GAMIFICATION IN RECRUITMENT
INNOVATION AT RESOURCE SOLUTIONS

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

gam·i·fi·ca·tion
gāmifəˈkāSHən/
noun

The application of typical elements of game playing (e.g. point scoring, competition with others, rules of play) to other areas of activity, typically as an online marketing technique to encourage engagement with a product or service.

Despite increased media coverage over recent years, the gamification of the recruitment process is not new. In fact, one of the earliest attempts to gamify recruitment was by the US Army in 1999 with America's Army, an online game which allows players to virtually explore the Army at their own pace and help to determine if soldiering matches their needs, interests and abilities. America's Army is still used as a recruitment platform today. However, as organisations compete for top-tier talent, gamification has returned to the top of the talent acquisition agenda globally.

The uses of gamification have undoubtedly expanded significantly since 1999, with games being used to determine job candidates' risk tolerance and other traits that could determine how well they'll perform in certain types of jobs, as well as assessing skills and abilities for particular roles.

One of the main challenges for HR professionals is to contextualise their needs – which part of the existing recruitment or selection process would genuinely benefit from gamification? At what levels could gamification be appropriate and add value? Cultural and geographic differences must also be considered, leading many global businesses to gamify processes on a market by market basis. Localised, bespoke games can enhance engagement and user experience, but add significant time and cost to the development process.

With smartphone usage surging globally, Resource Solutions anticipates that we will start to see significant investment from major employers aiming to engage with priority talent, particularly at the early-career level, using gamification.

IS GAMIFICATION IN RECRUITMENT IMPORTANT?

PROS AND CONS

PROS

- According to game designer, J McGonigal, the average western millennial will have spent 10,000 hours on computer generated gaming by the time they are 21.

- Millennial and generation Z talent expect to interact with technology constantly. According to a 2011 study conducted by Cisco System, Millennials view the internet as important as air, water, food, and shelter.

- Personality questionnaires can rely on the ability and willingness of candidates to accurately describe themselves. Research has shown such self-report questionnaires are potentially open to considerable distortion, especially when a job is on the line. Gamification can reduce this risk.

- Bob Nowill, Director of Cyber Security Challenge UK, believes that gaming is the way to get talent interested in the sector. "The next generation of cyber security talent is likely to come from the gaming environment," says Nowill, "so we have to reach them in their own environment."

- Gamification can be online or in a face to face setting, providing recruiters with a blended approach to communicating with talent. Whilst many games are online, Google's Code Jam event attracts 7500 participants, with the finals being held at their New York office.

- Games appear to resonate with their target audience. Brian Burke, Research Vice President at Gartner estimates that employee focused gamification applications now exceed customer focused gamification applications.

CONS

- Administering a test or a game remotely has the potential to screen out entire classes of workers. Whilst online games are popular with multiple demographic groups, there is a clear link between social deprivation and internet use. Those who never use the internet are likely to live in a more deprived geography, potentially limiting the of talent engaged via gamification recruitment initiatives.

- Measuring the ROI from gamification can be difficult, at best, and at times impossible. This is of particular significance as the cost of recruitment focused games can spiral. There are critical ongoing costs that are not always obvious, including compliance/legal costs, community management and policing and continuous creative (such as avatars and challenges.

- Technology is evolving so quickly that games targeting specific and/or multiple cohorts will appear outdated soon after launch, resulting in further costs and ongoing investment.

- Games do not typically offer a tailored, bespoke experience for different users, potentially resulting in less engagement unless complemented by events or face to face communication opportunities. The success of early careers networking events hosted by companies such as Bright Network suggests that top tier applicants also expect a personalised approach.

CASE STUDIES

Hackertrail
hackertrail.com

Resource Solutions recently ran a campaign through Hackertrail, a website which is set up to invite IT candidates to complete challenges – for example, hacking a website – the results of which are then shared with potential employers. We trialled this for a telecommunications client in Asia. The target audience for each campaign was a specific set of technologists residing in Malaysia, with a particular focus on those that reside in Kuala Lumpur. The online coding challenge was shared through a number of social media sites for three specific skillsets: Java Software Engineer PL/SQL Developer and IP Support Engineer.

