



**EVERYBODY BENEFITS:** EMPLOYER GUIDE

# Game on

How to use gamification to get your employees more engaged with health and wellbeing programmes



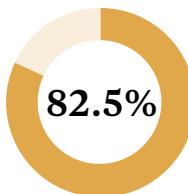
# Long-distance loneliness - the new challenge

While the post-Covid move to more home working offers flexibility, freedom and focus, it has created a new wave of 'out of sight, out of mind' challenges for employers looking to keep their teams engaged and connected.

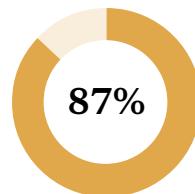
In fact, nearly a quarter (24%) of businesses now identify lack of connection and feelings of loneliness among staff as big challenges.

This makes it even harder for employers who are keen to support both physical and mental wellbeing to persuade their employees to sign up to health and benefit programmes.

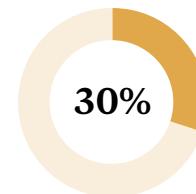
Several research studies all point to a major disconnect between the effort employers put into benefits packages and the actual return in terms of employee awareness and engagement.



of companies say at least half of their employees aren't engaged with their available benefits



of engaged employees are less likely to leave your business, try **57%** harder and perform **20%** better



of employees were aware of available benefits in one study





## Fun and games – how gamification can boost engagement

Gamification lies at the heart of some of the health and fitness industry's most successful brands - from Strava-type running apps to virtual reality cycling experiences like Peloton.

It entered the employee benefits arena more recently on an alluring promise of motivated employees taking up the preventative health challenge and the responsibility for their own fitness and wellbeing.

The move has been aided and encouraged by digital health technologies bridging the gap between gamification and corporate health and wellbeing.

A collection of hyper-personalisable apps and wearables now offer access to benefit and rewards in return for completing daily wellness activities, such as walking, cycling, mindfulness and meditation.

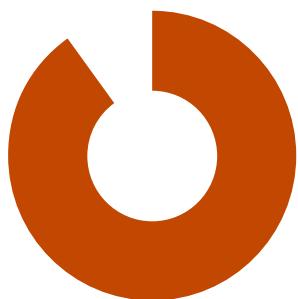
By tapping into our competitive nature, they successfully turn exercise into a shared and engaging experience. They also give employees all the data they need to design and manage their own health plans and proactively encourage them to invest in their own physical and mental wellbeing.

Gamification providers and users can refer to impressive results. According to one app provider, if two employees challenge each other to a walking challenge via the app, they both walk 35% more than they would do normally.



# Why do we like playing games so much?

According to one study, there are three elements that make game playing so compelling: achievement (showing mastery), immersion (discovering new experiences) and social factors (team building).



**90%**

of employees claim that gamification makes them more productive at work

When someone uses an app to look at a company leaderboard, they will walk

**25%**

more on average that day



People who use fitness apps with gaming features showed a

**22%**

increase in physical activity



# Your 11-step gamification gameplan

How can employers used gamification techniques to encourage participation in employee health and wellbeing programmes?

1

**Set tangible shared challenges:** Encourage employees to take part in cross-company, team or departmental physical challenges, while raising money for a favourite charity. All the training sessions needed for such challenges can help to improve team bonding. Activities can be spread out over a year to climb Kilimanjaro, for example, or cycle the Tour de France in 12 months across the whole team.

2

**Be creative:** Turn challenges into more engaging equivalents - a 5.5 mile run, for example, could be described as the equivalent of conquering Everest.

3

**Consider incentives:** Employees can be incentivised to engage in wellness initiatives through points programmes - as they complete wellbeing tasks, they earn points which they can then swap for tangible 'prizes' like a health-related gift card or use as credit against a wellness benefit like a gym membership or healthcare cash plan.

Rather than direct prizes, they can also earn entries into a company lottery - the more health challenges they complete, the more entries they earn, and the greater their chances of winning the prize. Direct financial incentives can also be used to reach particularly resistant workers, to encourage quitting smoking, for example.



## 4

**Be inclusive:** Alongside the usual runs, swims or cycles, you can also hold more inclusive and less directly athletic challenges like dance-offs, fun runs or even balloon throwing, where employees have to catch balloons full of water without breaking them.

## 5

**Include some quick and easy wins:** Not everyone can run a marathon so make sure you also set and recognise easier behavioural challenges like eating healthy snacks all week, 10 squats while waiting for the kettle to boil or a wake-up water challenge.

## 6

**Create leaderboards:** Setting personalised daily or weekly goals, as well as longer-term health and wellbeing targets, stokes engagement. Leaderboards can be an effective motivation tool with an element of friendly peer-to-peer competition as colleagues compete to see who can achieve their goals the fastest.

## 7

**Recognise and celebrate employee achievements:** It is important that employees who do buy in and hit key milestones within any wellbeing programme are celebrated widely on intranets, company newsletters and even via digital email signatures or personalised posts to share on LinkedIn.



## 8

**Send out regular reminders:** It may sound obvious but setting up a wellness challenge is only the start of the journey. Busy humans need regular reminders and an effective way to do this is to find technology which issues automatic daily, weekly or monthly updates on a participant's progress to either keep them motivated or nudge them to start or return to them.

## 9

**Appoint fitness friends:** Studies show that having a 'fitness buddy' can really help improve our chances of sticking to new healthy habits. When a co-worker is effectively made accountable for another employee's health efforts, they can encourage and motivate much more effectively than a line manager.

## 10

**Keep the challenges fresh:** Changing team or individual challenges on a regular – ideally monthly or quarterly – basis is critical to maintaining high levels of interest and engagement.

## 11

**Don't forget mental health:** Set some challenges which specifically address mental wellbeing and work-life balance, such as committing to a minimum of seven hours of sleep for a week, daily breathwork sessions or signing up to a 'no work email after 7pm' policy.





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