



# Enterprise gamification for contact centers

How to improve employee  
performance, CSAT, and more



# Introduction

Whether done in a company-owned contact center or a BPO facility, it's tough work to be an agent handling customer service, sales, technical support or collections. That means, as a contact center operator, you must engage employees at an emotional level to motivate and train them to excel. When that happens, a commitment to excellence becomes deeply engrained in your corporate culture and exceptional business results become more attainable.

Companies that have achieved that level of commitment and performance from their employees make use of enterprise gamification. That's the application of game mechanics – such as points, badges, leaderboards, narratives, and completion achievements – which engage employees on a sustained basis to encourage desired behaviors. Before you imagine customer service agents turning their work into purposeless playtime, think again. More than driving achievement, enterprise gamification provides customer service employees much needed engagement, transparency, instant feedback, training, and the recognition of peers and superiors.

This eBook will show you how to make enterprise gamification work in your company's customer service environment.

## Microsoft drives engagement with enterprise gamification

Long-term incentive programs and occasional call monitoring didn't drive employees in Microsoft's outsourced service centers to adopt the desired daily behaviors. To drive performance, Microsoft started creating daily races for agents with alternating goals driven by personal performance. Agents could win points and prizes every day based on their ability to improve and learn. The result: productivity increased 10%; attach rate doubled for non-sales agents; absenteeism reduced 12%; and, 79% of agents acknowledged new information and could apply it.



# Your contact center can realize 9 benefits of enterprise gamification

Let's say you begin with simple contests. Based on manager's analysis of employee performance, results are written with markers on leaderboards. The list of "top performers" often has unintended consequences. The underlying performance data wasn't transparent and, as a result, seen as less credible by employees. Those in the middle of the list - employees whose results are average - can feel alienated. They also don't receive recognition, a strong motivator. Worse, the top performer lists are often updated sporadically. This often means no immediate feedback to employees and the absence of a true feedback loop.

However, enterprise gamification has none of those adverse factors. It offers your company these nine benefits:

Benefit

01

Objective, transparent data

Enterprise gamification is based on data collection from enterprise sources. This has many benefits, one of which is that employees perceive data as objective and transparent.

Benefit

02

Frequent updates leave room for growth

Automatic updates can be used to refresh leaderboards and other gamified feedback mechanisms. Whether these occur on a daily or weekly basis, they give constant individual and team-based feedback. They also leave hope for change – “if I didn’t do well today, I can do well tomorrow or next week.”

Benefit

03

Many opportunities for recognition

Gamification can single out top performers in certain segments, people who’ve progressed relative to themselves, top teams, and more. This causes employees to feel their performance is noticed and appreciated as well as to keep them driving ahead.

Benefit

04

Gamification creates a sense of mastery

Mastery is the feeling that “I am getting better at this” – a sense of progression that is provided by results tracking and comparisons that are inherent in any gamification solution. As its name suggests, enterprise gamification is integrated into enterprise applications, making the use of game mechanics simpler and more streamlined. It also gives accurate information about all employees.



Benefit

**05**

**Gamification motivates everyone**

Employees can work against personal benchmarks, get recognition based on their relative improvement, earn points for completing training tasks, and more.

Benefit

**06**

**Gamification provides clear calls-to-action**

By integrating with enterprise applications it gives employees immediate feedback on performance and tells them what they should do next.

Benefit

**07**

**Gamification drives compliance and best practices**

Completing fields and adding information on required forms or compliance documents can be gamified too. This helps employees understand what they're expected to do and how.

Benefit

**08**

**Training**

Instead of shuttling employees to training classes, gamified learning can be integrated into the flow of work, training that is exposed to employees during quiet times or when their performance falters (and as a way to earn points).

Benefit

**09**

**Gamification drives balance**

Contact center employees need to balance conflicting expectations, resolve issues fast, and get high customer satisfaction ratings. By tracking many elements, and highlighting the need to improve some, employees can better balance their work and priorities to achieve better results. It happens quicker with game-based performance metrics.





