

Getting Started With Gamification

Gamification is a concept that's been getting a lot of attention, but what is it really? Can it be used in a law firm setting? And do we really have the time and money to build games for our lawyers?

What is Gamification?

Gamification is ... the use of game thinking and game mechanics to engage users in solving problems, changing behaviors or learning new skills.

Gamification is not ... about designing games. Contrary to popular belief, it is more about learning from games and applying these insights to other areas of training and development.

Gamification is ... the implementation of strategies such as rewards for players who accomplish desired tasks or competition to engage players. Types of rewards include points, achievement badges or levels, the filling of a progress bar, or providing the user with virtual currency. Making the rewards for accomplishing tasks visible to other players or providing leaderboards are further ways of encouraging players to compete.¹

Gamification is not ... just about entertainment. It is a proven approach that will increase learning resource adoption and use, improve knowledge retention, and benefit overall training success.

Gamification and lawyers? Really?

If it has not yet arrived, gamified learning will be coming to a firm near you. And soon. Gartner Research stated that more than 50% of corporate learning is now "gamified" and other global professional service organizations have already embraced gamified learning in a big way. Deloitte, for example, has noticed 50% faster course completion and 36% greater weekly retention since incorporating gaming elements into their online coursework.

Recent law school graduates have grown up with recreational and educational gaming so it is likely they would be tuned into this type of training as opposed to traditional business development programs.

Sounds expensive and complicated. Is it?

As with anything, gamification of learning can be as complicated and expensive as you would like it to be. But you can accomplish a lot without breaking the bank or adding a ton of new work to your plate.

If you can get out of the mindset that “gamification” means building games and, instead, look at it as leveraging some of the best concepts from gaming into your e-learning modules and other training and development resources, then you’re on the right track.

If you’re already building e-learning resources for your lawyers (as more than 70% of large law firms are doing today), then consider adding gaming elements and concepts to your self-paced learning modules. See below for some ideas of what those might include.

Examples of gaming elements you could apply to your online learning now²

Progress Indicators	Consider how you might make the end goal of complex tasks clear for students, and build clear progress markers along the way. Take advantage of the motivation to finish by using some sort of progress bar or checklist that is reminiscent of games.
Level-Up	Consider how you might divide up learning activities—like a complex case or problem—into component chunks and reward learners as they accomplish the smaller tasks, gaining new status and information as they move along.
Leaderboards	Nothing says gaming like leaderboards and the friendly competition they encourage. Leaderboards offer a visual depiction of the user’s ranking under various metrics compared to fellow learners.
Real-life Scenarios	Presenting real-life scenarios and allowing the user to engage in a “safe” environment greatly improves effectiveness.
Rewards	Offering real-life rewards (think Starbucks Gift Card) from within a virtual setting can serve as a highly effective motivator and has been proven to drive usage.

1. Gamification., Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gamification>
2. Gamification: Using Game-like Elements to Motivate and Engage Students, Greg Siering, Indiana University