

LEARNING MADE EASY



# Gamification Marketing

for  
**dummies**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand



Apply game concepts  
to a marketing plan

Develop and launch your  
first gamification campaign

Analyze your data to build  
marketing strategies

**Zarrar Chishti**





# Gamification Marketing

by Zarrar Chishti

for  
**dummies**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand

## Gamification Marketing For Dummies®

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# Introduction

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**W**hat is gamification marketing? After we had run a successful campaign, one of my clients put it simply: “I cannot believe we just gave our customers the *experience* of a game in a campaign that had nothing to do with games.”

Gamification is when you apply techniques and concepts from games to any marketing campaign. Today, gamification is everywhere — for instance, companies rewarding their employees, teachers encouraging their pupils to compete for higher marks, and even parents rewarding their kids for washing the dishes.

It’s no wonder gamification has worked well for marketing campaigns, too. When any company, large or small, implements gamification properly, the campaign will meet the company’s marketing objectives. Why? Because humans have an innate desire to play and compete.

Gamification marketing can have the following end goals:

- » To build brand awareness
- » To increase engagement
- » To drive conversions
- » To boost customer loyalty
- » To encourage brand advocacy

## About This Book

---

This book is for marketers, not developers.

Most books, blogs, and articles on gamification are written for developers. So, I wanted to write this book for people like my clients — people like you! Reading this book should feel like I’m sitting with you in our conference room discussing how you can implement gamification marketing in your next campaign.

This book covers all aspects of developing, launching, and analyzing a gamification marketing campaign. You don't have to read the book from beginning to end. You can use the table of contents and index to find the subject you want more information on. You don't have to remember what you're reading — there won't be a test on Friday, and you can always return to the book to find what you need.

If you're short on time, you can skip anything marked with the Technical Stuff icon, as well as text in gray boxes (called *sidebars*). This information is interesting (some might say fascinating!), but it's not essential to your understanding of the subject at hand.

Within this book, you may note that some web addresses break across two lines of text. If you're reading this book in print and want to visit one of these web pages, simply key in the web address exactly as it's noted in the text, pretending as though the line break doesn't exist. If you're reading this as an e-book, you've got it easy — just click the web address to be taken directly to the web page.

Finally, within this book, you'll find many examples of gamification marketing campaigns from companies around the world. Some of these campaigns will have ended by the time you read this book; others will still be running. For the ones that are still running, I encourage you to sign up and start engaging with them. Experience what they have to offer and try to relate how each gamification element will work with your own campaign.

## Foolish Assumptions

This book is for people who work in marketing or are responsible for their company's marketing. Therefore, I do *not* assume that you are knowledgeable in game design or game development. However, I do assume the following:

- » You'll be running a campaign for your company.
- » You know the basics of marketing.
- » You're aware of and have experience in playing online games.
- » You have access to your company's analytics program.
- » You have an in-house team or can hire a team of developers and designers.

# Icons Used in This Book

Like other books in the *For Dummies* series, this book uses icons, or little pictures in the margin, to draw your attention to certain kinds of material. Here are the icons that I use:



TIP

Whenever you see the Tip icon, you can be sure to find something that'll save you time or money or just make your life easier (at least when it comes to your campaign).



REMEMBER

You don't have to memorize this book, but when I tell you something so important that you really *should* remember it, I mark it with the Remember icon.



WARNING

I've run loads of gamification marketing campaigns, and I've learned a thing or two along the way. If I can save you from the pitfalls I know are out there, I will! Whenever I warn you about something that could cause a real headache for you and your team, I use the Warning icon.



TECHNICAL  
STUFF

Occasionally, I dig into some information that's a wee bit technical. If that sounds like your cup of tea, look for the Technical Stuff icon. If you'd rather stick to only the things you *need* to know, you can safely skip these tidbits.

## Beyond the Book

In addition to the material in the print or e-book you're reading right now, this product also comes with some free access-anywhere goodies on the web. Check out the free Cheat Sheet for information on how games can change your marketing forever, tips on how gamification campaigns differ, and advice on data security for your gamification campaign. To access the Cheat Sheet, go to [www.dummies.com](http://www.dummies.com) and type **Gamification Marketing For Dummies Cheat Sheet** in the Search box.

