Critical analysis of Gamification with special reference to Recruitment in HR

Author-Dr. Preeti Surkutwar
Co-Author- Dr. Kavita Adsule

Abstract: 'Gamification' is understood as the application of game systems – competition, rewards, quantifying player/user behaviour – into non-game domains, such as work, productivity and fitness.
Concepts of gamification within business have been used for many years. As an example game-concepts have been used in the early 1900s with companies offering free gifts with multiple product purchases. Therefore, the goal of this study is to increase understanding of how enterprise gamification is being implemented on a practical level in organizations.
This paper aims to examine the initiatives by the companies by adopting Gamification as a tool to recruit & engage employees. The information is gained from literature review of key reports on Gamification. In particular, we will analyze how gamification has changed the perspectives of companies looking for the best talents. Gamification can help recruitment processes by reducing costs and time that would otherwise be wasted using the traditional methods.
The paper aims at drawing the attention of the researcher to explore the importance of Gamification in HR practices like recruitment.

Key Words- Gamification, Recruitment, Productivity, Engagement,

1. Introduction:

Emerge of the knowledge of the elements that do attractions to the games and he identifies, inside an activity, task or certain message, in an environment of non-game, those aspects capable of being turned into game or playful dynamics. All this to obtain a special entail with the users, to stimulate a change of behavior or to transmit a message or content. That is to say, creates one significant and motivating experience"

Another definition of gamification is offered by Herger when explain that "gamification is not always about making games; it's about changing behaviors, engaging people, creating habits, solving problems in a gameful way. To achieve this use what we learned from videogames and behavior science and motivation theories. That means we apply game elements and principles to make work less boring and more fun. As it turns out, gamification is quite effective". Finally, we might emphasize Valera Mariscal's definition that is similar to that of Werbach & Hunter, but making concrete in the area of the video games, and he holds that gamification "consists of the use of the approach and elements of the design of the video games of contexts different from the game." After these four definitions offered by different experts we can extract the most relevant information from all of them and summarize that gamification is a tool that uses characteristics of the games to achieve aims in non-game contexts. Gamification applies behavior-motivating techniques from traditional and social games to non-game environments. An effective gamification program actually looks more like a loyalty program supercharged to help achieve real business goals when it is expanded beyond points, badges and leader boards.

Certainly, customers are not the only constituents of any company for who feeling engaged and motivated are important for fostering loyalty. Employees can also benefit significantly from gamification programs that create an environment in which they feel recognized and rewarded for their achievements, even beyond compensation and benefits.

While it's easy to see how you might use gamification in sales to motivate performance — or even in customer support services — to incentivize quick, satisfactory resolutions, the Human Resources function of any business can also leverage gamification techniques to incentivize and reward employees for completing important, but often mundane, tasks.

Organizations are moving onto grab situations and interventions which can help them build their timbers to be successful in this cutthroat competitive world. Today business world has understood the importance of right attitude of people is more important than their technical skills and hence every other organization is looking for ways and means to develop their people having the right attitude, befitting their individual culture. This boundary-less world given many new opportunities for people to grow but has also simultaneously put across enormous challenges to face. These challenges are not to be tackled by having simple some functional or technical knowledge but by their application. Application of knowledge is an outcome of one's attitude. Therefore, it has become imperative for organizations to mould their human resources into talent seamlessly by possible simulations and games. Behavior is shaped by continuous interactions with certain beliefs and absorbing them. This can be very well seen among today's children, by their interacting with the artificial climate of games. This medium can very well utilized by organizations to groom and build their people.

Gamification can very well resolve issues and challenges associated with recruitment and selection process in an organization. Induction which has become very tedious and routine activity in most of the organizations can be taken care of very well through gamification. Games can be very effective for getting people on board quickly with what they need to be doing by giving early guidance and feedback. So is the case with learning and development. The use of games can encourage learning among employees and can effectively help in achieving development of competencies.

The real success organizations can achieve, using gamification is to architect behavior change "primarily with intrinsic rewards rather than extrinsic rewards. Likewise, gamification could be used for transparent career development process with virtual mentoring and badges for activity completion and progression.

