



Increasing engagement in the contact centre with gamification



In the extreme sports arena that is the contact centre, agents are under constant pressure to perform with speed, efficiency and genuine care. That's a mighty big engagement ask for all but the most motivationally super-fit staff. Or is it?



THE CHALLENGE

Overall performance in our client's contact centre was fine, in general, but the team had potential to improve. Engagement surveys revealed agents weren't entirely clear on core performance measures, weekly feedback was inadequate and overall job satisfaction was mediocre. The score was just 60%. Could gamification push the limits of engagement with a knock-on change in performance?



We found gamification to be a perfect fit for contact centre performance improvement.



THE METHODOLOGY

Engagement is a slippery concept, variously defined by terms like 'employee willingness and ability', 'desire to provide discretionary effort', 'attentive and vigilant' and hundreds more descriptors. But what does it look like in a contact centre? In this particular contact centre? We followed human-centred design principles to define the challenge and guide the solution.





Phase 1: Observation

First, we got to grips with a day in the life of a contact centre agent by spending some time in their workspace. Here, we could observe activity first hand and talk to a variety of teams and individual agents about the high and low points of their work.

Phase 2: Ideation

Back at the office, we compared notes and refined our understanding of the challenges, then floated ideas for a gamification solution. Once we compiled our best thoughts on an effective narrative, the best mechanics and specific measures, we created a prototype.

Phase 3: Rapid prototyping

It's a rare prototype design that gets it all right first time. Equally, it's a rare final release that achieves perfection. So why spend 6 months developing Version 1.0 when you can develop a prototype, test it with a group of actual users, review performance stats and make refinements immediately? Total time for the second iteration - about 1 week.

Phase 4: User feedback

The agent test group offered feedback on our narrative, interface and rules, all of which were included in the next release. In fact, it's the constant flow of user community feedback that adds emotional richness and realism to a gamification platform. Who better to comment on what is or is not engaging than a live audience? And what better proof to bear out user opinion than user stats?

Phase 5: Iteration

Developers got to work making program adjustments based on feedback, fixed bugs, added functionality and enhanced the user experience overall.

Phase 6: Implementation

Six iterations later we had a stable version of the software, ready for full installation and launch, to the entire contact centre.

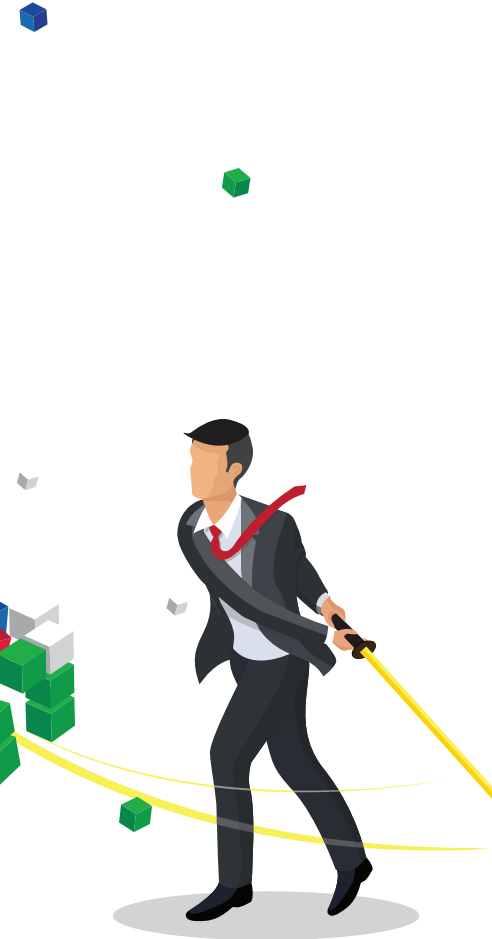




THE SOLUTION

A few stand out elements made the solution a success:

- **Communication.** Agents received focused, timely communications in advance of implementation explaining how gamification worked, the business objective and the personal performance value. We kept the energy going with regular reports on contact centre stats, individual and team achievements, new gamification functionality and system developments.
- **Measures.** Performance measures varied among teams and individuals. Data is the essence of gamification and so allows for micro-level personalisation to lead individuals, groups, sub-groups, and entire teams on a journey to mastery and personal best.
- **Rich narrative.** A complex, compelling narrative structure kept agents engaged and driven to meet the next performance challenge.



THE RESULT

Within the first three months contact centre engagement scores went from 60% to 98%. Gamification delivered the instant feedback which made performance measures very specific and objectives very personal. Plus, it increased awareness of individual fit and how agents added value in the bigger organisational picture. Not least amongst the benefits, gamification challenges provided some mental relief from both the mundane routines and relentless pressures of the job.

