



WHITEPAPER

Getting Started with Gamification:

A Guide for Call Centers



Improving agent engagement is a common objective amongst call center managers. It's no secret that engaged agents tend to be more productive, have better customer service scores and help create a positive work environment.

Call center managers often attempt to improve agent engagement by tracking call center metrics and posting them on a bulletin board for everyone to see. But these efforts are labor intensive and difficult to sustain. How can you expect agents to remain engaged if they don't know how well they're performing? The good news is call centers can formalize a gamification program to make it systematic and optimize its benefits. This white paper explains how.

The Importance of Agent Engagement

The Corporate Leadership Council defines engagement as “the extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organization and how hard they work and how long they stay as a result of that commitment.” Agent engagement benefits everyone. An agent who is more committed to the organization naturally works harder and stays with the organization longer. As a result, the organization benefits from reduced costs due to lower turnover and increased output due to improved productivity. Agents, on the other hand, generally receive improved quality scores and enjoy greater job satisfaction. Unfortunately, agent engagement isn't the norm.

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In 2014, just 28.2% of employees in service roles were satisfied with their jobs, according to a Gallup poll. Compared with other generations, millennials were least engaged at 28.9%.

Improving employee engagement in the call center is challenging due to the nature of the job. Agents spend the majority of their time speaking with angry customers, some of whom may have waited in a long queue and are near the point of abandonment. During busy times, agents go from one disgruntled customer to the next without a moment to recover. All around them, their co-workers are having the same experience. The pay for these positions tends to be low and the turnover is high, making it difficult to establish a culture that builds agent engagement. You can't change the nature of the job, so how do you increase engagement?

Understanding Gamification

The key to engagement is motivating agents to work hard and rewarding them accordingly. This works best when there's a level of competition involved, as in gamification. Gamification is defined by Gartner as "the use of the same design techniques and game mechanics found in all games, but it applies them in non-game contexts." Gamification leverages game design, loyalty program design and behavioral economics to drive behavioral change and successful outcomes – and it works. In addition to call centers for agent engagement, gamification is used for customer engagement, training and education, personal development and innovation management. Markets & Markets estimates that by 2018 the global gamification market will reach \$5.5 billion.

Call center gamification programs involve tracking one or more metrics for each agent, displaying that information where everyone can see it and rewarding agents for meeting specific goals.

Rewards alone can be sufficient for motivating agents to work harder, but posting the information publicly also encourages friendly competition amongst agents. As a result, gamification not only improves individual performance but can also help create a positive, more enjoyable workplace. Agents have a better attitude about their work which, in turn, enables them to deliver better service.

The concepts behind gamification – game design, loyalty program design and behavioral economics are complicated, but implementing a gamification program is simple when you follow these three steps.

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Implementing a Gamification Program

Step 1: Identify What You're Going to Measure

The first step in implementing a gamification program is to identify the metrics you want to track. You can track handle times, attendance, schedule adherence, number of answered calls, quality scores, upsells, revenue... the sky's the limit. However, it's important to strike a balance between the various metrics. For example, pushing too hard on handle times will almost certainly impact customer service levels. Decide what areas need improvement and how you can balance them to ensure that the focus stays on taking care of the customer.

SMART TIP

Start small by tracking the number of answered calls, schedule adherence and/or handle time.

Step 2: Determine Incentives

Next, decide how you'll reward agents for various achievements. While it's ideal to have a budget for your gamification program, it's not necessary to spend a lot. Rewards can range from vacation hours, pizza parties or restaurant gift cards to trips, department store gift cards or electronics. You can even ask agents to submit their ideas. This will provide you with further ideas and ensure that the reward is something your people are willing to work for. Of course, the rewards you choose should be comparable to the achievement and the environment.

SMART TIP

Offer tiers of incentives so that agents are incentivized to work hard over the long term.

Step 3: Embrace Automation

In order to be effective, agent performance must be tracked on a regular basis and the metrics displayed prominently. While call center managers can do this manually, it should be automated to ensure that it's done consistently and doesn't add to an already heavy workload. Automation also tells agents that the organization is serious about rewarding performance and ensures that agents are aware of where they stand at any given time.

SMART TIP

Choose a workforce management solution with gamification capabilities.





Conclusion

People are already accustomed to seeing gamification in various areas of their lives – in health and fitness trackers, grocery store and credit card loyalty programs. Gamification is effective, and a gamification program is an easy way to engage agents in a manner that they're accustomed to. When looking for gamification capabilities, look for a solution that allows you to easily get started and has a roadmap for growth, thereby allowing your gamification program to mature as well.

At USAN, we believe that gamification is only as effective at engaging agents as it is practical to use.

That's why we have a workforce management solution that allows call centers to get up and running with a gamification program in a matter of minutes. Metrics are automatically updated in real-time and displayed to agents every time they check their schedule. In the future, gamification will play an important role in differentiating the workplace and improving customer service. We plan to help customers every step of the way with a strategic roadmap that keeps gamification simple and effective.

To learn more about USAN's Metaphor Workforce and how we can help make your call center workforce management a success, call us at (770) 409-2441.



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ABOUT USAN

USAN helps companies profitably engage customers and deliver amazing cross-channel experiences with the industry's best cloud, premise and hybrid multi-channel customer engagement solution. From traditional telephone interactions to the web, social media and everything between, USAN's portfolio of call center products gives users infinite flexibility in the way they engage customers across channels. In addition to campaign management, back-office integration, and business process automation, USAN's offerings include Hosted IVR, ACD, and Dialers built upon a fifth-generation carrier-grade infrastructure that delivers "five nines" of availability and proven scalability.