# How to measure. What to gamify.

Choosing the right metrics for measurement and the right game mechanics is crucial.

The wrong metrics can lead to disastrous results. Focusing on AHT alone can lead to dropped calls. The right metrics can lead to the right results.

## **The key drivers for gamification can be:**

- Improve employee retention, engagement, and satisfaction
- Drive skill acquisition so employees can move across all customer service channels – from social through chat, email, and phone
- Reduce average handling time (AHT), increase first call resolution (FCR), and improve customer satisfaction (CSAT)
- Expand use of best practices through training and communications

## **Game mechanics used need to be a combination of:**

- Competition on a team and individual basis, with benchmarks and averages rather than comparison to named individuals (compete vs oneself, not vs a meaningless leaderboard)
- Completion satisfaction that relates to carrying out software-related tasks and the like
- Task completion, point collection and quizzes for training and eLearning tasks
- Points and expert badges for knowledge collaboration

Before deciding on what to measure and gamify, you need to consider employee classification so people enter the game in a way that compares them fairly. Employees working different contact channels have different attributes and different training requirements. Take care to compare employees by cohort and channels so they'll be playing the game against people like them. This is extra important when leaderboards compare an employee to a group benchmark. What's more, don't set a benchmark at an impossible level as that may discourage employees.

# Picking the right metrics yield the right results

## Customer service activities can be broken down into three basic elements:

- Measuring the speed an issue is resolved (AHT + issue resolution)
- Measuring how accurate that resolution was (FCR + customer satisfaction)
- Ensuring customer-reported satisfaction is high

## Each metric measured can be reported to the employee with enterprise gamification (as a gauge or color, depending on the narrative theme).

Other measures might include:

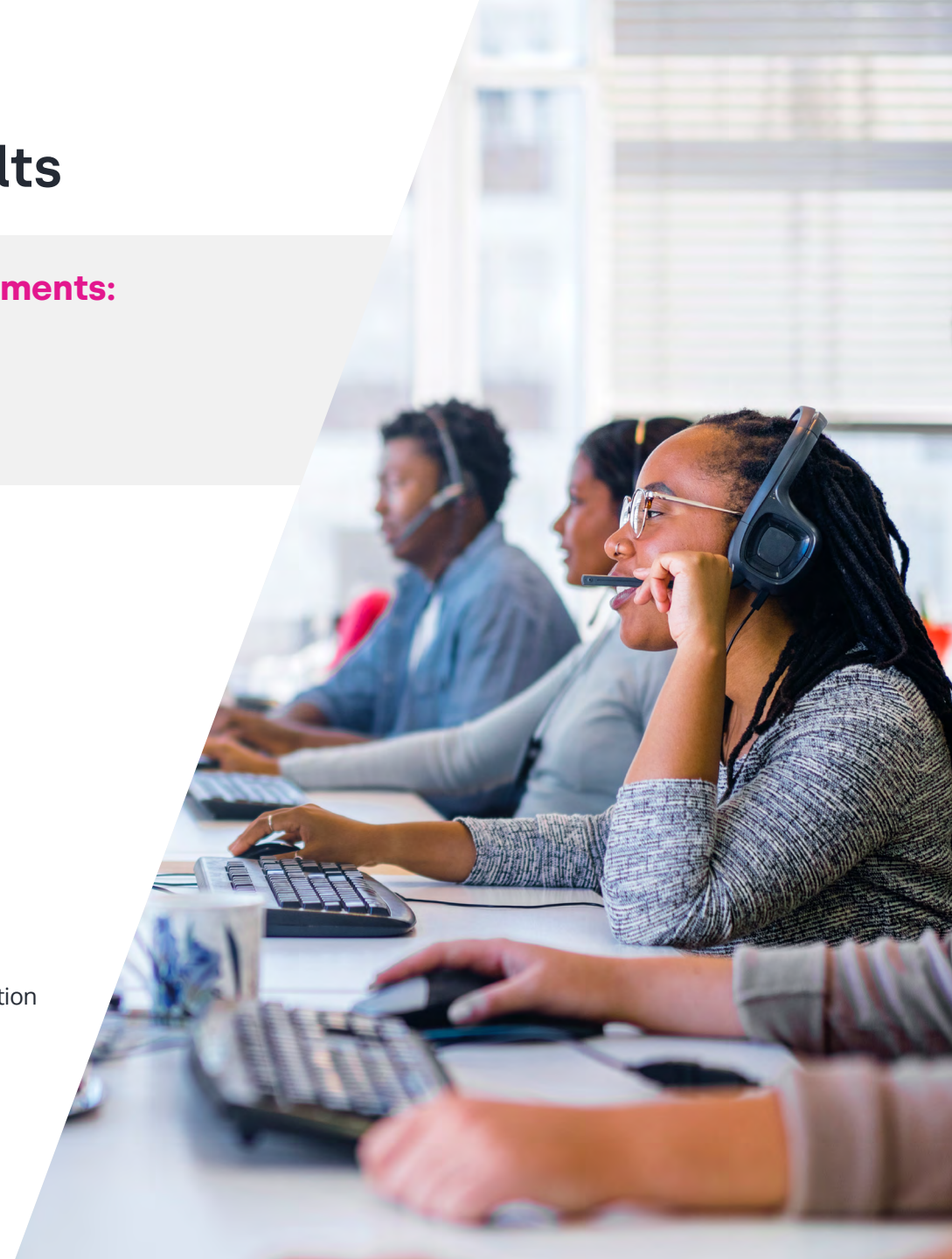
- Accurate entries into ticketing systems or other core customer service applications
- Answering through the right customer service channel.
- Learning activities completed through on-the-job training – in terms of completed training material, quizzes, and team learning tasks

