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Business Gamification

FOR
DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Build a successful gamification program
- Entice and retain customers
- Drive employee behavior within your organization

Kris Duggan

Entrepreneur and gamification expert

Kate Shoup

Author and screenwriter



***Business
Gamification***
FOR
DUMMIES®

Business Gamification FOR **DUMMIES®**

**by Kris Duggan, CEO of Badgeville,
and Kate Shoup**



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About the Authors

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Dedication

For Colin and Aidan.

— Kris Duggan

For Heidi-bird, as always.

— Kate Shoup

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— Kris Duggan

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— Kate Shoup

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Introduction

Welcome to *Business Gamification For Dummies*!

Does this sound like you? Your organization has low retention or dismal conversion rates. Your customer communities are ghost towns. Your loyalty program is stagnant. Sometimes, it feels like customers have forgotten about your brand altogether.

Or maybe one of these problems is more familiar: Your employee onboarding process is slow as molasses. Your people don't collaborate. You have an employee churn rate higher than Mt. McKinley. Folks just don't perform — a problem that isn't helped by the fact that your expectations of employees have increased over time, and the systems you expect your employees to use have become more complicated.

The truth is, all these problems stem from a single cause: lack of engagement. In fact, lack of engagement — whether among customers or employees — can really do a number on your organization. On the customer side, customers who aren't engaged tend toward disloyalty; with ample choice, they fraternize with your competitors as much as (or more than) they do with you. And on the employee side, folks just don't perform.

Wouldn't it be the bee's knees if you could find some way to engage these people so they start performing the behaviors you want them to perform? Well, we have good news for you. You *can*. With gamification.

Gamification enables you to drive, measure, and reward high-value behaviors, whether by customers or employees. Game mechanics leverage design and behavioral psychology principles inherent in today's social games to drive and reward specific user behaviors in business environments. You can employ smart gamification elements — such as points, achievements, levels, leaderboards, missions, and contests — to drive desired behaviors on virtually any website or enterprise application. Gamification is less about games and more about figuring out what motivates people to perform — not to mention turning the mundane into the *fundane*.

This book is your entrée into the wide world of gamification. In it, you'll discover how gamification works, what tools it uses, and how effective it can be at improving business for you. Are you ready to get started? If so, game on!

About This Book

Above all, *Business Gamification For Dummies* is a reference tool. You don't have to read it from beginning to end; instead, you can turn to any part of the book that gives you the information you need when you need it. And you can keep coming back to the book over and over. If you prefer to read things in order, you'll find that the information is presented in a natural, logical progression.

Conventions Used in This Book

To help you navigate this book, we include the following conventions:

- ✓ **Boldface** highlights key words in bulleted lists.
- ✓ New terms and words are emphasized in *italics*.
- ✓ Web addresses appear in `monofont`.

When this book was printed, some of the web addresses we mention may have broken across two lines of text. If that happened, rest assured that we didn't include any extra characters (such as hyphens) to indicate the break. If you want to visit a website whose URL has been broken, just type exactly what you see in this book, as though the line break didn't exist.

Foolish Assumptions

When writing this book, we generally assumed that readers were interested primarily in learning the ins and out of gamifying digital properties — websites, apps, and so on — rather than real-world ones. Although we do discuss applying gamification principles to events such as conferences and the like, and we touch on the ways real-world problems can be solved through broader gamification principles, our main focus is on the gamification of zeros-and-ones type environments.

We also assume to a degree that readers are more interested in low-cost or even no-cost rewards — think virtual rewards (which, when used correctly, can be as powerful if not more powerful than monetary rewards) — than monetary-based rewards. (You'll learn more about the various types of rewards in Chapter 5.)

How This Book Is Organized

Business Gamification For Dummies is organized into four parts, and the parts are divided into chapters. This section gives you a quick preview of what to expect from each part so you can turn to the part that interests you most.

Part I: Basic Training: Grasping the Basics

As you embark on your gamification education, you'll quickly discover just how easy it is to get overwhelmed. The focus of this part is to inoculate you against gamification-related anxiety. In Chapter 1, you'll find out just what all the gamification fuss is about. In Chapter 2, you'll delve into the psychology of your users to find out what makes them tick. Chapter 3 is devoted to helping you pinpoint your business objectives, and Chapter 4 helps you determine what behaviors are likely to drive those objectives. In Chapter 5, you'll discover the importance of rewarding users, as well as what types of rewards are available to you. And in Chapter 6, you'll explore the various game mechanics employed in gamification. With these gamification basics under your belt, you'll be primed to use gamification to its fullest potential!

Part II: Decisions, Decisions: Choosing a Gamification Framework

Regardless of whether you want to use gamification to increase customer engagement or encourage collaboration among employees, your next step is to determine just *how* to implement gamification. To aid in this, we've identified six gamification frameworks — holistic programs designed to achieve a specific business objective. Chapter 7 provides you with an overview of each framework — social loyalty, community expert, competitive pyramid, gentle guide, company collaborator, and company challenge — comparing and contrasting them. Chapters 8 and 9 offer more details on each of these frameworks in turn. Although you are not bound to use any one of these frameworks, gaining an understanding of them can help you assemble your own gamification program.

Part III: Getting Your Gamification Program Off the Ground

In this part, you get practical advice on how to get your gamification program off the ground. Chapter 10 provides the 411 on whether to build your own

gamification program from scratch or partner with a provider. You'll also get solid info on which providers are out there, at the ready. In Chapter 11, you discover exactly who belongs on your gamification team; Chapter 12 covers the basics of configuring and deploying your program. Chapter 13 is all about analytics, providing just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what kind of data you can gather with gamification. Finally, Chapter 14 offers a glimpse of where gamification may be heading from here on out.