# Where to Go from Here

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If you aren't familiar with gamification at all, start with Chapter 1 — a very good place to start. If you already have a good understanding of gamification and you're familiar with the basics, you can probably skip ahead to Chapter 3 and start learning how to kickstart your first gamification marketing campaign. If you're all about the data, head to Part 4. And if you just want some inspiration, check out Chapter 15.

Wherever you start, you'll find information you can use on your next gamification marketing campaign!



# 1 Introducing Gamification Marketing

### **IN THIS PART . . .**

Find out what gamification marketing can do for you and how campaigns can fit with your goals.

Explore the various types of gamification marketing models.

## IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Seeing how gamification works in marketing
- » Identifying what sets gamification apart
- » Determining which gamification elements will work for you

# Chapter 1

# Gamifying Your Marketing Strategy

**T**hanks to the rise of gamification, marketing campaigns around the world have become increasingly more engaging. Gamification marketing campaigns offer your audience an *experience*, not just content.

Building gamification elements into your marketing will give your next campaign a serious advantage. Gamification enhances user experience and increases your audience's engagement. Another advantage of gamification is that your audience will be more inclined to interact with and share your campaign.

The application of gamification elements in business is catching on fast. Gartner research projects that more than 70 percent of Forbes Global organizations will have at least one game-based application, and that half of all companies that manage innovation processes will have “gamified” them. This opens a wonderful opportunity for you and your team to drive specific behaviors and motivate audiences to perform tasks that would require a lot of effort and time in a non-gamified campaign.

In this chapter, I look at how gamification can help with your marketing and then explore how it gives your campaign an advantage over traditional forms of marketing.

# Seeing What Gamification Can Do in Marketing

Using gaming elements in your marketing campaign may sound strange at first. But in my 15 years of gamification and marketing experience, I've found that gamification is a highly effective marketing strategy, no matter which industry a brand is in.

When you gamify your campaign, your audience will have fun interacting with your brand, which means your company will increase its overall engagement. It's a win-win situation!



TIP

The ultimate goal for gamification is to drive your marketing objective to collect big data. I explore this subject in great depth in Chapter 11. But for now, just now that you can analyze big data to glean insights that can lead to better decisions and strategic business moves for your company. So, it's not just about giving your audience a fun experience — it's about gathering data about your audience while they're having fun.

In the following sections, I explain what exactly gamification is, tell you how you can gamify your marketing, and share some examples of successful gamification marketing campaigns.

## Understanding gamification

*Gamification* is simply the process of applying techniques and concepts usually found in games to something outside of games — in this case, your marketing campaign. Chances are, even if you've never heard of gamification marketing before, you've experienced a gamification marketing campaign, whether you realized it or not.

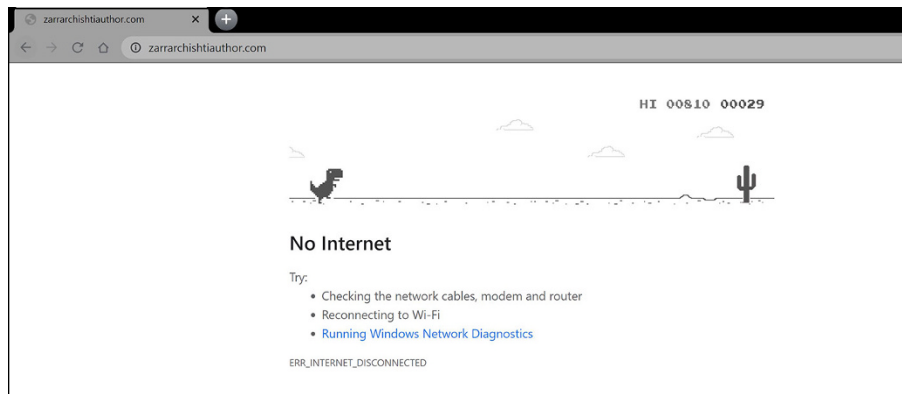


REMEMBER

Gamification can be as simple as incorporating badges or achievement elements (you can find this in the Starbucks Rewards campaign; see Chapter 15). On the other end of the spectrum, you can develop a fully integrated gamification campaign, as when McDonald's and Hasbro teamed up to create the McDonald's Monopoly game.