Another might be entries into knowledge management systems. To improve the resolution rate and FCR, organizations can focus on:

- Creating a knowledge base for popular cases
- Creation of FAQs

Most organizations would love to harness employees' experience while closing cases - and have them update/create resolutions for future cases. Some employees aren't up to the effort and don't feel rewarded by it. However, gamification for knowledge collaboration and recognition provides a strong solution to this problem.

Keep in mind the importance of mastery, that sense of control and recognition. With gamification you can help employees answer the question – “Am I getting better at this?”







# Gamification makes employees happier

Gamification in contact centers should be much more than giving employees rewards for completing basic activities. Simplistic gamification of customer service tasks won't do much to delight customers or boost the sense of well-being among your customer service employees.

To make this point clear, let's explore the relationship between job essence and job function.

## The difference between job essence and job function

Steve Curtin's "Delight Your Customers – 7 Simple Ways to Raise Your Customer Service from Ordinary to Extraordinary," begins with a distinction between the two elements of work:

- **JOB FUNCTION:** the duties or tasks associated with the employee's job roles
- **JOB ESSENCE:** the employee's highest priority at work

If you ask a waiter what they're supposed to do in their job, they will typically describe their job function: clearing tables, taking orders, serving food. Most often, they won't mention their job essence. But job essence is important. In this case it is to provide service that will keep people coming back to the restaurant.

Without the focus on the greater goal – the job essence - both the contact center employee and the customer experience itself are stuck in a transactional service experience that, at best, leaves customers unimpressed. It also causes employees to feel their work is repetitious and unrewarding.

That's why enterprise gamification needs to focus on the job function and job essence. Focusing on job function means tracking just what matters: AHT, FCR, and more, if those are key. Gamification of the job function gives agents powerful feedback on their work and guidance on how to do better. Gamification of the job essence helps to communicate and measure customer feedback in ways that matter to employees. Although job essence is mostly voluntary, outside the realm of the job function, it can be gamified. Think about awarding points for exceptional performance and the resulting positive communications loop that will encourage employees to continue to go the extra mile. Communicating job essence will make employees happier, because it attaches a meaning to what can be tedious work.

