

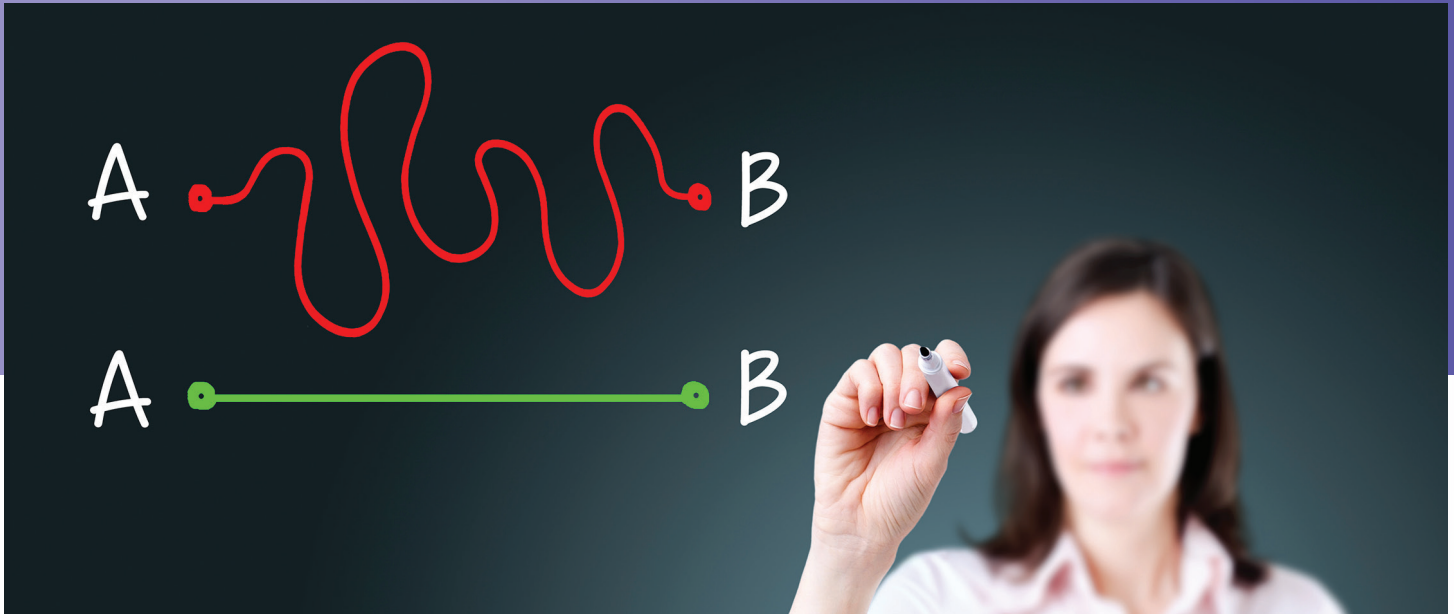


# 10 Ways You're Getting Gamification Wrong,

How to Make it Right  
and Get Results

10 Ways You're Getting Gamification Wrong,

## How to Make it Right and Get Results



**C**ongratulations on implementing games and gamification into your learning strategy! It has been proven that game-based learning can increase:

- employee participation
- training enjoyment
- knowledge retention

But, sometimes your well-intentioned gamification strategy is just not quite right and consequently, you're not seeing the desired results. We interviewed our Instructional Designers and they shared the 10 most common mistakes you may be making and how to fix them.