Adding gamification elements even to a negative situation can make things a little better. For instance, when Google's Chrome web browser can't load a page for some reason, it presents the user with a simple yet highly engaging minigame, as shown in Figure 1-1.

**FIGURE 1-1:** Google added a *T. rex* side-scrolling minigame to its Chrome web browser.



## Gamifying your marketing

Gamification elements can be based off a number of game types that have their own gamification elements, such as trophies, badges, or rewards (see Chapter 2).

In my experience, when marketing content incorporates gamification elements, audience engagement increases. This increase in engagement means that your audience will not only remember your campaign, but also share it with their friends and family on social media. This means you have a bigger potential to increase your brand's awareness to a far larger audience.

When you expose a gamification marketing campaign to your audience, they'll start to think more about your brand, which can lead to a huge increase in news-letter subscriptions and can even lead to purchases of one or more products or services related to the campaign.

The most effective result of gamification marketing is that your conversion rates will spike as audiences become motivated to complete tasks for rewards.

## Looking at some examples of gamification

Chapter 15 is all about real-life case studies of gamification marketing campaigns. Let me whet your appetite with just a couple additional examples from brands you've probably heard of:

- » **Verizon Wireless:** Verizon enjoyed a 30 percent increase in login rates due to its gamification campaign. The company did this by adding leaderboards, badges, and social media integration, among other gamification elements, to its website. With this campaign, Verizon managed to engage with its customers on a much closer level.

More than 50 percent of the site's users participated in the new gamification features. And users who took advantage of the social integration spent 30 percent more time on the site and generated 15 percent more page views than users who used the traditional login method.

» **Volkswagen Group:** Volkswagen invited its consumers in China, one of its largest and most important markets, to help the company develop new versions of the "people's car." Participants were given gamification tools to help them easily design their new vehicle, and they were able to post their designs online. The designs were then open for others to view and rate.

The results were tracked on leaderboards so that contestants and the general public could see how the competing designs were faring. Within ten weeks, the online crowd-sourcing campaign had received more than 50,000 ideas! By the end of the campaign's first year, at least 33 million people had visited the site, and the general public had chosen three winning concepts.

This campaign owes its success to the fact that Volkswagen recognized that participation in a popular business initiative needs to be not only enticing and rewarding but also engaging and fun. Because Volkswagen's marketing team using gamification, the campaign went viral in China.

## Understanding How Gamification Differs from Other Online Marketing Tactics

When I first started consulting on gamification marketing, traditional marketers viewed gamification as just a temporary fad that wouldn't last. Today, gamification is one of the most profitable forms of marketing worldwide, with engagement from millions of audience members.

Gamification marketing can be very profitable and lucrative for your company. Over the years, I've helped and witnessed companies from all industries successfully implement gamification elements into their campaigns.

In the following sections, I walk you through the advantages of gamification and show you how you can take your user experience to the next level.

### Looking at the advantages of gamification

Gamification provides the answer to problems inherent in traditional marketing. Gamification taps into the basic instinct humans have of wanting to play and

compete. It also provides a way for all marketing campaigns to provide real value to their audience and a positive digital experience.

When you use gamification techniques, you'll build brand awareness, drive engagement to your brand, and develop a long-lasting loyalty program.

Here are some of the advantages gamification has over traditional marketing:

» **It enables you to put some fun into your brand or message.** Gamification incorporates elements of fun and competition in any marketing strategy. This is good news for your brand, because your gamification marketing campaign will actively draw people who want to participate, follow, and share your brand's message.

