

Actually it *is* fun and games

By  [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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Gamification can make training in the workplace faster, more effective and less expensive.



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This is according to Kirsty Chadwick, education specialist and founder of The Training Room Online, an e-learning design company.

Chadwick quotes stats from the global market research company, NPD Group:

- US\$1.37bn spent in the US by consumers on video and PC games during the first quarter of 2013
- 10 hours, how much time the average American gamer spends a week gaming

"A report from M2 Research suggests that this isn't a fad, either, saying that the global market for gamification apps and services will grow to US\$2.8bn by 2016," she says.

So what does this have to do with training?

"The workplace is changing and as a result more training is needed to take place in a shorter period of time than before. The technology available today means this can be accomplished. E-learning is an effective way to deliver information to staff, for example, new legislation or regulations in an industry, such as the Consumer Protection Act (CPA), in the retail industry. "E-Learning ensures the information conveyed is consistent and delivered to everyone in an organisation. It also allows a company to check on the effectiveness of that training in an easy manner."

The aim: quick results

E-Learning is designed to allow learning to take place quickly. "A module would typically take 15 to 20 minutes to complete and this would be done over a month. A course might consist of 10 to 20 modules which would be completed over a month."

Another characteristic of this type of learning is that it moves away from the typical classroom set-up. "The learner would not typically sit in front of a computer for eight hours but will move to a chill area for example and complete the module," she says. This removes the burden for companies of finding and setting up venues and also means that their staff is not away for days on courses. "The system schedules the people as they have to complete the programme within a given timeframe. It records their progress so the company or training department can evaluate where they are in the programme."

Gamification is one of the tools organisations can utilise. "Gaming holds some great benefits for workplace training and learning. As a training tool it can increase training effectiveness by as much as 50%," Chadwick says.

She explains that learning is built within a game. "Learners have to navigate through the game to answer questions to get to the next level, and this is also linked to rewards. It is very visual and linked to objects and characters. Therefore when the learner needs to recall the information in the work environment, he/she visualises the game and it triggers the memory."

Very different to traditional learning

Whether gamification will work as a training tool depends on the environment and what you want to teach. "This tool is particularly appealing to and effective for the younger generation, who have grown up with gaming on various consoles and mobile devices and are familiar with Just In Time (JIT) learning concepts. For them gaming is a natural extension of their lives and what they do in their social time."

It is a completely different approach to traditional learning where it is more a push of information. This is a fun and stimulating learning environment that we are going to see an increase in says Chadwick. "I believe gaming as a training tool will increase not only in companies but in basic education. Children in primary school are familiar with games on cell phones and other devices and gaming would be a natural extension of their learning."

However, she warns that we not lose sight of the end goal. "We need to keep sight of the end goal of training, which is that people perform better in their jobs and that we can bring about attitude and behaviour changes. This is why we train people, but too often the impact of the training is not evident."

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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