



# Employee Engagement, Incentives, & Analytics

## Gamification Drives Results — When Used Effectively

Gamification — the application of principles or aspects of game playing to an activity or task to encourage increased engagement and productivity — has become an increasingly popular innovation. Unfortunately,, generally it is not used very well. Many organizations that have instituted a gamification system have been disappointed when it goes on to fail.

Still, everyone keeps talking about gamification. Why? Because when implemented well, and with the support of leadership and management, it can be powerful and extremely effective.

Gamification in the video game space has created multibillion-dollar companies and a market hovering around \$200 billion in value. You surely know people, whether they are 6 or 66, who spend a lot of their time playing video games. Video game designers use gamification tactics to keep players coming back day after day, night after night.

**StateNational**



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## Pitfalls of Poor Gamification Programs

When organizational leaders realized these gamification tactics could also be used to influence prospects, customers, and employees, they latched on. But many didn't understand the reasons why gamification works. Some have gone for flashy solutions that look beautiful but their audience quickly tires from a gamification program that is not ... fun. Others go for programs that are neat in a few circumstances but not flexible enough to change over time.

Some other potential pitfalls that can create disappointing results from a gamification program include:



### Options that are too limited.

Participants don't want to play the same three games that are boring and overly simple over and over for nominal rewards.



### Games that are too complex.

Games that take too much time or have too many rules can be more frustrating than motivating.



### Placing too much focus on situations where goals are NOT being met.

For example, color coding in red when a team member is failing to reach a goal, without recognizing when users are having success based on their individual circumstances.



### Focusing only on top achievers.

It's important to include recognition for the efforts of each individual.

Another contributing factor to failing gamification programs is when leadership and management are not supportive. Maybe line supervisors are enthusiastic about it but leadership ignores, downplays, or forgets about the program.

## Effective Gamification Enhances Experience

But then there are programs that work exceptionally well. The ROI exceeds everyone's expectations and the audience continues to use and enjoy their participation. They come to expect it, and if for some reason they can't access it they get worried. We're not saying they are video-game-level addicted — but they really, really want it to be a continuing part of their experience.

## Experience.

**Employee Experience.**

**Customer Experience.**

**Prospect Experience.**

Building culture, creating a great work environment, and driving better performance starts with the employee experience. Gamification principles should be a part of that. Because these principles are inherently effective, they are probably already inadvertently a part of your culture, even if you haven't strategically or intentionally planned it that way. Purposefully and mindfully building them into your company's processes can enhance the experience of your employees, ultimately translating to better outcomes and greater satisfaction for those your business serves.





## Snowfly & State National Partnership: Building the Program

## StateNational

State National Companies, the U.S.'s leading provider of portfolio tracking and insurance for auto and mortgage lenders, purposefully and intentionally built gamification into the employee experience at their in-house contact center. This wasn't done casually — it was talked about, thought about, and planned. Company leadership, from CEO to EVP to front-line management, were fully supportive of the initiative.

application of human psychology that works very similarly to video games or Vegas-style games. A good gamification system does not strive to make the experience so amazing that employees only want to play games; you also don't want them to participate in activities only to level up or earn another badge. Gamification is simply a vehicle to improve behaviors and organizational outcomes.

Partnering with Snowfly, a pioneer in the workplace gamification space, State National was able to roll out a gamification program that saw almost immediate ROI. Success metrics were quickly met and exceeded. Employees and leaders alike were impressed, bought in, and excited to learn more about the program.

Gamification systems should be designed around metrics the leadership wants to improve. One of the keys to a successful gamification program is to clearly identify which behaviors and outcomes you want to have a positive effect on. State National and Snowfly worked together to build their program around the company's most important desired outcomes.

At an organizational level, gamification is proper

**Success metrics were quickly met and exceeded. Employees and leaders alike were impressed, bought in, and excited to learn more about the program.**

## State National identified the following metrics:



**Average  
Handle Time**



**Outbound Verifications  
Completed**



**Quality  
Assurance**

Of course, they could have chosen from the multitude of other metrics they watch, but a successful rollout usually focuses on a small handful of KPIs to track. As time goes on you can shift to other metrics, or add new metrics, but you don't want to measure a dozen outputs right away.

State National worked with the Snowfly implementation team to determine what the most important KPIs were for the initial rollout. They made

sure they could measure them, and created a baseline to compare against as the program settled in. It's critical to have metrics baselines so you can come back later and understand the impact of the program.

