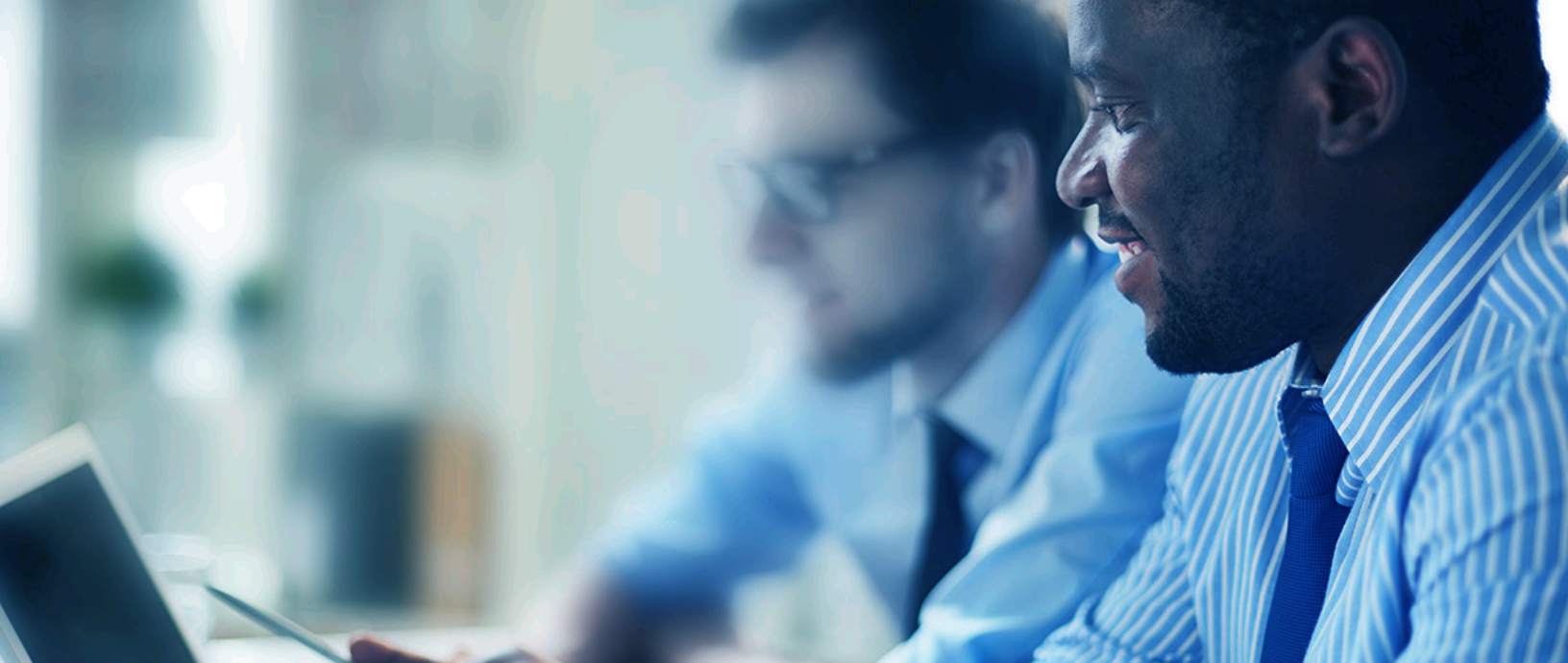


# Gamification

## Best Practices Guide



**VERINT®**



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# Gamification Best Practices Guide

According to a recent Gallup Poll, roughly 70 percent of U.S. employees are disengaged or actively disengaged, which wreaks havoc with a company's turnover rate and productivity, and costs companies between \$450 billion to \$550 billion per year.\* As a result, organizations are constantly looking for ways to get their employees more invested in their jobs.

Gamification solutions have emerged as effective ways to engage employees by using game mechanics and motivational science in business settings. These solutions not only help motivate employees through achievable goals and benchmarks, but they also help recognize employee contributions and reward

them accordingly. Gamification solutions are also valuable for onboarding, training, and performance management. And they've been shown to improve employee engagement, job performance, and productivity.

This document identifies some of these best practices and provides guidance for those organizations that will be integrating a gamification solution into the day-to-day activities of their workforce. Since gamification affects goal setting, communication with employees, levels of transparency and more, it should be aligned with company goals, standards, and management processes.