The Results
685 candidates visited the challenge site, with 42 registering to complete the challenge.
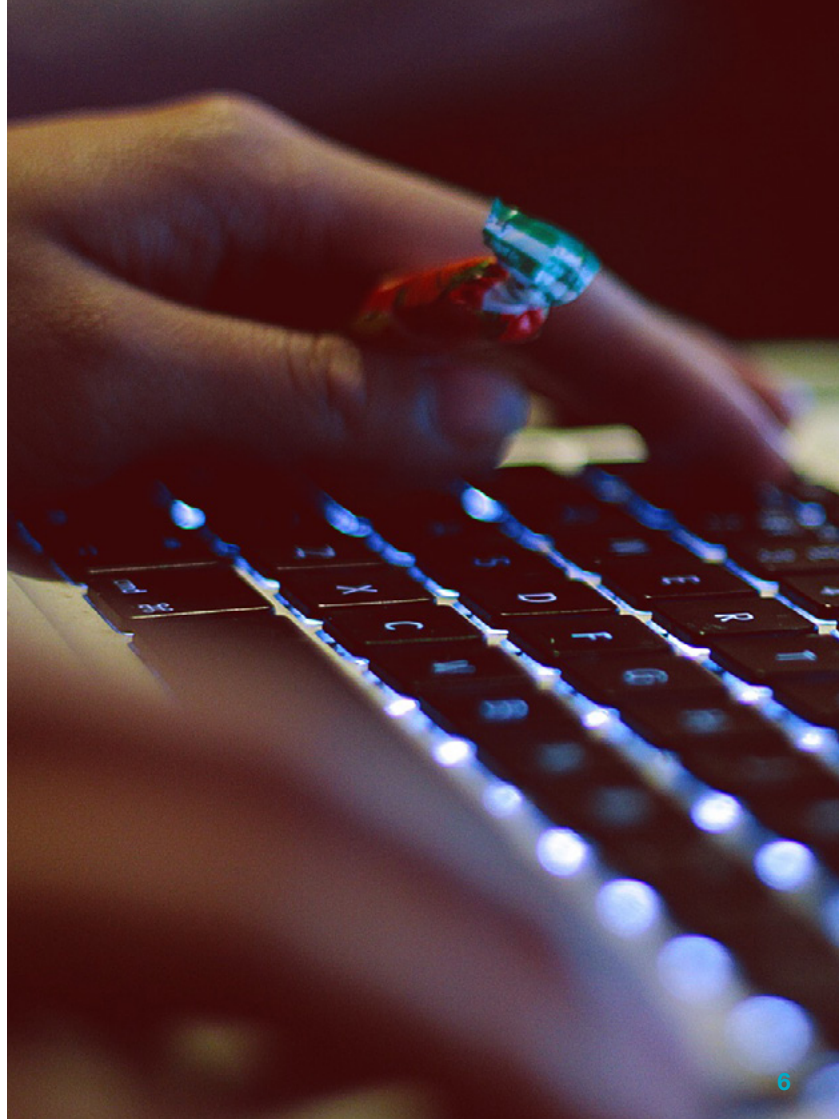
L'Oreal

Between 2010 and 2015, L'Oreal in India used gamification tools to recruit for marketing, human resources, sales and operations roles. Their game, Reveal, allowed players to experience working in a global firm, interact with avatars representing employees and get a sense of which department they might be suited for at L'Oreal. "Gamification tools deployed by us call for solutions to real-life challenges. It helps us screen the applicant's analytical skills, which may not be possible via traditional hiring means. We attempt to recruit 20% of the company's managerial cadre though gaming channels," says Mohit James, HR Director at L'Oreal India.

The Results
Following the achievement of the key project deadlines, the Reveal game, including all assessment components, was successfully launched across the globe in January 2010. The game secured a number of industry awards including the 2010 National Graduate Recruitment Award for the 'Most Innovative Way of Attracting Graduates'. By 2015 the game had amassed 120,000 players.