With all these benefits on the horizon, a word of caution. Games used should be tailored to the need of an organization. What fits for an organization, may not fit others. For sure, gamification is the solution to many organizational challenges. It is the 'emerging learning methods',

one cannot overlook. HR professionals in particular and organizations, in general, have to adopt this new age tool as quickly as possible to meet their future professional and business needs.

1.1 Need for the study:

Gamification is the process of using game design techniques in a business context or in a non-game context. Using IT, games are created based on everyday routines and tasks which are used in everything from employee training and recruiting to product testing and sales force management. This exposure helps organizations to avoid any real time disaster and at the same time enhancing work experiences to be more engaging, fulfilling, fun and productive.

Gamification is the usage of game-thinking and game mechanics in non-game scenarios such as business environment and processes, specifically in recruitment, training and development, and motivation; in order to engage users and solve problems

1.2 Objectives of study:

1. To study the topic "Gamification in employee recruitment"

2. To learn the effect of gamification in employee recruitment

3. To study the advantages that it can contribute inside the area of human resources.

4. To Study the effect of gamification in retention

1.3 Scope of study:

❖ This study allows brief introduction of tool gamification in hr
❖ This study gives idea about effect of gamification in recruitment.

1.4 Limitations:

❖ It may add unhealthy competition in process.
❖ It may produce bias in recruitment process.
❖ Candidates with old age group may find it less interesting.

2. Literature review

F Oprescu, C Jones, M Katsikitis - Frontiers in psychology, 2014 Gamified workplaces could be a positive and innovative solution to addressing contemporary problems in organizations. Such problems include high levels of stress, reduced sense of community, reduced loyalty and rapid changes in the workforce. To better prepare organizations for the future it may be helpful to identify and understand the potential advantages, disadvantages and areas for future research in relationship to the use of gamification for personal and organizational wellbeing. An analysis of research literature across disciplines in combination with expert opinion identified gamified workplaces as a promising strategy for promoting wellbeing. Furthermore, this paper proposes a set of 10 principles (I PLAY AT WORK) that may support gamification efforts. In addition to the value of mapping the present for the benefit of the future, there is also considerable value in reshaping core ideas related to the workplaces. Gamified workplaces can provide opportunities for a more vigorous and strategic inter-disciplinary research agenda that can stimulate investments in the area.

Ch. Prof. Andrea Pontiggia Camilla Perinot 2014 / 2015 the purpose of this work is to highlight the importance and the widespread development that gamification has had in the field of human resource management. In particular,this study analyze how gamification has changed the perspectives of companies looking for the best talents. Gamification can help recruitment processes by reducing costs and time that would otherwise be wasted using the traditional methods. This study explains an interesting idea to support the recruitment process developed through gamification.

Josiah J. Eikelboom, 2016 The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a correlation between the personal indicators of gamification users, game preferences, and workplace engagement. A three-part survey was deployed through an online, opt-in gamification platform in order to gauge individual user preferences. A total of 53 users responded to the survey, which consisted of a demographic questionnaire, the Big Five Inventory (BFI) personality assessment, and a qualitative questionnaire focused toward game style preferences and workplace engagement. Qualitative responses gave weight to data trends and aided in linking gamification preferences to participant indicators. As the data was analyzed, certain trends emerged among the responses. Participants in general proved to be more open to experience yet also more introverted. These two personality factors also linked to preferences in certain game types, such as narrative and cooperative play. Overall, users indicated that gamification aided them in their workdays by keeping them engaged in otherwise unengaging environments, and by heightening their effectiveness, motivation, and efficiency when their workplaces were otherwise engaging. The implications of this is that organizations may be able to utilize targeted gamification builds in order to better engage subsets of employees through preference-driven utilization.

Sandra Gallén Aledo 2015/2016 The aim of this study is to analyze the tool of the gamification and, concretely, the advantages that it can contribute inside the area of human resources. This mechanism, which is taking force inside the organizations in the last years, can help the businessmen to solve their problems of motivation and engagement of personnel thanks to the application of technologies of games in contexts that are not game, such as the case of the business.

