

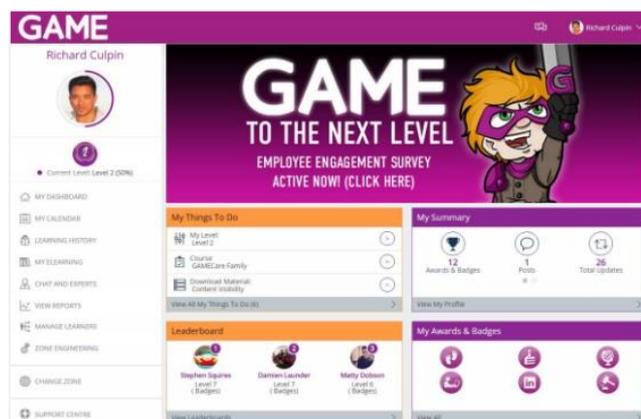
Game changer: How staff at GAME are using learning technologies to win in a competitive market

Winner of 'Best Learning management system implementation' at the eLearning Awards, this case study focuses on how GAME used interactive content, including social and gamification in their Learning Management System to successfully engage learners.

GAME

Holding onto a market share of 30% in a fast moving and competitive market is tough and when the market is the video gaming industry it is tougher still. It was touch and go for GAME in 2012 when the company was forced into administration and they had to close almost half of their 600 UK stores. Three years into recovery the company has the biggest high street and digital gaming presence in the UK. They recognise that it is vital to deliver an excellent customer service experience not found online and that their staff need to be equipped with the skills and expertise to do just that.

GAME is a fast-paced, customer-driven, dynamic place to work and shop. They are passionate about what they do, and it shows in the way they work and in the way, that they attract talent to the organisation. It is also essential that they offer a learning experience that builds on their brand. To do this they partnered with Growth Engineering to create Learning Zone – an online environment that harnesses social connection and collaboration to build essential skills.



Conditions for success

To address the skills issues, the GAME team ensured the people involved in the project had the skills, capability and experience needed to understand the learners as well as the kind of training that would work for sales staff. They talked to every area of the business to learn exactly what was needed in business. Head Office wanted content focused on sales and negotiation skills, and sales people wanted product information. Finding the right balance would be crucial to the project's success.

Previous experience of eLearning within GAME was negative, learners associated it with a strong start leading to stale content. The design team knew that a constant stream of fresh content and an engaging platform were essential for future success.

They set themselves 'Learning Conditions' in their design which included:

Condition 1: It had to be a unified learning area with everything available in one place.

Condition 2: It had to be managed in-house, so branded content could be swiftly created and distributed.

Condition 3: It had to be fun and interactive, keeping learners engaged.

Condition 4: It had to offer a learning journey, with traceable progress and clear goals to work towards.

Condition 5: It had to be a social platform, allowing learners to interact and share with each other.

Turning the vision into a reality

GAME is a video game retailer, so their learning design features built-in gaming mechanics for a perfect fit with their staff and brand.

Some of the key features of the platform include:

- ▶ Learners earn badges for completing content, exploring the site and sharing their achievements on social networks. These badges are also demonstrated on Leader boards within the platform.
- ▶ Learners level-up as they learn, with each new level requiring a certain amount of experience. This experience is gained through completing content, as well as completing mandatory courses.
- ▶ The 'What's Happening?' Feed allows learners to share badges and communicate with each other using a social feed.
- ▶ Live chat features allow for learners to share and communicate in real time.

Products develop rapidly within the gaming industry, and so the ability to share information with immediacy to learners was important in the design process.

The following features helped the GAME team become more agile:

- ▶ The ability to deliver full courses complete with tests at the end within two days
- ▶ Using micro-courses to cover initial product announcements containing videos and information that can be published within an hour of new product announcements going live
- ▶ Tests are now standalone pieces that can be created in 30 minutes

The experience also needed to be easily accessible by users, their 2 major partners, Microsoft and Sony also offered training systems and it was important to unite their partner training services to ensure training services are all in one place.