# Gamification helps you leverage 'task significance'

Inner work life is the stuff behind a sense of motivation or a sense of disengagement. An experiment by Adam Grant, a professor at the Wharton School of Business, set out to show what happens when employees are reminded of the significance and meaning of their work.

Grant selected a university office that was tasked with contacting alumni to ask them to donate to the institution's scholarship funds – a contact center of sorts. Employees received "stories." Some stories were about what they gain from the job – salaries, hours worked, bonuses ("personal benefit" stories). Another set of stories was about how students are enjoying the scholarships and what that enabled them to achieve ("task significance" stories). There was also a third control group that received no stories.

Employees in the "task significance" group managed to get more than twice the number of weekly pledges, doubling the amount raised for scholarships.

Take care to integrate task significant messages – such as customer kudos and satisfaction – into the gamification communications you are using with employees. It will make a difference.

## Inner worklife

"People experience a constant stream of emotions, perceptions, and motivations as they react to and make sense of the events of the workday."

- **Professors Amabile and Kramer**, Harvard Business School





# How to communicate to build credibility and participation

When you launch an enterprise gamification project, you have to create credible and repeated communications with employees. Enterprise gamification projects are an opportunity to communicate with employees about your organization’s goals, rules of conduct, expectations, best practices and knowledge base. This communication is both informative (make sure everyone plays by the same rules) but it is also habit forming (always enter data into the system once you’ve completed a call). Not communicating an enterprise gamification project puts it at risk due to a low level of adoption.

By setting game rules, you are really communicating with employees about the behavior you expect from them. Game rules that seem intuitive to you – even obvious – since you know what the expectations of the organization are – might counter-intuitive or incomprehensible to your employees.

Gamification projects are typically measured in week-long intervals. Fantasy sports and other narrative settings typically begin anew each week so people feel they have a new opportunity to do better. It follows that after communicating the launch of the gamification project (including a tutorial), communication should be weekly. For example, consider sending a customized email newsletter to all game participants on a weekly basis. The weekly newsletter extends the game experience beyond the gamified environment. It should include the following:

01

Recognition

The newsletter should include recognition for outstanding players, competition winners, and those who have improved the most during the week, relative to their past accomplishments.

02

Reminders on pending actions

Reminders on pending actions will help the player achieve their goals in a more consistent way and assist in ensuring compliance, opportunities for success (even if there was some slack during a specific period) and to form habits.

03

Progress reports / game statistics

People want to know how they did and how they compare to the average. Viewing personal performance side-by-side with team benchmarks motivates better performance. It works better than sending out lists of all people ordered by achievement.