Part IV: The Part of Tens

In this part, we offer our (admittedly unsolicited) opinions on good books for further reading as well as sites and apps that get gamification right. Chapter 15 features a list of excellent books covering more about gamification and related topics, such as reputation systems, as well as the larger topics of motivation, persuasion, change, habits, and human behavior. If you're ready to expand your knowledge in these fascinating areas, get reading! Chapter 16 offers a look at several sites that feature smart gamification. Oh, and there's also an appendix that shows you how to supercharge your sales teams with gamification.

Icons Used in This Book

Icons are those little pictures you see in the margins throughout this book, and they're meant to draw your attention to key points that help you along the way. Here's a list of the icons we use and what they signify.



Some things are so important, they need to be set apart for emphasis. This icon — like a string tied around your finger — is a friendly reminder of stuff to commit to memory and use over the long haul.



When you see this icon in the margin, the paragraph next to it contains a valuable, practical tip about using gamification.



This icon highlights things you want to avoid. An important part of achieving success is simply eliminating the mistakes; the information marked by this icon helps you do just that.



This icon highlights information that may be interesting if you want to really drill down to another level of technicality, but that can be safely skipped without jeopardizing your understanding of the topic at hand.

Sidebars

Sometimes, we have information we want to share with you, but it relates only tangentially to the topic at hand. When that happens, we put

that information in a sidebar. Even though it may not be mission-critical, we think you'll still find it worth knowing.

Where to Go from Here

Glance through the table of contents or index and find the part, chapter, or section that flips your switch. That's usually the best place to begin. If you're just trying to get a sense of what gamification is about, you'll want to start with the chapters in Part I. If you kind of already know something about gamification and are ready to look at some of your options and how they might work, check out Part II. If you're itching to get going and launch your own gamification program, Part III is ready to step you through the process of building it. If your program is up and running but you're a little unsure about the analytics side of the equation, you'll want to flip right to Chapter 13.

After you've finished reading this book, you'll want to invest some time considering your business objectives, the behaviors most likely to drive those objectives, and the mechanics most likely to drive those behaviors. With that information in hand, you're well on your way to developing a gamification program.

Play on!

Part I

Basic Training: Grasping the Basics

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



"This company really values its customers.
I just leveled up to be their CEO."

In this part . . .

As you embark on your gamification education, it's easy to get overwhelmed. This part is devoted to helping you stave off any gamification-related anxiety. In addition to discovering what all the fuss is about, you'll find out just what makes your users tick and consider what business objectives you want to achieve through gamification. We help you determine what types of behaviors might drive those objectives, and you'll explore the various types of rewards available for your program. Finally, you'll survey the game mechanics common in many programs. With these basics under your belt, you'll be primed to use gamification to its fullest potential.

Chapter 1

Gamifi-wha? Introducing Gamification

In This Chapter

- ▶ Defining gamification and seeing what it does
 - ▶ Answering the question: Does gamification work?
 - ▶ Checking out who uses gamification
 - ▶ Developing a gamification program
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Gamification. Say the word, and chances are the response will be, “Gamifi-wha?” It’s not even in the dictionary — meaning, ironically, that you can’t use it in a game of *Words with Friends*.

The fact is, the term just hasn’t made it to the mainstream vernacular — although we’re confident it soon will. Before August 2010, almost no one searched for the term *gamification* on Google. Starting in January 2011, however, searches have spiked. And according to Gartner, Inc., by 2014, more than 70 percent of Global 2000 organizations will have at least one gamified application. Some experts project that the gamification market will grow to \$2.8 billion by 2016!

In this chapter, you’ll find out what gamification is, how it works, and who’s using it. You’ll also discover the basic steps involved in launching a gamification program.



Although the word *gamification* may be new, games themselves are not. Far from it! Indeed, games have been played for millennia. Witness the 3,000-year-old set of dice unearthed at an archaeological site in Iran, and the fact that people in China have been playing Go since about the same time. Games are an integral part of all societies the world over.

Paging Mr. Webster: Defining Gamification

So what does gamification mean? Simply put, *gamification* refers to the use of game mechanics and rewards in a non-game setting to increase user engagement and drive desired user behaviors. (You'll learn all about rewards in Chapter 5, and game mechanics in Chapter 6.) You can use gamification to increase such things as stickiness, sharing, content creation, purchases, and so on.

Best behavior

In part, the idea behind gamification is to tap into people's innate desire to play games to influence how they behave and what they do. (This innate desire explains why games are big business. In 2010 alone, digital games generated \$25 billion in sales.) It's about making things fun — something that game makers have known for decades, but that the rest of us are just figuring out.

More than that, though, gamification is about tapping into what really motivates people and then using a variety of techniques (discussed throughout the book) to inspire them to perform desired behaviors. As an added bonus, with gamification, the desired behaviors that users perform are recordable — and when you have data, you have an opportunity to act on it.

Sound creepy? Fair point well made. Yes, gamification can certainly be used to promote behaviors in which people might not otherwise engage. But the best gamification programs operate by rewarding people for behaviors they are already inclined to perform or are required to perform, increasing their engagement and enjoyment. In other words, gamification makes things more fun.

If you're feeling skeptical, consider this: If you've tucked a frequent shopper card in your wallet in the hopes of someday getting one free sub, purchased a plane ticket using airline miles, been Employee of the Month, or earned your black belt in karate, you've already seen the effects of gamification. All those are real-world examples of gamification in action. Honestly, if you think about it, this type of gamification is everywhere — and it has been for a while. What's new is that gamification is now being applied to websites and software applications. That's the kind we focus on in this book.



This book strives to teach you to apply gamification techniques to every facet of your business, to help you meet your business goals.