“As the adoption of gamification solutions becomes more widespread, best practices are starting to emerge.”

\* Gallup 2013 State of the American Workforce Report.



# Eight Gamification Best Practices

## 1. Leverage Objective Data

One of the inherent flaws with traditional management approaches is that managers are naturally biased. After all, managers are human and can't help letting personal opinions about the people they manage affect their reviews. Management is, by its nature, subjective, and the more introverted, less gregarious employee might suffer as a result.

Gamification allows managers and employees to track their progress on performance benchmarks, or key performance indicators (KPIs), based on objective data captured from multiple sources, such as performance scorecards, customer service enterprise systems, CRM systems, Learning Management Systems, desktop analytics solutions, and more. The data is aligned to employee KPIs, such as number of items completed, average handling time, first call resolution, time spent in production, etc., and enables managers to evaluate employees based on real, system-generated data, which can often reveal hidden superstars. This not only gives all employees a chance to truly shine, but also helps them focus on the right behaviors. It also motivates employees who feel as if they haven't been given an opportunity to fairly prove themselves. Providing transparency and objective data helps minimize "gut feel" management approaches, increasing employee trust in manager assessments, and improving engagement.

## 2. Provide Regular Feedback

Humans crave positive reinforcement, especially at work. But they also crave feedback. In traditional settings, employees often have to wait an entire year to get substantive feedback from their managers in a written review. In some cases, if there's an issue with performance, that year-long wait often makes it too late to address the problem.

However, by providing regular, timely feedback—positive or negative—companies can help satisfy an individual's need to know where they stand and help keep them engaged. Employees receive positive feedback in the form of earned points, badges, a spot on the leaderboard, awards, kudos, and more. Tracking personal performance on the gamification platform is, in and of itself, a powerful form of feedback. When employees struggle at work, they tend to disengage. By offering specific feedback on where they can improve and guidance on how to do that (with skill-building and eLearning tools that address weaknesses on-the-spot), employees know exactly what's expected of them and what needs to be done next. This creates opportunities for improvement and the motivation to do better next time. Some gamification solutions allow you to integrate with additional coaching and eLearning tools to further help with performance management and skill-building.

By providing frequent updates on job performance on an hourly, daily or weekly basis, and on an individual and team basis, employees know where they stand and how they can improve, which helps keep them engaged and productive.

“

The greatest improvement in overall employee performance comes from shifting the middle.

”

### 3. Make Each Employee the Hero of the Game

Recognizing only the top performers in an organization doesn't improve employee engagement overall. Even lower performing employees can up their game with the right type of acknowledgement, guidance and support. So instead of ranking all employees in one leaderboard, recognize all employee improvements (even if they are small) against personal and team benchmarks, and make each of them the hero of the game. Also, call out those employees who complete training or learn a new skill as a way to encourage all your staff to do their best, not just the most successful.

Top performers will naturally rise to the top and lower performers will tend to hover around the bottom. But, if you can help the bulk of your employees (the middle of the performance bell curve) improve, even incrementally, it can have a huge impact on your company's productivity. And to do that, you'll want to be all-inclusive and far reaching with your gamification solution.

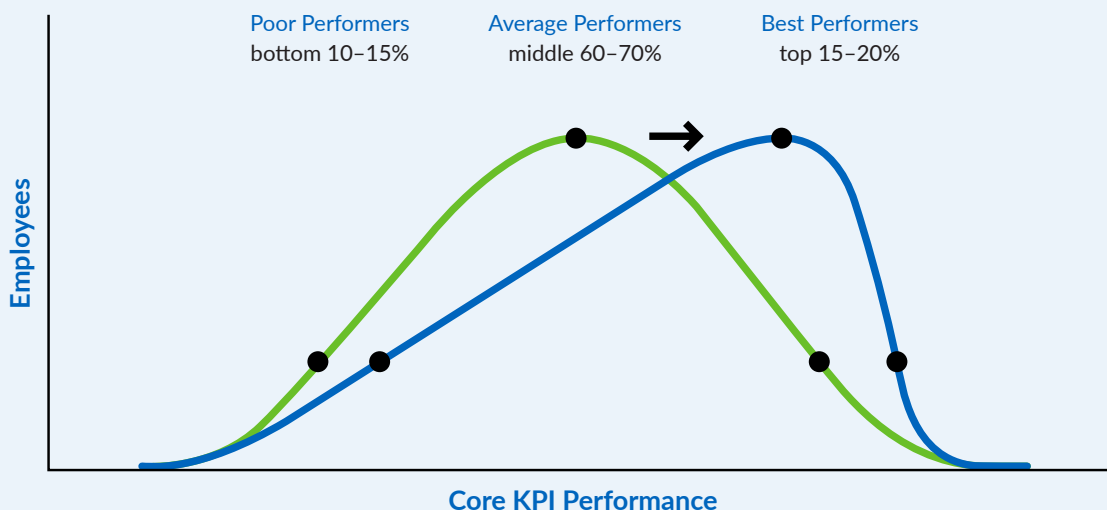
Specifically:

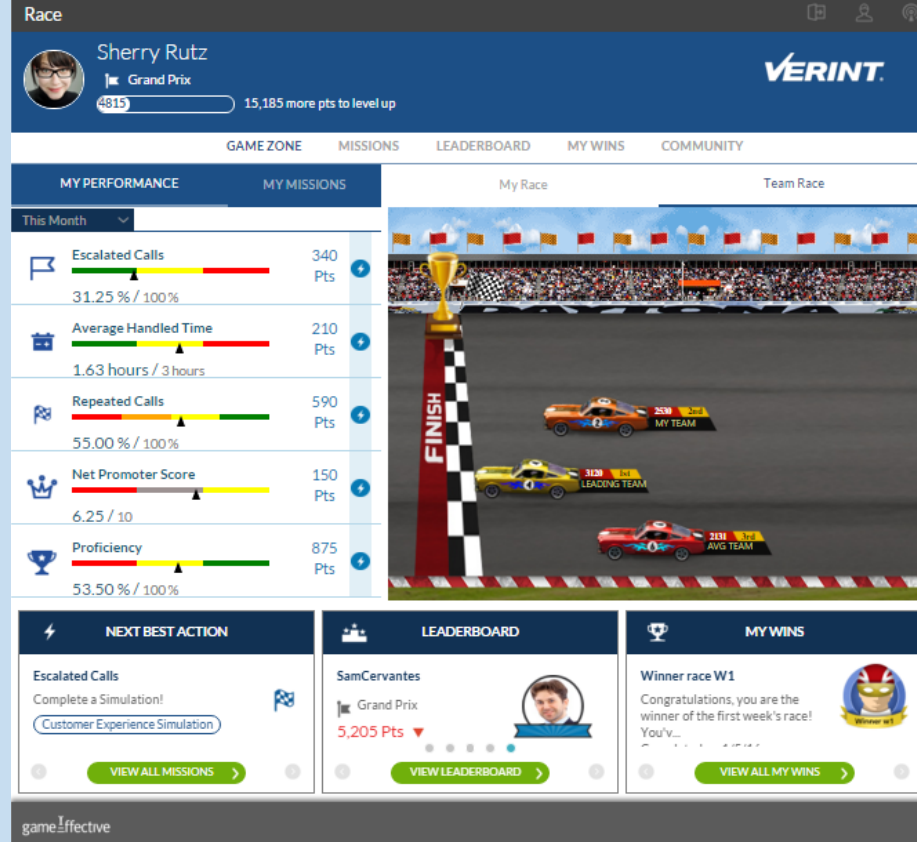
- Feature every user on the leaderboard, not just your top performers. Even if an individual is in 20th place, they should appear on their personal view of the leaderboard.

Showing individuals where they stand, including the employees ahead of them and behind them, humanizes their ranking and gives them perspective.

- Create personal best targets. It can be deflating to constantly be compared to the best of the best. Instead, create “personal best” targets for individuals so employees are motivated to compete against themselves, working against their own performance benchmarks, or against a team average instead of a named competitor. Achieving milestones and targets makes every employee the hero of their own game. Targets can be created by taking a segmented view of employees and setting goals that make sense for that specific segment, driving them to improve.
- Don't pit employees against each other. Comparing employees head to head rarely works to motivate anyone but the top performers. Gamification can help employees see where they need to improve, help them proactively consume additional training or learning activities, and motivate them with positive re-enforcement and recognition to improve their performance. You will want to create situations that diffuse cut-throat competition, not fuel them.