Pia Höglund 2014 The thesis broadens the understanding about the future use of gamification in training activities at organization. The focus is to understand how the employee engagement, motivation and interest for training activities can be influenced and increased by the use of

gamification. The thesis follows a constructionist and grounded research design. The empirical data is collected through seventeen interviews with training consultants, game designers and human resources representatives as well as observing two different training situations.

Michael B. Armstrong, Richard N. Landers and Andrew B. Collmus 2016 Game-thinking is beginning to appear in a wide variety of non-game contexts, including organizational support settings like human resource management (HRM). The purpose of this chapter is two-fold: 1) to explore the opportunities for game-thinking via gamification and serious games in HRM based on current and previous HRM literature and 2) to identify future research areas at the intersection of game-thinking and HRM. Prevailing HRM theories will be applied to the use of game-thinking in different sub-fields of HRM, including recruitment, selection, training, and performance management. The purpose of this chapter is two-fold: 1) to explore the opportunities for gamification and serious games in HRM based on current and previous HRM literature and 2) to identify future research areas at the intersection of game-thinking and HRM. Prevailing HRM theories will be applied to the use of game-thinking in different sub-fields of HRM. Empirical research will be considered when available, although the current empirical literature on gamification is sparse (Hamari, Koivisto, & Sarsa, 2014). Where empirical studies of game-thinking in HRM are absent, case studies of organizations using serious games and game elements will be discussed.

3. Research Methodology-

The Research in this paper is based on Secondary data Analysis. The Data was obtained from Research Papers, Dissertation, Articles, Blogs, Internet Sources and even some doctoral thesis.

4. Data Analysis & Interpretation

Considering the paramount importance covered by the recruiting activities, the value of managers' role during the analysis and the selection of new employees, and the delicate consequences that a good or a bad choice can rise, organizations are trying to improve and perfect their methods, in order to reduce mistakes but also the waste of resources.

Now, the frontiers of the recruitment strategy are changing and we are going toward something completely new. The more innovative and big corporations, which have the necessary resource to invest on recruiting activities are now overtaking e- and social recruitment, to enter a new world.

The appropriate word to say when "gamification is coupled with recruitment it is often referred to as "*recruitainment*".

4.1 Knack Games

Knack is a tiny start-up based in San Francisco, which provides serious games able to match people with opportunities. The informal word "knack" means talent or special skill or ability, and here is the thorough idea of the organization. In fact, its mission is to find the best talents helping them understand their abilities and helping companies to identify ideal workers. Games have not been realized for enjoyment, but are used to collect data about people's capabilities.

Knack has developed these games also because the market for talent is becoming more and more competitive and, to report some forecasts, "by 2020, the McKinsey Global Institute estimates that we will have a global shortfall of 40 million college-educated workers, as well as a deficit of 45 million workers with secondary-school educations and vocational training in developing economies".

Thanks to the mechanics of its games, Knack is able to "apply analytics to large sets of data so that companies can better understand the combination of skills, knowledge, and traits that characterize their most productive employees and hire accordingly".

4.1.1 How it works:

It is not possible to understand the deep mechanisms behind the company *Knack* because the idea is covered by secret, which enables them to keep it new and unique. However, the basic concept is that "in every Knack game, each decision is recorded and transformed into data by special sensors that enable algorithms to process player behavior". While people are playing, the algorithms behind games are able to track the personal skills and abilities. It is not clear how these algorithms work, but the company team "has expertise in behavioral and cognitive neuroscience, big data and data science, computer science and software engineering, game design, and user-experience design" who help them analyze data efficiently and with scientific rules.

Before starting with its procedures, we need to explain that Knack identifies what it calls "knacks", which can be defined as the various parameters describing the particular qualities. To give some examples, they refer to creativity, teamwork, critical thinking, as well as problem solving, tenacity or others. These knacks have

It has been divided into three different groups considering the "field" they cover. They can be distinguished among the outright Knacks, Powerknacks and Superknacks.