» **It enables you to get better and more meaningful feedback.** Sadly, we're all inundated with requests for feedback from websites these days. Because of this, generating meaningful customer feedback for a traditional marketing campaign is rare. If you rely on traditional marketing techniques, you'll likely have no clear picture of how your audience feels about your company, brand, and campaign.

Gamification helps make the process simple by offering a more engaging and fun campaign that increases response rates. It generates an emotional and immediate response from your audience because they respond without thinking about their answer. So, as your audience is being bombarded with requests for feedback, gamification helps your campaign stand out by making the process simple, seamless, and fun.

» **It generates loyalty.** Your audience is inundated with all forms of noise — special deals, offers, and advertising messages everywhere they look. In order for your marketing campaign to be successful, it needs to engage customers, retain their interest, and develop loyalty. With so many options aggressively competing for your audience's attention, this task is becoming more and more difficult.

Gamification can power effective customer loyalty programs, creating a more valuable and sustaining customer relationship. When done well, gamification loyalty programs have an impressive impact.

» **It personalizes your audience's experience of your brand.** Gamification marketing can create a more personal experience for your audiences during the campaign. Segmentation and personalization are critical to driving conversion, developing trust, and building customer loyalty (see Chapter 9). The more you tailor your marketing to your target group, the more effective your campaigns will be.

You can create custom game experiences targeted to specific audience segments and then develop these game experiences to your brand values. By doing this, your marketing campaign will connect with your audience on a deeper level.

- » **It gives you big data.** *Big data* offers insights from all kinds of structured and unstructured data sources to help improve how companies operate and interact with consumers. Gamification, which allows you to connect with your audience in a more interactive and intimate way, gathers valuable data that can be turned into new insights to create detailed market segments for future campaigns.

Gamification creates a lot of data that your company can analyze, especially when users are asked to sign in via social networks where a lot of your audience's public data can be captured. More interestingly, this data can be integrated to provide context with all the other gamification data you're storing.

I look into big data techniques in greater detail in Chapter 11.

- » **It enables you to influence customer behavior.** Gamification has a major advantage over traditional marketing campaigns when it comes to influencing customer behavior. A gamification marketing campaign engages universal experiences, such as stimulation and motivation.

Influencing audiences to make the decisions you want them to make is the holy grail of marketing. In Chapter 15, I explain how Nissan's use of gamification influenced drivers to use better driving habits, which is exactly the message Nissan wanted to align itself with.

- » **It drives engagement.** If your marketing campaign is engaging, it'll be worth sharing. Gamification can help drive engagement by getting your audience to share your campaign with their family and friends.

Gamification plays on the psychology that drives human engagement — the human desire to compete and improve, as well as wanting to get instantly rewarded. The technology is merely the means to put that psychology to work in the business sphere.

- » **It appeals to a younger audience.** By promising a fun and engaging experience, your campaign will grab a younger audience's attention instantly. Younger audiences have been quick to adopt the newer digital and social technology revolutions. This makes gamification an even more important method of marketing if your campaign wants to appeal to young people. Gamification forces your marketing to practice creativity, which is bound to draw younger audiences.

- » **It increases reach.** No matter what kind of campaign you run, one of the main objectives will always be to gain new customers. It doesn't matter what



market segments you're targeting or which sector your company works in, increasing your consumer reach will always be a fundamental part of your marketing.

The brilliance of gamification marketing campaigns, in which everyday situations are turned into games, is that they're layered and multifunctional, naturally improving both audience engagement and brand reach.

- » **It builds better brand awareness.** By using gamification, you can attract new customers when they notice your branding as part of an innovative and fun campaign. Your audience, old and new, will experience your marketing campaign in a fun and interactive way — an experience that will leave your audience more aware of your company and branding.

By exploiting rewards, points, ranks, leaderboards, and competition, all of which I cover in depth in Chapter 4, you can encourage your audience to follow, share, and like your brand on social media. This way, you can increase your reach and, ultimately, your brand awareness.

## Taking your current user experience to the next level

A gamification marketing campaign will trigger emotions that are linked to positive user experience. These emotions can play a very important role in the way you engage with your audience overall.