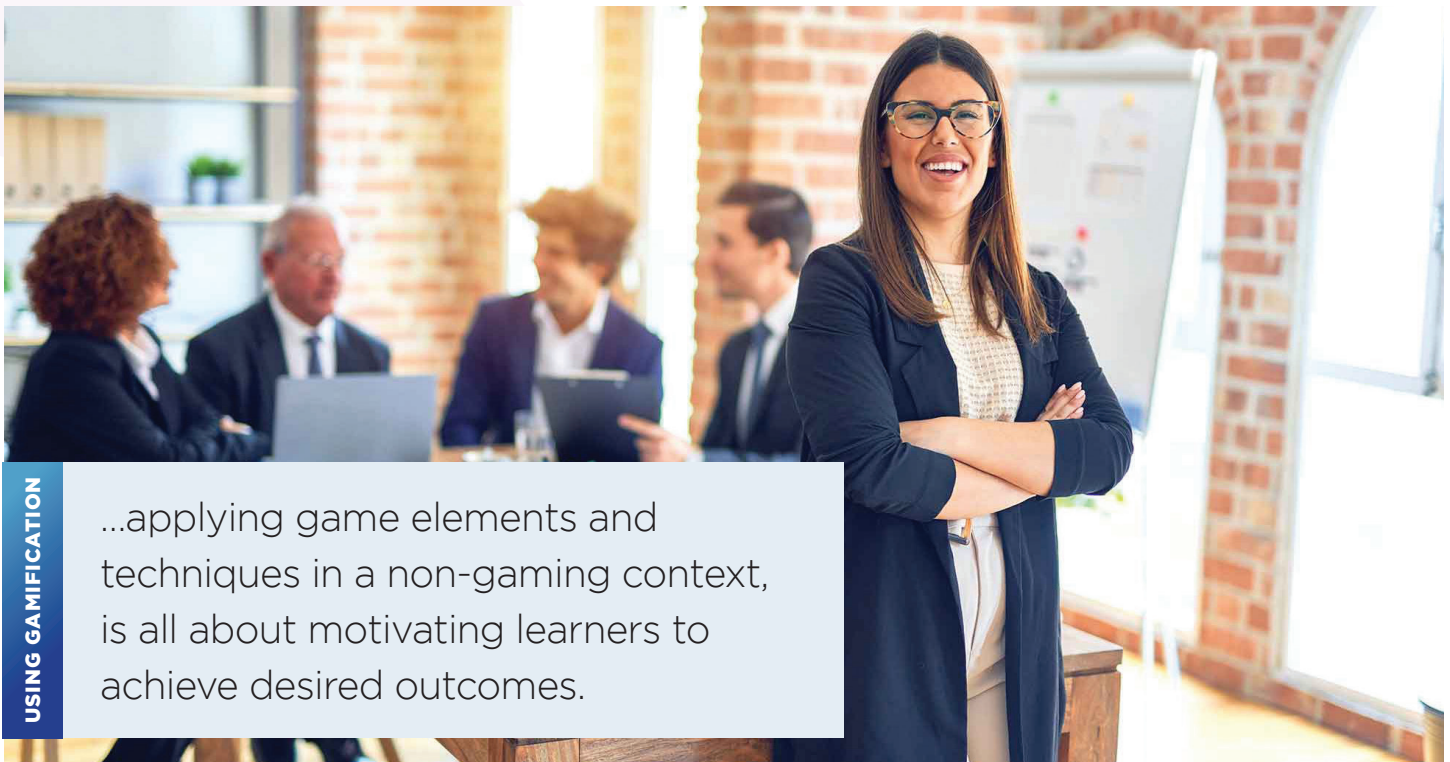
1

### You're Only Focused on Fun

You are leaning into the fun, but you've lost sight of the skill you want people to master. It can be tempting to rely on the gameplay or visuals to engage learners. But if you don't structure the content in a meaningful way, people will not be able to make connections between what they are learning and how they will use it on the job. We often refer to this as "chocolate-covered broccoli" or "lipstick on a pig"! Instead of shoehorning content into a template, **choose a game type** that effectively supports your performance objectives. When you write the tasks and questions, make sure they are meaningful and relevant to the job. Consider adding questions that not only model the correct way of doing things but also highlight misconceptions and help people learn from their mistakes.

Choose a game type that effectively supports your performance objectives.

USING GAMIFICATION



...applying game elements and techniques in a non-gaming context, is all about motivating learners to achieve desired outcomes.

## 2

## You Don't Understand How Games and Gamification Differ

**Games and gamification** are two entirely different concepts. Gamifying means using and applying game elements and techniques in a non-gaming context, which is all about motivating learners to achieve desired outcomes. So your games need to be designed systematically and delicately to meet your goals. If your games are just games, they may be fun, but they will not get people anywhere.

## 3

## You Aren't Adding Feedback

Your game is missing contextual feedback. When people make a mistake, they are more likely to pay attention to (and learn from) what they did wrong. Effective feedback allows you to capitalize on this moment of need. Whether it is a reaction, a hint, a link to a resource, or a more detailed explanation, feedback should be relevant to what the learner did. If you really want to engage learners, you can flip the whole training sequence upside-down—build a game-based challenge instead of a presentation, and educate via intrinsic feedback that shows learners the real-world impact of their choices.

Effective feedback allows you to capitalize on the moment of need, a reaction, a hint, a link to a resource, or a more detailed explanation.

## 4

## Your Game Structure is Flawed

Do you want your game to be effective? Make sure you are paying close attention to your structure. If all the question types are the same or the game is too long, learners will not stay engaged. Instead, focus on creating small, bite-sized microlearning games that include a variety of **question types**. This keeps learners asking, “What’s next?” without becoming bored or wondering when the game will end. As for the answers to your questions, they should be challenging. Make sure they aren’t too obvious or lack relevance to the material. Remember, the goal is for the learner to actually learn and apply concepts which are best done when the brain works through a challenge.

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Focus on creating small, bite-sized microlearning games that include a variety of question types. This keeps learners asking, “What’s next?”

STRUCTURE



One of the keys to designing rewards and prizes is to know your audience and what motivates them.



## 5

## Your Rewards or Prizes are not Motivating Enough

Rewards and prizes are an important part of gamification, and they can be really motivating if done correctly. Here are some pitfalls to avoid:

- Make sure everyone gets rewards - one grand prize doesn't work
- Make sure the rewards match the audience - consider non-competitive rewards. Not everyone is motivated by competition. Overemphasizing competition can alienate your audience if they aren't motivated by it.
- Make sure you're rewarding actual learning — structure rewards so they're not just for moving through the curriculum
- If you use a theme for gamification, make sure it resonates with your audience. Having everyone go on a pirate treasure hunt could work or it could fall really flat.