- mindsets, which are the beliefs and perceptions about yourself and the world around you;

- decision-making, which represent how you evaluate options and make choice;

- social and emotional intelligence, which refer to the aptitude towards relationships;

- character and leadership, which are how you carry yourself and influence others;

- thinking, which represents how you face problems and how you reason;

- and finally, creativity, which represents your ideas and innovation. Powerknacks indicate the competencies and represent a sort of subgroup of knacks, while the Superknacks are the educational fields indicating one's potential for success.

4.2 L'Oreal

L'Oreal Group is one of the most innovative companies, helping applicants challenge themselves. "L'Oreal has been a long-time leader in recruitment. Since 1993, the Group has produced a dynamic portfolio of international business games that encourage young people to realize

their potential, develop their professional skills and discover career opportunities having fun". What was developed in 1993 is the Brandstorm, which is a "unique business competition for students to unleash their creativity and apply ground-breaking ideas to one of L'Oreal's international brands and distribution channels".

In parallel with Brandstorm, TMP, which is a digital brand authority, was asked to provide a gaming platform to find out the best talents in the world to fulfill the company's goals. They developed the game *Reveal by L'Oreal*, which is "a unique experience for college students of all academic disciplines preparing for the working world: they discover what a worldwide business is all about, and assess themselves on real-life business challenge".

Therefore, we can conclude that L'Oreal Group has developed two different tools for talent hunting, which are organized and developed differently. The fact that they maintain both instruments means that gamification is not referring only to serious games like Reveal, but dynamics and mechanics beyond Brandstorm are considered game-based too.

4.2.1 How it works:

The first thing to highlight is that both Reveal and Brandstorm are pointed towards young people. Especially, those who are in the last two years of college. In fact, L'Oreal"was elected the most attractive employer by 130,000 students from the world's best universities".

Reveal game is presented as a serious game available on the internet. It lets people "experience the story of a brand new product launch process, from the birth of an idea until the launch on the market"[196]. In this sense, we can say that once you register, it is presented as a sort of video game in which people play for enjoyment, but understanding the multiple aspects of a new product launch. It means that the game is useful because, independently from the eventual hiring, it can be considered a training tool, which introduces students to the working environment of the company.

It represents a double advantage. From the point of view of the organization, they are able to understand people's emotional intelligence, creativity and personal capabilities so that they can recruit the best talents from the top universities. In fact, it has been reported that between 2010 (year of birth of the game) and 2012, the Group recruited 200 young talents from the over 100,000 participants. From the point of view of participants, it is a way to understand the personal attitude towards work and which is the most adapt position for them.

Source: *Herger (2014)*

Through the game, students have the possibility of winning a trip to Paris to watch the operative departments and to understand how they work, but especially to have a job interview.

Brandstorm is more appropriately considered a business game. It is structured as a competition among groups of young students in the last two years of university. The aim of the game is to register and participate practically to the realization of a project, which is different every year. It offers "the students a pedagogical and professional experience and the opportunity to take the role of an International Marketing Director within the beauty products industry".

Among many, one main difference between these two tools is the duration. In fact, Brandstorm has an annual frequency and has a predetermined duration, with a deadline within which the team must complete the phases to go on. On the other hand, Reveal has all year duration and could also be played only for enjoyment, because it is the organization that directly selects people and decides whether to hire them.

4.3 Inner Island

Inner Island is the first practical case of gamification for recruitment in Italy. It is the gamification tool proposed by MSC Cruises, which provides a mix of games, quizzes and a business case, which put people to the test by solving practical but virtual situations. It was devised in February 2015 to find out good students and young graduates.

Like each gamified solution for recruitment we are analyzing, the aim of this tool is to recruit the most appropriate candidates for vacant job positions. The company cares about the personal abilities and skills, which distinguish each person from the crowd. In this case again, the name does not seem casual. In fact, the word *island* certainly refers both to the fact that MSC is a group building cruises, which sail through the sea and connect different areas of the world separated by the sea, and to the fact that the world is full of new islands that can be discovered. On the other hand, the adjective inner refers to the interior and hidden sphere, which characterizes each person and which is

unique and innate. Indeed, the purpose of the game is to find out the hidden islands, which represent the most prepared talents in the world, immersed and scattered in the sea of people.