Maintaining engagement

GAME used a campaign approach to ensure successful implementation of the Learning Zone. This consisted of a teaser campaign using the in-store bulletin system, allowing a taster of badges and levels without alluding to anything specific. The game changer was establishing the Learning Zone as the place where new games are advertised and revealed to create a connection for staff a motivation to return.

Managers were sent launch documents explaining the Learning Zone features, and materials such as posters were put up in staff areas. The head of each region was also invited to a meeting with the L&D Team to explain the system. Store managers were integral to the engagement process, and had responsibility for logins to the new solution as well as keeping staff engaged.

GAME know their staff are eager to learn and that a vital part of the engagement strategy would be regular communication to ensure continual connection. Tactics include:

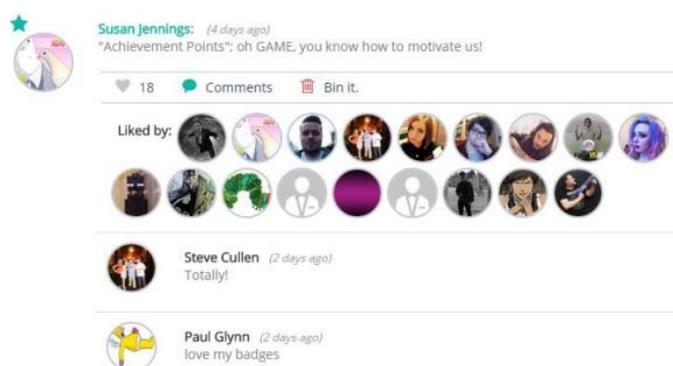
- ▶ A newsletter sent out each month to learners detailing new content and what's being worked on. It also encourages staff to use their voice and provide feedback on what is and isn't working for them.
- ▶ The team check the 'What's Happening' feed at least once a day to reply to staff, post updates and pin great discussions to the top of the page. Comments and feedback from learners are shared with the rest of the business.
- ▶ New content is added to GAME Learning Zone on a regular basis, and a PDF details any content or features currently being worked on. This shows learners that the platform is constantly evolving and content is refreshed.

The bottom line

There has been considerable engagement with the platform since its launch in April 2015, (one 4-month period saw 40,500 logins with staff completing an average of 17 pieces of content each during that time). In addition to this, the GAME Learning Zone has become a social network. They report several lively discussions on the social community platform, helping them to build a community of learning.

But what about the bottom line?

E3 is the world's largest video game trade show and GAME used the Learning Zone to drive the greatest number of game pre-orders in the company's history. They themed the zone for E3 and used it to keep learners up to date on every announcement throughout the build-up and the event itself, creating daily quizzes to cover every announcement using badges to recognise achievement.



GAME launched a Module called 'Big Up Your Basket', giving the key selling points of 25 bestselling games, and recommended the add-on to upsell to customers along with them, such as strategy guides and extra consoles. As a pilot, GAME made this content available exclusively to one of their regions who reported a seven-fold improvement in sales compared with a similar region who did not have access.

Creating a culture of learning

GAME believes in the potential for Learning Zone based on its impact on learning culture and measures of success. Timescales, a competitive market and the challenge of preconceptions around eLearning were just some of the considerations GAME had to consider when designing their new Learning Platform, but in working closely with their provider, learners and the business, they could successfully implement a fully engaging environment that is changing the way that staff work and learn.

5 Tips for changing the way that staff learn and work

1. **Talk to the business** and staff first: ask them what they think the need is and communicate this back in your interventions
2. **Develop a strong brand strategy** and get creative with your communication: use teaser campaigns and appeal to how your learners take in information
3. **Establish your platform** as the first point of call to learn about and discuss latest product information
4. **Simplify access** to all learning opportunities: work with your platform providers to include partner training systems under a single login
5. **Use technology** to respond fast with relevant support

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