One of the keys to designing rewards and prizes is to know your audience and what motivates them. Use this information to create rewards and prizes that work for your audience.

## 6

## You Have Too Much Text

You aren't using visuals or videos to enhance the learning experience. Learning and game designers often start by writing out the flow, the narrative, and the questions, but the process shouldn't end there. Look for opportunities to add media in a purposeful way. **Multimedia elements** can make the game more relatable by providing a story, context, or examples. When they are used to support the content, they can also improve comprehension. For example, you can use multimedia to preview or organize topics, highlight key concepts, simplify complex information, or show information in action. A word of caution: distracting, cluttered, or irrelevant multimedia will confuse learners and take them away from your main message. But a well-designed game with rich visuals is more memorable than text alone.

Multimedia elements can make the game more relatable by providing a story, context, or examples.

DESIGN FOR RECALL

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KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Showing the leaderboard can be motivating, but it can also be very stressful.



## 7

## You Don't Know Your Audience

Showing the leaderboard can be motivating, but it can also be very stressful. Know **your team** — sometimes it makes sense to show a leaderboard with team member names. If it doesn't, consider aliases so they can hide their identity. This way the motivation factor stays while removing the stress.

8

## You're Not Making it Social

One of the main factors that make gamification so effective is the level of engagement. For starters, it can engage people in content because it makes them feel like they are in control—which all games do. In order to take your games to the next level, you need to help your learners engage with each other. The **more collaborative** your games are, the more effective they will be, and the more likely people will learn what they need to learn. Your learners will healthily compete with each other, learn from each other, and grow together.

In order to take your games to the next level, you need to help your learners engage with each other.

MAKE IT SOCIAL

9

## You're Not Using Blended Learning

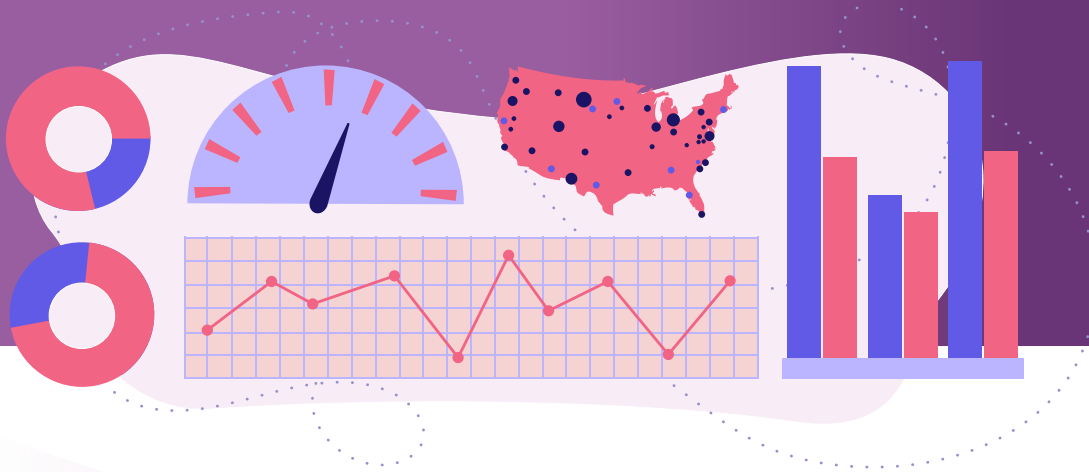
You might think you need to switch from creating eLearning courses to all games and gamification, but we believe in a **blended approach**. Learners tend to disengage and go on autopilot when all of your training looks and feels the same. An experience that includes a variety of instructional strategies is more memorable. That's because novelty grabs learners' attention, so they engage at a deeper level. Interacting with information in different ways creates more neural pathways and associations, so it's easier to recall what you learned.

BLENDED LEARNING

Learners tend to disengage and go on autopilot when all of your training looks and feels the same.



Game analytics provide similar levels of detail, with the added bonus that most people play games multiple times.



## 10

### You Are Not Analyzing Results

A typical Learning Management System (LMS) allows you to track participation and completion rates, quiz scores, and other training data and analytics. Game analytics provide similar levels of detail, with the added bonus that most people play games multiple times. Scores, engagement rates, and other game data give you the power to adjust and improve the learning experience. For example, you may:

- Compare scores, sessions, and accuracy to measure effectiveness over time
- Rewrite questions that are always answered correctly (too easy) or never answered correctly (too difficult)
- Add practice games and/or encourage repeat play for games with low accuracy
- Add challenging games for high scorers
- Replace, redesign, or retire games that no one is playing
- Introduce new games on days or times that people are most likely to be engaged

Scores, engagement rates, and other game data give you the power to adjust and improve the learning experience.

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