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HOW GAMIFICATION TAKES YOUR APP TO THE NEXT LEVEL

A deep dive into how gamification works as an effective strategy for your mobile app

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In 2021, the value of the global gamification market stood at around $11.94 billion, with experts estimating an increase of almost $20 billion in the coming years. Gamification has become a worldwide phenomenon across industries, with many brands and apps leveraging this trend for their own business objectives.

Despite this, many still do not understand what gamification is exactly–and why it has become so popular.

" increase of almost $20 billion in the coming years "

What is gamification?

Gamification was first defined in a 2011 academic paper as "the addition of game elements to non-game activities". Since then, this definition has expanded to include the use of games in non-game contexts. This practice creates a game-like environment that facilitates excitement and a sense of achievement for people to complete certain tasks or take certain actions.

With this, brands have been using gamification in their apps to boost engagement, encourage interactions, increase profits, and more.

What separates gamification from games?

On the surface, gamification and games may seem interchangeable–both involve game elements and mechanics and encourage people to engage with them. The key difference between the two lies in their purpose.

Games are created for the sole purpose of enjoyment and fun for those who play them. On the other hand, gamification goes beyond entertainment by using these elements to drive motivations in line with your overall business goals.

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Why is gamification so popular?

The biggest reason why gamification is so popular is that it works. Gamification easily creates additional value for your mobile app, giving your users more reasons to come back, participate, and spend. This "stickiness" is what helps apps retain their current user base and grow it further.

With its rising popularity, it's no surprise that research on gamification's effectiveness has begun to emerge. Recent studies from different experts and institutions came out with positive findings, such as:

Gamification has helped brands increase customer interactions by 30-40%. (Deloitte)	A fully-engaged customer can net an average of 23% premium in terms of profitability. (Gallup)	Companies that used gamification saw a 700% increase in conversions over those that did not. (The Octalysis Group)

What does gamification look like?

With its expansive definition, gamification can come in different forms. The type of gamification your app needs will depend on the nature of your app, the demographics of your user base, and your overall business objectives. Below are some examples of how gamification can be deployed:

01 Adding challenges and rewards to in-app actions

02 Creating games to promote brands

03 In-game advertising for real-world products

04 Embedding games into an existing app ecosystem

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How does gamification work?

Gamification taps into both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, which can be leveraged to drive users into certain actions. Extrinsic motivators include elements such as badges, points, and rewards–things offered to the user externally to encourage them. Meanwhile, intrinsic motivators exist within each user, such as satisfaction from completing a task and joy from engaging with fun, enjoyable content.

Good gamified experiences are made up of a system that balances these motivators, combined with eye-catching design and an intuitive user experience. When done right, users will engage with your app longer and remain loyal to your mobile app.

What are the common elements and mechanics used for gamification?

Gamified experiences are built on game elements and mechanics, providing the right conditions for users to want to engage and continue returning to the app. Choosing which elements and mechanics to use for your app should be tailored to your existing app ecosystem and other KPIs.

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Below are some of the common elements and mechanics used for gamification:

01 Points

Points serve as a basic unit of visualizing a user's progress through the system, providing them feedback on their performance.

02 Challenges

Challenges create situations for users to take action. They can be as simple as a single task or as complex as competitions.

03 Rewards

Rewards function as extrinsic motivators for users, awarded after s uccessfully completing challenges. Rewards come in many forms, as they should encourage users to complete challenges to earn them.

04 Badges

Badges are a representation of milestone achievements that a user has earned through engaging with the system. They serve both as a goal for users to work towards and as a status symbol.

05 Levels

Levels are a further visualization of progress, operating at a larger scale than points. They can also be used to reflect how much time and effort a user has spent engaging.

06 Leaderboards

Leaderboards introduce competition into a system. This is done by displaying the progress–whether through levels or points–of other users, ranked based on their performance.

07 Community

Communities are groups of users united through their shared experience of the system. They can be formed through challenges that require cooperation rather than competition, or through social interactions.
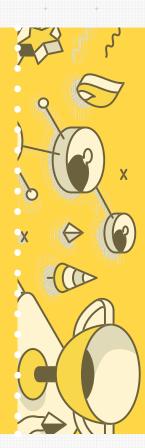
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What does app gamification involve?

Because of its broad definition, gamification can take different forms. App gamification specifically can involve adding challenges and rewards to in-app actions, or even integrating games into an existing app ecosystem.

Regardless of approach, gamifying your mobile app should always stay aligned with your overall business objectives and KPIs. Your gamified experience should be engaging, easy to understand, and provide the right amount of challenges and rewards–all while maintaining a consistent and intuitive design.

Successful app gamification should encourage users to come back, not drive them away.

What are the benefits of app gamification?

App gamification, when done right, can offer your business a number of benefits. These include:

Creating new streams of revenue	Boosting overall engagement	Shaping in-app brand experience
Fostering a user community	Expanding user base	Providing data-driven insights into user behavior

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Chapter 4:

Key Takeaways

- ☑ Gamification is the use of game mechanics and elements in non-game contexts to engage and drive people into taking action.

- ☑ Gamification can take many forms, including adding games to an existing app ecosystem.

- ☑ Gamification operates on the principles of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, driving users to continue engaging with an app.

- ☑ App gamification can help increase revenue, boost user engagement, improve retention rates, grow your user base, and more.

All in all...

Gamification is an emerging strategy that leverages basic principles of motivation–through the use of game elements and mechanics–to encourage users to take action. With research proving how effective gamification is, it is no surprise that many brands and apps have adopted gamification to achieve their business objectives and other KPIs.

To successfully create a gamified experience, you need to have a clear understanding of what gamification is, how it works, and how it can be used to support your business goals.

Take your brand to the next level and gamify your app today!

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