Here are some ways using gamification elements can affect your audience:

- » **Giving the user control:** Leading your audience toward your desired marketing goals becomes part of the user journey. Nobody likes to be forced to a destination. Most people like to feel in control. This is the core of what gamification is all about. Your campaign will become more like a “choose your own adventure” campaign, which is what'll make people engage with it (see Chapter 2).
- » **Going on a journey:** Gamification elements can help your audience navigate where they're going in your campaign. People like to know where your campaign is heading and where they are in the process. Consider a simple gamification element like badges: You can see how badges can act as progress maps for your audience. They know where they are in the process and what the next steps are. In a way, these elements help break up the journey your audience is taking, which makes it more manageable and engaging — and more likely that they'll keep going.

- » **Giving a real sense of achievement:** Achievement is one of the most powerful driving factors for your audience to remain in your campaign. Whatever they do in your campaign, they'll want to feel like they've achieved something. If you can make them feel a sense of achievement, they'll keep coming back to your campaign. By using gamification elements such as points or rewards, you can create this sense of achievement at regular intervals.
- » **Setting competitive goals:** Your audience will be competitive by nature. Most of them will want to push themselves further and harder. By applying elements such as leaderboards, you can convince your audience to come back and try again. Competition is the driving factor behind the popularity of the Nike+ app (see Chapter 15).
- » **Exploring:** When you give your audience the freedom to explore, it creates intrigue and excitement, which are two very powerful and positive emotions. Of course, the gamification element should be carefully structured so your audience is neither overwhelmed nor bored. With a combination of levels, strategy, and storyline elements (see Chapter 2), you can transform any campaign into one that allows your audience to feel like they have room to explore inside your campaign.
- » **Giving rewards:** People love rewards. Earlier, I explain the importance of creating a sense of achievement. But this sense of achievement should be supplemented with a tangible reward. Consider the Starbucks Rewards program, in which Starbucks offer rewards after a certain number of purchases (see Chapter 15). Create your rewards in a way that your audience will go out of their way to get their hands on them.
- » **Offering exclusivity:** Your audience will do just about anything for exclusive gamification elements, such as status levels. Exclusivity creates intrigue and curiosity. Your audience will work hard to achieve that status. This is akin to unlocking the secret level on a video game.
- » **Creating collaboration:** Another key driver is community and collaboration. Community elements allow audiences to collaborate in order to achieve bigger and better things than they could on their own. If you can make your audience feel like part of a team within the campaign, you'll create loyalty and a positive user experience.

## Stepping Up Your Current Marketing

Using gamification elements in your campaign can be a great way to increase the amount of engagement with your brand. And brand engagement will go a long way toward influencing an audience's purchasing decisions.

Here are some ways you can step up your current marketing strategy by incorporating gamification:



REMEMBER

- » **Figure out what type of gamification elements might appeal to your target audience (see Chapter 3).** If you don't look at this aspect first, you may not engage them to get the return you're seeking.

Not every gamification model and element will be suitable to your target audience. In fact, you may find that only one or two really resonate with them. Before deciding which ones to use, you need to understand how gamification models perform with various audiences.

If your audience spans a larger demographic, you could combine several popular gamification elements to appeal to a more general audience.

- » **Do your research.** Check out the examples in Chapter 15 to get a sense of how gamification works, what type of rewards companies give, and how the campaigns incorporate companies' marketing objectives.



TIP

Nothing helps shape your own gamification strategy like trying out what others have done before you. See if you can identify best practices that would fit *your* marketing objectives.

The gamification elements that often do the best are social sharing, scoring, and rewards. I've investigated numerous quiz, trivia, puzzle, and skills gamification models before knowing what would work for my client's brand and audience. This more hands-on strategy also provided me with a way to better understand what was engaging based on my *own* reactions.

- » **Think about establishing incentives.** Consider what you want to give away as an incentive. It could be a new product, digital content, or promotional coupons, for example. Whatever it is, you need to offer a clear incentive in order to make the gamification work with your audience. Your audience needs a *reason* to aim toward earning the coveted gold badge.