PwC

PwC in Hungary set a goal: to more fully engage its pool of candidates during the search process. Traditionally, candidates were spending less than 15 minutes on their career website, and the firm was interested in attracting more suitable, qualified candidates. This resulted in the development and launch of a game called Multipoly, which allows PwC candidates to virtually test their readiness and suitability for working at the firm by working in teams to solve real world business scenarios. Multipoly presents users with tasks based on the PwC competencies, such as building business acumen, such as building business acumen, increasing digital skills and embracing relational skills.

The Results
Noemi Biro, PwC Hungary's Regional Recruitment Manager, noticed candidates who had played the Multipoly game were better prepared for the "live" face-to-face interviews, as the game "pre-educated [them] about PwC and its vision, services and skills needed for success." Biro says new hires with Multipoly experience also find on-boarding at PwC easier, as they have already experienced company culture through the game. Overall, Multipoly increased the number of applicants by 190% and 78% of those completing the game were interested in joining PwC.
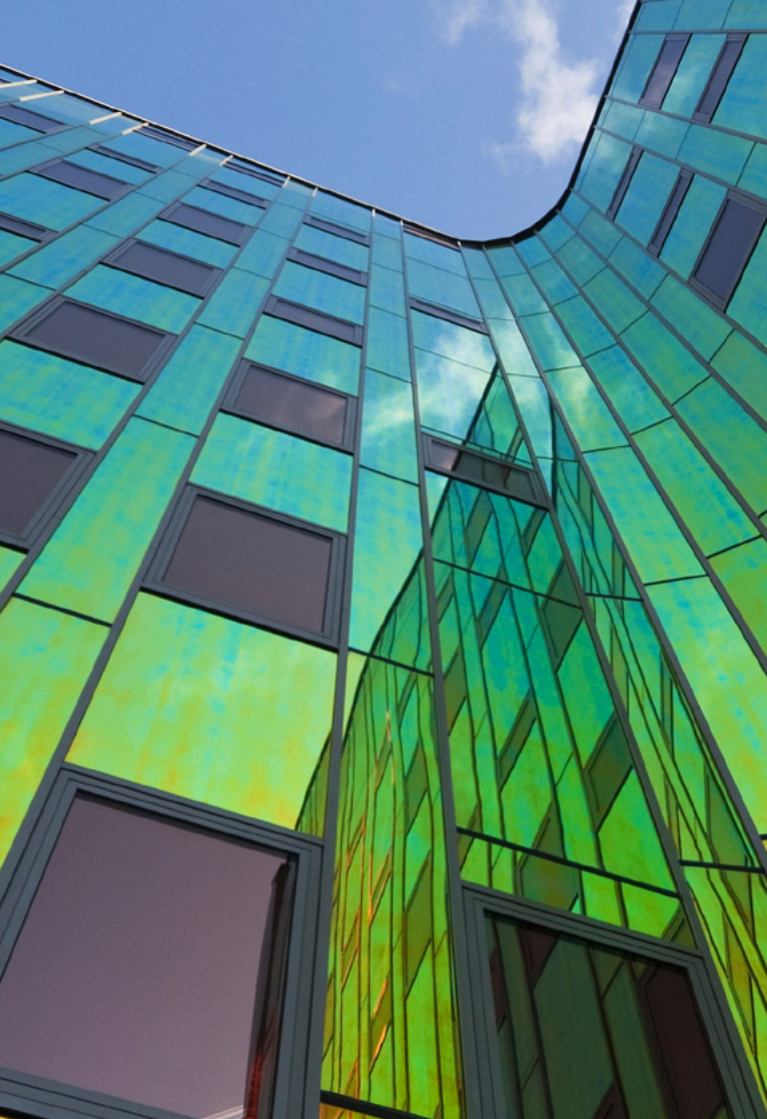
GCHQ

The Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), famed for breaking the German Enigma codes at Bletchley Park during the Second World War is now responsible for protecting the UK against cyber crime and terrorism. A major talent requirement of GCHQ is hiring people "who can think both like a hacker and a defender". They created an encrypted image on a website called CanYouCrackIt. co.uk . Candidates who successfully deciphered the hidden message were directed to a page revealing both the source of the code and the career opportunities.

