

Winning the Engagement Game: Enterprise Gamification in Utilities

WHITE PAPER

Abstract



Gamification for social and commercial benefits is gaining traction in our daily lives. Think frequent flyer programs, loyalty rewards, bonuses, and others, wherein brands reward customer loyalty with tangible benefits such as miles, coupons, or freebies.

The gamification industry is projected to grow to \$30.7 billion by 2025 at a rapid compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 27.4%¹. Enterprises are increasingly leveraging this trend to influence consumer behavior, motivating them and establishing deeper engagement. Additionally, the proliferation of digital technologies such as mobility, cloud, artificial intelligence (AI), and analytics have further propelled the potential of gamification, making it one of the most sought-after strategies to drive business transformation.

This paper explores the advantages, use case scenarios, and success stories of enterprise gamification in Utilities and how it can help firms respond effectively to changing market conditions.

¹ Markets and Markets; Gamification Market - Global Forecast to 2025; March 2020;
<https://www.marketsandmarkets.com/Market-Reports/gamification-market-991.html>

Enterprise gamification: Redefining customer and employee engagement

Enterprise gamification takes different aspects of gaming such as engagement, transparency, challenge, and fun, and applies them to meet the real-world objectives of an organization. Every aspect of organizational activity, from routine tasks and learning modules to customer interactions and sales, can be gamified by combining innovative ideas and creativity.



Figure 1: Game cube - Leveraging human psychology in enterprise gamification

Gamification can promote desired user behavior across existing business applications such as collaboration platforms and self-service portals. This requires focusing on key aspects of human psychology such as social pressure, significance, achievement, ownership, availability, and volatility (The Game Cube Figure 1). In addition, with utilities increasingly embracing digital technologies such as big data and analytics, cloud, mobility, AI, and social media, enterprise gamification holds significant potential for them. Here's how:

- **Big data:** Utilities have a huge influx of data from sensors, customer relationship management (CRM) and billing systems, smart meters, social media and other external sources. Organizations can use this real-time data to drive gamified platforms to make the experience richer and more engaging.
- **Analytics:** Customer data (structured and unstructured) can be analyzed to determine consumption, CO2 footprint and community impact, while delivering personalized playing experiences on a gamified platform.

- **Cloud:** Data processing and presentation requires faster and secured platforms while maintaining cost. Gamified platforms can be hosted on pay-per-use infrastructure, thereby reducing total expenditure (TOTEX).
- **Mobility:** Mobile applications can be gamified to improve adoption, usage, interaction and experience. Mobile based gamification platforms can also access information like location, screen time, camera images, etc. to further enhance and personalize the game experience.
- **Artificial intelligence:** Designers can add self-learning features and ways to change the course of the game based on how the user is playing. AI-based games can provide real-time tips on location and weather-based suggestion for energy savings, personalized rebates based on usage and bill payment options based on customer preference.
- **Social media:** Social media can be used to promote enterprise games, enable collaboration among users to share energy saving ideas, promote leading contributors to a cause, highlight sustainability ideas within a community and allow players to showcase their in-game achievements. It is also an efficient tool to source data for generating player personas.

Gamification in the utilities industry: Six key use cases

The time is ripe for the Utilities industry to explore enterprise gamification to increase consumer awareness, build customer relationships, and drive loyalty. A well-designed game can enable Utilities to better engage their internal and external stakeholders and derive both tangible and intangible value, as shown in Figure 2. Enterprise gamification makes 90% of employees more productive, 30% experience higher motivation to be at work, and 91% enjoy a better work environment². In today's world, when majority of the workforce is operating remotely (400% increase in the last decade³), the online retail market is growing annually at 32% on average⁴ and time spent on mobile apps has doubled in the past four years⁵. It is critical that companies make their interaction channels more engaging and enriching.

² Engagement Strategies Media; Survey: Gamification Improves Work Experience for 91% of Employees; <https://enterpriseengagement.org/newswire/content/8468367/survey-gamification-improves-work-experience-for-91-of-employees/>

³ TechRepublic; How remote work rose by 400% in the past decade; January 22, 2020; <https://www.techrepublic.com/article/how-remote-work-rose-by-400-in-the-past-decade/>

⁴ Digital Commerce 360; US ecommerce sales rise 25% since beginning of March; April 1, 2020; <https://www.digitalcommerce360.com/2020/04/01/us-ecommerce-sales-rise-25-since-beginning-of-march/>

⁵ Mobiloud; People Spent 90% of Their Mobile Time Using Apps in 2019; <https://www.mobiloud.com/blog/mobile-apps-vs-the-mobile-web/>



Figure 2: Value quadrant for utility players

Let's explore six key use cases where gamification can produce better results for utilities as compared to the traditional approach:

- Promoting new services:** Utilities can offer points and badges to customers for using new services. For instance, customers can earn badges for adopting smart metering, earn points for leveraging mobile apps for self-service, or get rewards for engaging with the utility provider for other value-added services.
- Increasing awareness about conserving energy and water:** Utilities can create self-running game platforms to track how much energy or water their customers are saving. These platforms typically use smart meter data and enable the customer to track their performance over time. They can also enable peer comparisons, challenges and quests for customers to complete individually or as a community.
- Enhancing employee collaboration:** Organizations can promote collaboration by rewarding employees for using the gamification platform frequently, helping others by sharing best practices, success stories or resolving their problems. It can also promote field collaboration where employees can request peers for remote or on-site help. Employees can earn points and badges for increased collaboration and rewards for sharing tools and logistics.
- Improving performance at the contact center:** Organizations can create challenges and quests based on real-time performance of contact center agents. Customer feedback call handling time, success in resolving problems or sharing of knowledge with peers can be among the key performance indicators (KPIs) tracked by the gaming platform. By winning challenges, employees can earn badges and points, thus motivating them to excel further.

- **Promoting e-learning adoption and uptake:** E-learning platforms optimize operational costs and maximize employee output. Gamification can help Utilities promote the adoption of such platforms and reward employees with points and skill badges for every e-learning course completed. These points and badges also allow organizations to identify highly skilled resources and subject matter experts (SMEs).
- **Engaging customers in operations:** Customers can not only be a source of revenue, but also add value to the utility's operations – from reporting problems in the field to fixing their own problems. To encourage such customer initiatives, utilities can build gamification techniques within the apps or platforms already used by customers. Organizations can effectively motivate customers by not only guiding them through these best practices, but also rewarding them for the value they bring by adopting the best practices.

Leading utilities such as National Grid, Commonwealth Edison (ComEd)⁶, Washington Gas, E.ON, DTE Energy, and Consumers Energy have already adopted gamification to influence consumer behavior. While some companies are leveraging gamification to motivate their customers to save energy and in turn earn tangible rewards, others are using gamified platforms to track behavioral norms and compare themselves against peers. All of these initiatives are aimed at encouraging consumers to evaluate and optimize their energy consumption. The use of simple games enables these companies to better engage with their customers and guide them in maximizing energy efficiency in their homes.

Making the right moves in the game

As utilities increasingly embrace gamification platforms, they need to consider these key factors:

- Identify a purpose and clear set of objectives intended to achieve the ultimate goal.
- Define a process and then gamify it.
- Define company values and culture clearly and ensure that any gamification is in accordance with the culture.
- Identify appropriate rewards and recognition that are likely to resonate with users; understanding what motivates players to perform better, both individually and as a team.
- Communicate the results through the right channel at the right time, and in the right manner.
- Track the right metrics using the right set of data.
- Focus on the long-term gains of the organization and plan implementation activities accordingly.

⁶ CIO; Gamification Helps Utility Companies Change Customer Behavior; October 27, 2014; <https://www.cio.com/article/2835752/gamification-helps-utility-companies-change-customer-behavior.html>

Utilities can also take a cue from organizations in other industries that have successfully leveraged gamification to drive better business outcomes, as well as employee and customer engagement, as listed below:

- Fitbit and Strava have revolutionized the fitness sector by smartly adopting gamification. Using smart devices and mobile phones, these platforms are making life a 'sport'. Users share data related to movement, location, exercises, achievements, calorie consumption, and more. This is encouraged by intrinsic and extrinsic rewarding mechanisms that include community challenges, regular feedback, badges, social boosting rights, and more.
- Salesforce increased cybersecurity awareness among its employees through a gamified training campaign. After the training, the company observed that 50% of users were less likely to click on a phishing link, while 82% were more likely to report the same.⁷
- Retail companies use gamification to boost loyalty and increase sales by engaging users in community competitions, awarding badges based on feedback and referrals generated, putting timers on rush sales and offering cashbacks.

Driving sustainability in utilities through gamification

In today's highly connected era, Utilities should consider innovative ways of leveraging gamification in combination with data from internet of things or IoT-driven smart grids, smart cities, infrastructure sensors and other connected devices to improve outcomes for themselves and the planet. Enterprise gamification can provide the necessary impetus for a customer to embrace green energy, adopt self-service initiatives, or use a new solution, device or technology. For instance, activist Philippe Cousteau, in conjunction with the University of Virginia, has developed a multiplayer online game to simulate the impact of human activity on the health of the Chesapeake Bay (the largest estuary in the US). In the UVA Bay Game, players assume the role of key stakeholders — ranging from fisherman to regulators — to learn systems-thinking and collaboration.⁸

With time and attention becoming increasingly scarce and resources turning precious, stakeholders are likely to be attracted to more rewarding activities and opportunities that can help them accomplish and socialize more. Enterprise gamification offers this. It could well be the next game changer that helps utilities better engage their stakeholders to maximize returns and stay ahead of the game.

⁷ Computerworld; *Boost your security training with gamification -- really!*; July 16, 2014; www.computerworld.com/article/2489977/security0/boost-your-security-training-with-gamification-really.html

⁸ Medium; *How Green Gamification Can Save the Planet and the Utilities*; November 5, 2018; <https://medium.com/nyc-design/how-green-gamification-can-save-the-planet-and-utilities-8a33b79eb743>; Accessed November 2020

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