Research what works with others in your industry or ask your audience what they would like to receive from your next campaign.

- » **Keep it as simple as possible.** A complex gamification marketing campaign may get lost on your audience. Look at the campaign from your audience's point of view. If they can't figure out your gamification elements quickly, they'll move on. These days, people have relatively short attention spans and many distractions, so consider making each achievement or gamification milestone relatively short.
- » **Start thinking about who you'll want to work with for your creative and technical tasks.** Define your ideal time frame for developing and launching your gamification marketing campaign, and set your budget. Gamification

may be new to your marketing strategy, so look to outsource talent that specializes in gamification (see Chapter 5).

- » **Plan your launch.** Your audience cannot play your awesome gamification campaign if they don't know it exists. By using a combination of a planned successful launch, a targeted email campaign, social media promotions, and a researched media outreach, you can ensure your game reaches everyone who would love to play it (see Chapter 9).
- » **Don't be afraid to experiment with your gamification elements.** There is no bible or "best way" to creating gamification marketing campaigns. Gamification elements are designed to personalize the experience and continually increase the challenge involved for your audience. The only way you'll know which element is right for *your* audience is to take the plunge and make educated choices.



TIP

Stay up to date on new gamification elements to keep your marketing strategy fresh for your audience. Subscribe to gamification blogs written by industry experts. Here are a few I recommend:

- » **Gamelearn** ([www.game-learn.com/serious-games-gamification-blog](http://www.game-learn.com/serious-games-gamification-blog)): Gamelearn's blog explains how games can apply to business environments.
- » **Gamification Nation** ([www.gamificationnation.com](http://www.gamificationnation.com)): This blog offers fresh gamification content presented in a fun way.
- » **Gamified UK** ([www.gamified.uk](http://www.gamified.uk)): Gamified UK is a great place to start learning about gamification and game theory more broadly.
- » **Yu-kai Chou** (<https://yukai chou.com>): Yu-kai Chou is an author and international keynote speaker on gamification and behavioral design, and his blog is a great resource.

- » Looking at the game options at your disposal
- » Choosing the right settings for your audience
- » Avoiding common mistakes

## Chapter 2

# Getting to Know Gamification Models

**Y**ou and your team have lots of gamification options and elements. The key is understanding all these options and how they can benefit your campaign.

Be sure to keep your intended audience in mind when you're building your campaign. Understanding your audience will help you make the right choices and, ultimately, the most engaging campaign.

In this chapter, I walk you through the various settings you can make for your gamification campaign and fill you in on some of the mistakes I've come across in gamification marketing.

## Exploring Your Options

When you're just starting to think about developing a gamification marketing campaign, you'll be glad to know that you have lots of options! But the options may be overwhelming. There is no definitive list of all the options at your disposal, but over many years working with many clients, I've come up with ways to make sense of all this information. And that's what this section is about.

Here, I introduce you to the six game types you have to decide on:

- » Classic
- » Enterprising
- » Disrupting
- » User experience
- » Contributing
- » Community

In the following sections, I walk you through each of these game types in greater detail.

## Discovering game types

In this section, I walk you through the six game types that have individual elements that you can choose from. As you read the sections that follow, think about your target audience. First, rank the game types that your campaign associates with best. Then choose the elements that will work best for your audience from each of the game types. For instance, if your target audience is made up of other businesses, you'll probably want to base 70 percent of your campaign on the enterprising game type and the rest on user experience and classic. Alternatively, if your clients are in the 18- to 25-year-old market, you'll want to focus more on the community and user experience game types, because that's what 18- to 25-year-olds are into.

### Classic

The classic game type includes gamification elements that are intuitive. You can add these gamification elements to your campaign and know that your audience will be able to easily engage with it.



TIP

If this campaign is your first gamification marketing endeavor, I recommend using the classic game type.

Here are some elements commonly found in the classic game type (not every classic game will have every one of these elements, so you can pick and choose what works for you):

- » **Strategy:** Strategy involves skillful thinking and planning, in which your audience must plan a series of actions against one or more opponents.