The Results
Designed by creative agency TMP in 2011, the campaign was a massive success, with 95 million visitors to the site. GCHQ's Head of Resourcing, Jane Jones, said that the game had, "revealed a lot of undiscovered talent that we're keen to explore". Approximately 5,000 people applied for the role from which 170 applications were brought forward. The success of the game resulted in a follow up challenge called, 'Can you find it?' where prospective candidates solve 5 codes hidden around the web.

INNOVATIVE PROVIDERS

Knack
knack.it

Knack uses video games as a screening platform rather than device to determine how creative, cautious, adept at multitasking or easily distracted, among other attributes, job applicants are. Its Wasabi Waiter game, for example, casts the player as a server at a sushi restaurant who must figure out which dishes to recommend.

Wasabi Waiter is visually similar to hundreds of other recreational online games. Players acting as sushi servers track the moods of their customers, deliver them dishes that correspond to those emotions and clear plates, while tending to incoming patrons. Unlike most games, though, Wasabi Waiter analyses every millisecond of player behaviour, measuring conscientiousness, emotion recognition and other attributes that academic studies show correlate with job performance. The game then scores each player's likelihood of becoming an outstanding employee.

Arctic Shores
arcticshores.com

Arctic Shores creates game-based psychometrics, which they claim are an objective and engaging approach to personality and cognitive assessment. They combine validated psychometric methodology with machine-learning and mobile game design to provide deeper candidate insights for better hiring decisions.

How Arctic Shores' game-based assessments work:

Capture: Candidates intuitively react to in-game challenges, recording a digital fingerprint of over 3,000 data points.

Combine: Big data analytics combine thousands of in-game actions to form meaningful psychological variables.

Compare: Candidate traits are compared to a large norm group or employer specific benchmark.

Deloitte plans to use Arctic Shores' Firefly Freedom to recruit 200 apprentices. If this works, they may use it as part of a recruitment programme that brings 1,500 people a year into the business. The aim is to find "high-potential recruits who may not necessarily stand out through a traditional recruitment process".

Emma Codd, Managing Partner for Talent at Deloitte, said: "We need people to join Deloitte from a variety of backgrounds, bringing a range of perspectives and experience. There is compelling evidence that alternative recruitment methods support this objective, helping to identify exceptional talent by providing opportunities for the millennial generation to shine."

*Resource Solutions does not endorse any individual provider or product

Codility
codility.com

Codility is a Poland-based coding assessment tool whose bespoke tests can be produced by selecting from a constantly evolving pool of 100+ tasks of different types (coding, algo, buig fixing, SQL), at three difficulty levels.

Test results are scanned and compared to previous submissions. Identical copies are flagged, making cheating far more difficult than most tests. Ease of implementation and low cost means lots of applicants can participate, thus reducing the risk of losing out on talented coders.

Codility is relatively simple to implement and is highly respected in the coding community. Resource Solutions has been trialling Codility with a number of financial services clients in the UK. Initial trials suggest that it has the potential not only to improve candidate experience, but also to generate significant cost savings if used to replace first stage technical telephone interviews.

WHAT TO CONSIDER BEFORE APPLYING GAMIFICATION TO YOUR RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

- Are there currently any pain points in your recruitment process?

- What specific benefits could gamification offer?

- Are there examples of successful gamification in your sector or context?

- Which platforms do your target audience currently use?

- Is gamification mandatory or optional for applicants?

- Could gamification potentially reduce the number of applications?

- For which vacancies could gamification be considered appropriate?

- Could gamification aid or detract from your diversity initiatives?

- Will gamification be online only or a physical challenge such as a hackathon?

- Does your preferred provider have accreditation, and is their product based on independent research?

- What is the geographic footprint of your preferred provider? Do they understand your local market nuances?

- How will gamification be measured and assessed? Can ROI be accurately calculated?

- Has your recruitment team been involved in the development process?

- Do you have the time to set aside to develop and deploy a game that suits your recruitment needs?

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