A successful program is created both by the gamification vendor — who should be experts in gamification and have experience across industries and different uses and types of customers — and the customer. In this case, Snowfly and State National had multiple meetings to understand, clarify, and refine the program purpose and objectives. Once the purpose and objectives were finalized, program details were defined.

**It's critical to have metrics baselines so you can come back later and understand the impact of the program.**

“

I like that with Snowfly I can see my personal average handle time and the group's. We can see promotions and anniversaries. We earn points, and I can see my achievements and metrics.

”

– Maria Johnson,  
Bilingual Contact Center Specialist



# Creating and Implementing an Effective Gamification Program



## Communication is key in any new organizational rollout.

Leadership must be briefed so they can talk about timelines and deadlines, rewards and incentives. They should help create excitement and show support to managers and employees alike. Each manager must understand their role, and how their team can get more details and support. And each employee should understand how the program works, what they can get rewarded for, and how to get rewards.

When State National implemented their program, leadership facilitated team meetings consisting of demonstrations of how the software worked and how participants could use it to achieve rewards, and on the eve of the launch they delivered a presentation to everyone on the floor to reinforce the introduction.



## The “game” should be easy and quick while providing a bit of the unknown.

This models the types of Vegas-style games that have an element of the unknown but a decent chance of winning. Your gamification program is not a Vegas-style

game designed to create a 60% margin for the “house” — instead, you want to ensure your employees feel they will win. When they play games to get rewards they should feel like they got what was coming to them, and sometimes more. That “sometimes more” is the part that entices them to come back and play again, and to earn more points.



## The program changes as needed.

Perhaps your team or organization has a major push to improve a certain metric this month. Your gamification program should be able to support that focus. State National, for example, first implemented monthly initiatives to drive productivity to increase the number of outbound verifications, and also had a competition to drive department overtime. Then in March of 2020, they created a March Madness contest to measure productivity based on average handle time. Flexibility and nimbleness go a long way toward ensuring a program’s success.

“ At first I didn’t know what to think and had no idea how to use Snowfly. After logging in and playing with it — I love it! I thought it was going to be hard, and it is not. When I logged in, I saw all the games you can play, and how you can recognize your peers, earn points, and cash them in. I love how we can upload our pictures and put a name with a face!!! I get excited when I log in and I have coin/points to redeem and it’s fun to cash them in. This is one of the best apps ever.”

– Wendy Miller, Contact Center Specialist II

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## Randomization

Humans crave stimulation and surprises.



## Variable Rewards

Variable rewards have 4 times the impact of a static rewards structure.

# Why Gamification Works

When rewards and incentives are randomized they are less likely to be expected, or worse, demanded. Non-randomized rewards can end up becoming planned for — a part of the employee’s scheduled income. They become an entitlement. Eventually they are expected whether the right behavior, attitudes, or results are achieved or not. When this happens your gamification program has switched from “effective” to “backfired.”

Think about it: If you went to a casino that didn’t have randomization you could easily game any system. You could just figure out patterns and make sure you push the button or pull the lever on the right count to hit a jackpot! This changes why you put quarters into a machine. Predictability and stability are good to a certain extent but your gamification program needs some unknowns to keep people engaged, which is why randomization is so critical.

## Elements of Gamification

Badges

Leaderboards

Recognition

Rewards

Redemption

Games

Engagement through Nudges

Gamification can increase employee engagement by **48%**<sup>1</sup>

Consistent deliveries of dopamine drive **long-term behavior changes / habits**<sup>2</sup>

What gets recognized gets **improved**.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://review42.com/resources/gamification-statistics/>, <https://medium.com/swlh/how-gamification-in-the-workplace-impacts-employee-productivity-a4e8add048e6> <sup>2</sup> Snowfly Research, 2022 <sup>3</sup> Jason Alba, [Snowfly.com](https://snowfly.com)

## Snowfly Schedules of Reinforcement

	RATIO (AMOUNT)	INTERVAL (TIME)
FIXED	<p>Happens every time a <b>FIXED</b> number of the same behavior is performed</p> <p>EXAMPLE:</p> <p><b>Every 5 Sales = Fixed Bonus</b> (Based on # of occurrences only)</p>	<p>Happens every time a <b>FIXED</b> amount of time passes</p> <p>EXAMPLE:</p> <p><b>Paycheck Every 2 Weeks</b> (Happens regardless of performance)</p>
VARIABLE	<p>Happens <b>ON AVERAGE</b> a given number of times the same behavior is performed</p> <p>EXAMPLE:</p> <p><b>Vegas Slot Machine</b> (Random payout, but you KNOW it's coming)</p>	<p>Happens on a completely <b>UNPREDICTABLE SCHEDULE</b> or variable amount of time</p> <p>EXAMPLE:</p> <p><b>Fishing or Manager "Atta-Boy"</b> (It may happen, it may not ... who knows?)</p>

