gamification:



Gamification in learning in India

- Gamified learning is associated with improved employee engagement and is seen as an innovative approach to learning using application of gaming elements
- Around 90 percent of organizations are implementing gamification while 80 percent find gamification relevant and unique
- Linking game design with learning objectives is considered a key success factor for gamification
- People, vendor and technology are the three dimensions of challenges for gamification implementation
- Gamified learning finds a target audience both with employees fresh out of college as well as experienced employees
- Continuous learning, reward-oriented tasking, work optimization, social connections and engagement are some of the key benefits of gamification





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