04

Personal performance feedback

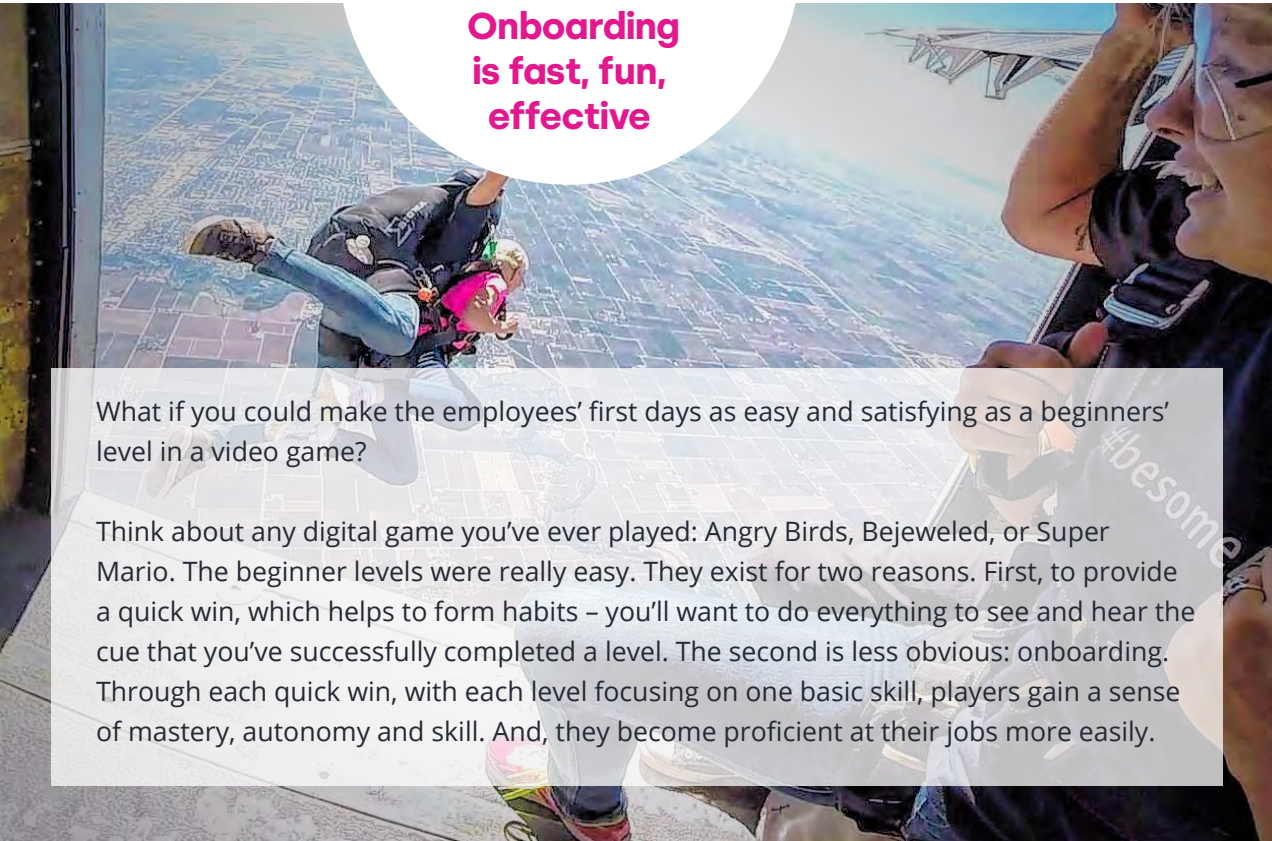
This communication creates a routine of continuous self-improvement.

Most importantly, don't forget to celebrate winners on an individual or team basis.

# Improve onboarding, create a culture of continuous learning

Onboarding isn't only about shrinking the time it takes an employee to get to productivity, and it isn't a fancy name for orientation. It reduces turnover and increases engagement since it takes the edge off those first days on the job.

Onboarding makes employees familiar with their job: keep customers happy and the job functions they need to know to perform their job. It also helps them get familiar with the organization and its aims. All this gives employees a sense of quick success and productivity.



## Onboarding is fast, fun, effective

What if you could make the employees' first days as easy and satisfying as a beginners' level in a video game?

Think about any digital game you've ever played: Angry Birds, Bejeweled, or Super Mario. The beginner levels were really easy. They exist for two reasons. First, to provide a quick win, which helps to form habits – you'll want to do everything to see and hear the cue that you've successfully completed a level. The second is less obvious: onboarding. Through each quick win, with each level focusing on one basic skill, players gain a sense of mastery, autonomy and skill. And, they become proficient at their jobs more easily.



## Onboarding is eLearning

You've prepared training materials. Can't new hires just sit at a table – you'll even offer coffee and cookies – and go through the books? Gamification can do much more than that and with better outcomes.