“ One thing we focus on is keeping our reps happy, and we’ve been getting a really good response back from them. They like the games, and they keep trying to get better at them to get more points and tokens. It gives them something to reach for, a little bit of competition throughout the department. When you challenge somebody, they seem to rise up to the challenge — it helps inspire people. That’s what we’re all about, inspiring people to do better, and gamification is helping us do that. ”

– Temecka Graves, Contact Center Senior Supervisor



## Keys to Successful Gamification:



**Variable Ratio Reinforcement**



**Dopamine Experience**



**Tied to Behavior**



**Encourage Repeated Behavior**



**Allows Focus on Incremental Behaviors**

[Click here](#) for more information on gamification at Snowfly.com

## How State National Is Setting Themselves Apart Using Gamification

State National invested considerable time, money, and effort into developing and incorporating a gamification system that would be fun and rewarding for users while boosting their quality output and job satisfaction. Their expectations are to reduce contact center agent turnover, increase operational efficiency, improve agent and supervisor productivity, enhance team transparency, and expand the competitive landscape among the company's frontline agents.

"We started with the mindset of rewarding and recognizing daily achievements," says Contact Center Operations Manager Kempton Hester. "These targets were set based on each individual's goal for their role within the department. Our overall contact center goal was based on the daily recognition of team members within the department achieving their own goals, which leads to increased productivity while improving customer and employee satisfaction." Hester says that the Snowfly program has been successful in meeting those goals.

While State National's gamification program is still relatively new, initial results have been promising. In the first 5 months since implementation, the company has seen an improvement of 5.7% on inbound productivity metrics (i.e., Agent Hold Time) and a 6.7% improvement in outbound productivity metrics (i.e., Outbound Verifications Completed).

“As a supervisor, there is so much Snowfly allows us to do! We can recognize not just our direct reports but the entire department. We can utilize it to drive productivity by creating challenges and adding news articles about initiatives and department updates. We can use it to give a few words of encouragement and motivation, which goes a long way when the workload seems endless. I have to admit, I even like being able to take a second and play a game or two when I need just a minute to regroup! It is one of the best recognition platforms I have used. Thank you!

– Brandy Mathis, Contact Center Supervisor



## Where Do We Go From Here?

The team at State National, from leaders to daily users, are very pleased with the Snowfly gamification program so far. In fact, results are so promising that there are already plans to introduce additional metrics, including:

External Customer Survey
Quality
Customer Experience Evaluation
Process Evaluation
Conformance
Queue Stats
Time To Answer
Abandon Percentage
ACD Handled
ACW

State National is also looking to expand the program to other departments where components of such a program could help boost productivity, such as Document Processing, Compliance, Claims, and Account Services.

What's more, this industry-leading company is already in the midst of implementing a Snowfly Voice Analytics solution that uses artificial intelligence to monitor customer calls to their in-house contact center, automatically analyzing them for service quality based on myriad factors including vocal tone and word choice.

Quality results for these analyzations are factored into the existing Snowfly gamification system, encouraging representatives to earn rewards by delivering excellent service and rewarding those who are already doing so — all while making their jobs more fun and fulfilling. Look for a future report on those results as they become available!

## StateNational

Headquartered in the Dallas–Fort Worth metroplex, State National supports clients nationwide with the industry's most advanced insurance solutions and services. As the leader in portfolio protection for nearly 50 years, we provide credit unions, banks, and finance companies unmatched flexibility and customization through our enhanced insurance tracking and risk mitigation programs. And with an "A" rating in all 50 states, we offer turnkey policy fronting that gives innovative businesses the agility and credentials necessary to capitalize on emerging market opportunities. Make it simple with State National and accelerate your business today.

Visit us online at [StateNational.com](http://StateNational.com).



**NOT ALL GAMIFICATION WORKS.  
OURS DOES.**

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**Click here** for more on State National's innovation mindset and industry-leading insurance solutions.