4.3.1 How it works:

Inner Island is an application available on the internet. Again, it is connected with the social network Facebook, so it is easily reachable by everyone. It is divided in three phases, which consider an initial quiz with various questions, followed by three serious games, and finally, you have a business case to carry out.

"Thanks to Inner Island, you can discover your inner potential and express you talent and passions: you will have the chance to submit your ideas and interpretations about key aspects of holiday and cruises".

Before starting, the game needs to obtain some information, to understand your provenience, your possibilities of working in a country, but especially your age because this tool was born to look for young people between 18 and 25 years old.

Registering directly with Facebook, the system acquires the necessary information and you can skip a passage.

At the end, the journey among all the three phases will enable the organization to understand which are the eight best candidates and will hire them within the company for a paid internship, among the headquarters in Italy, Spain and France.

Findings & Suggestions:

- The most important advantage is that gamified solutions for recruitment help HR departments not to waste their time analyzing the numerous candidates, of whom 80 percent has not the right qualities.
- It gives the possibility of avoiding discrimination and subjective judgments. The fact that games analyze only the performance of players without knowing anything about their gender, age, race, education or aspect, makes them the most objective way to understand intrinsic strengths. It is objective at such a point that it avoids any kind of bias.
- At the same time, "a person doing the interview is always subject to their own biases about the candidate the person being interviewed will respond with answers he/she thinks the employer wants to hear, and the overall experience for both parties is subpar". We can say that gamified solutions for recruitment make hiring processes more meritocratic from candidate point of view, and for this reason, they can instill more confidence and trust compared to the other ways analyzed in the third chapter.
- We have thought about is that probably these tools are young-people-directed. In fact, for younger generations, it is normal to feel comfortable with videogames, but maybe, for people of older generations, who have not grown with all these technological tools, it could be very difficult to demonstrate also the personality traits. These apparent inabilities could be due to the lack of experience and practice with tablets or smart phones. However, we consider this problem easy to overcome because as time goes by, everyone will be inevitably obliged to keep up with the times.
- **Knack games** are designed with the serious game format. Each game is played online, and applications are connected with Knack App, which provides information about data analysis. The design is based on an algorithm, which collects and analyzes data received while candidates play.
- **L'Oreal Group** has developed Reveal and Brandstorm competition. **Reveal**'s design is in the serious game format, because the player acts as an avatar within a simulated organizational environment. In fact, the context is virtual and represents the L'Oreal Company's landscape where the candidate acts as if he/she was a realistic employee trying to carry out an innovative product. **Brandstorm** is designed as a well-structured business game with defined phases. The context is the real background of the university (or college) where students start their project, and in a second moment, it is the reality of L'Oreal organization. In this case, the context is not virtual because participants live a realistic experience.
- **Inner Island** has again the serious game format, in the first part, and then it becomes a competition among individuals. The experience lived comprehends an initial questionnaire, a series of mini-games and finally the realization of a project. The context is online during the quiz and the mini games, and finally they need to realize a case to be presented with a video. In this case, it is not virtual because there is no realization of a context similar to a potential reality.

Conclusion

- The aim of this work has been to study on gamification, its possible applications in the managerial world, the benefits that it can bring to the organizations and to its components, and the analysis of some cases of success of the same one, both to general level of the entities that decide to apply this tool, as of the companies that decide to do it in the area of human resources.
- In some situations, like Knack, Virtuoso, Reveal, Ace Manager and Multipoly, it is not important to achieve the goal. Serious games are designed so that the mechanisms analyze the strategy used by the player and not only results. Here behaviors are fundamental. In fact, thinking about what we studied about gamification, its objective is changing people's behaviors.
- Instead, gamified solutions for recruitment mix psychometric research, with neuroscientists' and mathematicians' interventions to create algorithms and other rules able to collect data deriving from game dynamics, and to transform them in descriptions of personal characteristics, not only in terms of abilities, knowledge and capabilities, but especially in terms of emotional, relational and sentimental intelligence.
- Considering that the advent of gamification is new, we do not have data numerous enough to say if it really works and if these judgments about people are absolute. In fact, there are no proofs of the fact that there are no parameters that could change the tune.

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