Whether they're being trained on product specs, communications channels, expressing empathy with customer issues or managing difficult callers, rote completion of learning materials is often partial. Gamification has a surprising ROI: more materials will be viewed, and quizzes and team work can show how the material is applied.





### Competitions aid learning completions

One of the best onboarding methods is to create a learning competition between teams – people at the same table, for instance. They will go through learning and onboarding together, answer questions about training materials, and review each other's answers. Collaboration to increase team learning scores can easily get you to 100% completion of material review and learning tasks.



### Foster a continuous learning culture

Many contact centers now put new hires in the simpler, asynchronous channels (email, social networks) where the response isn't immediate. Over time they'll move into the channels that require more knowledge – answering calls that deal with technical complexity, for example. Breaking onboarding into phases – with gamification – can integrate training into the employee's workday. Using training as a pre-condition – to unlock a challenge, a leaderboard or a team contest – can do wonders for onboarding and on-the-job training. Ultimately, it creates a culture of continuous learning.

# How it all comes together:

## An employee's journey with real-time performance management



### Meet Jane

- 31 years old
- Lives in Garden City, NY
- Works as a customer service rep for a large insurance company
- Has about a year of experience
- Part of a team of 200 customer service reps

### Scenario

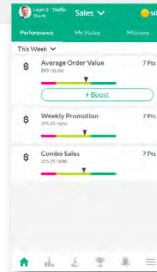
Jane's company started using a real-time employee performance management platform 3 months ago to improve their performance and increase engagement with e-trainings and the company's messaging.

#### IN-APP NOTIFICATION

Commuting to work, Jane gets an alert from the **mobile app** to check her KPI progress.

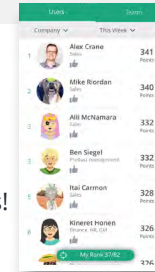
#### PERFORMANCE IMPACT

For each one of Jane's KPIs, she can see her target and her current progress. The closer Jane is to her target, the more points she will earn.



#### TEAM NPS CHALLENGE

Jane got invited to a **Challenge to compete against other teams** for a special badge and team lunch. The team with the most services sold wins! Jane and her team **encourage** each other. At month's end they're on top!

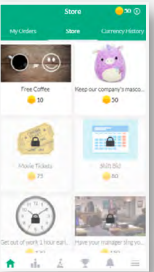


#### ACHIEVEMENT BADGES

This month, Jane broke the company's revenue record. She is **recognized** with a **Sales Expert Badge**. She posts it on the community to **share her success**. Jane feels great about it.

#### TANGIBLE REWARDS

Her points let Jane Level Up and earn Golden Coins. She visits a virtual store to use her coins on a lunch with her manager and a company water bottle. She's motivated to keep achieving and helping her team reach its goals.



#### ALIGNMENT

Jane gets a **personalized, gamified performance dashboard**. She's in a race where cars are powered by points. Points are earned by achieving KPI targets and completing training.



#### POINTS FOR TRAINING

Jane's conversion rate is low so the platform recommends she completes a learning activity that will help her with qualification skills using an interactive simulation. Jane completes it and earns 50 points. Jane finds herself **motivated to take more training and is having fun doing it!**

#### PERSONALIZED NOTIFICATIONS

Jane's been busy and hasn't done as much training as usual. She gets an **automated notification with encouragement** and some tips on making a successful call. She gets motivated and wants to win the next race.

#### SOCIAL RECOGNITION

Today, Sam helped Jane on one of her opportunities. After lunch, Jane checks out the **leaderboard** and sees that Sam is doing well. Jane sends Sam a **Kudos** giving him **social game points** and a special notification for **recognition**.



## About Central

Enterprise gamification has many advantages for contact centers and BPOs. It can promote a balanced approach to metrics, communicate goals and best practices, and encourage learning. Moving beyond competition-only game mechanics, taking care to track performance and provide feedback can improve both corporate results and employee well-being.

[central.com](https://central.com)

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