#### Greatest Impact is from Shifting the Middle





## 4. Tie Individual Goals to Corporate Goals

People tend to enjoy working on things they're good at. They feel a sense of pride for a job well done and are naturally more engaged in what they're doing. But they also want to feel like they're contributing to the bigger picture. Organizations should explain how individual KPIs help achieve specific objectives (such as first call resolution) and how they are tied to specific corporate goals (such as increasing customer engagement). As corporate goals change, the objectives or the missions in the game can change to align with these goals.

For instance, if an organization has a new product launch, it can create a campaign or "mission" to upsell existing customers to the new version and provide extra rewards for executing related tasks. Another way is to use "completion" game mechanics to encourage employees to complete learning tasks—and take quizzes and simulations to test their knowledge on the new product. These goals can be part of the game and part of the score. Or perhaps they need to meet new regulatory procedures and complete the same level of learning for compliance purposes. You can also drive behaviors, such as adoption of enterprise software or proper CRM use, tickets, knowledge management systems and more. Employees can see how their efforts are contributing to the organization's goals, helping increase their sense of accomplishment and worth.

## 5. Foster Collaboration

We've all heard the old adage that two heads are better than one. That's because no one can know everything. It is important to encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing among your employees. An efficient way to do this is by tracking contributions to your shared knowledge base or internal community. By acknowledging and rewarding those who help others by contributing to a shared information source, you encourage engagement and interaction with content and posts. In addition, creating games or missions for teams that cross time zones can further help create connections and form bonds around the globe. Over time, you can build a robust knowledge center that can increase collaboration, share expertise and accelerate the onboarding of new hires by providing a one-stop resource for FAQs.

## 6. Keep Your Games Fresh and Engaging

Every organization is different and every individual is different. So creating a gamified world that is familiar to your users can get them up and running more quickly (and keep them engaged longer) than a generic solution. While certain gamification methods work across different verticals, such as leaderboards and rich game narratives, relevance can help your employees feel more connected to your organization's goals. Also, creating new missions and games to reflect changing business priorities and performance initiatives can help maintain interest and participation over time.



## 7. Communicate

Change is hard for most people, so you're likely to get some pushback from your employees when you first roll out your new gamification solution. The key is to communicate, communicate, communicate. In the beginning, communicate the "why" behind the solution, including your organization's goals, as well as the "how"—where the data will be captured, what applications will be integrated, and "what" the rules of game will be.

To encourage daily improvement at work and keep employees on track, launch the game with a "big bang" so that people begin using it and get an understanding of the rules and how it works. Then send frequent and friendly reminders about the game and missions that need to be completed. Create teasers for upcoming campaigns or competitions to get them excited about the next challenge. Give positive feedback for performance—including small improvements and overall progress. Or simply remind users that there are multiple ways to earn points. Constant communication and positive reinforcement will help instill positive employee work habits around your gamification platform.



## 8. Build a Dedicated Gamification Team

Once you decide on a gamification solution, you will want to implement it as quickly as possible. But, you'll need the right people to help you get up and running and moving along smoothly. There are several responsibilities for which you'll want to assign ownership. One person could have more than one role, but expectations and tasks should be clearly defined to help ensure accountability and success. These responsibilities include:

- **Team leader:** He or she is in charge of running the implementation and ongoing gamification solution management, and serves as the focal point for the program.
- **Content person/people:** They develop multiple profiles and regularly (weekly/monthly) refresh game mechanics—quizzes, challenges, missions and KPIs—so they don't get stale and keep users engaged.
- **Technical lead:** He or she integrates and implements the gamification solution, connects systems, and troubleshoots.
- **Communications person:** He or she sends out information about your new gamification system (pre-go-live announcements) and ongoing updates about teasers, new challenges, and new quizzes (post-go-live announcements) to get employees excited.
- **Business unit manager:** He or she acts as liaison to top management to ensure they are involved to aid in the employee behavior change process. This individual best knows the employee pain points and challenges, and needs to stay involved in the implementation.

These best practices, along with a gamification solution like [Verint® Gamification™](#), can help organizations increase employee skills, engagement and collaboration and ultimately improve organizational performance, profitability, and customer engagement.



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## About Verint® Systems

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