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Leader board LMS for Retail Customer Service and Corporate Training Needs

*Enabling businesses drive participation, engagement, employee productivity and effective last mile customer service at the Retail Stores with a game based approach to **Employee Enablement***

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Why customer service is becoming a differentiator for Store Performance in the Retail Industry?

Customer service is a vitally important differentiator across the retail industry. Regardless of whether it is a Super market, a hospitality outlet or a specialized goods provider. The challenge is to develop a retail service model that treats each customer as an individual and maintains satisfaction and loyalty levels that drives a customer back to the store.

It is a given that retail customer service strategies vary between larger chains and the smaller independents. Larger retailers tend to have a more formal strategy for the retail customer experience in place through planned interventions. The management's commitment to customer service seems to reflect in store level customer experiences across different formats of retail stores.

The challenge of directly linking retail customer service to profits has been understood though efforts to improve customer service have not been measured conclusively. However, there was a common belief that customer service would remain a key battle ground for many retailers going forward and benchmarking customer service would become a more common process when developing a retail service model.

Customer service training is encouraged by many retailers with the larger operating more formal training programs that were supported by strong store-level observation and feedback. A significant number of retailers also operate some form of reward and recognition scheme based around the retail customer service experience.

High levels of employee engagement will facilitate the delivery of improved levels of customer service. But, with high level of employee attrition at the till and online retail competing for the store's share of retail pie, attention on employee engagement is treated as a regular task than as a strategic task that can change the profitability of the enterprise. This is probably why, we do not see consistent experience in different stores of the same retail chain.

Current Employee Engagement Models and their Effectiveness

Our research finds that few retailers have a structured ongoing training program for new joiners and almost no framework for ongoing customer engagement and domain based skill upgrade programs and training for current employees. There is regular product training but it always in the end comes to "Smile and be Nice" as the key training message.

The employment of part time resources to backfill the attrition also results in bad customer service. There is no time to train part time resources and they have been put on the job with hardly any training.

Yes, there are challenges to ongoing employee training as they work a 10 hour shift and employees often complain they have no time or inclination for training before or after their shift. With stores having to open for larger hours, finding time for training often takes a back seat due to attendance and attrition issues.

There have been attempts to put a formal training process for new associates in larger retail conglomerates and they have programs built for different customer and store operation situations. The success rates have been mixed and there have not been any significant levels of increased store performance that has been observed.

Gamification as a Learning Vehicle for Customer Service in Retail Industry

Gamification has been used by companies to engage their customers for some time now, using social media and mobile technologies to deliver contests, challenges and rewards. Now, however, enterprises are beginning to uncover the value that games can add inside the organization to drive business performance by motivating employees. Growing seriousness about gamification marks a dramatic change in the way enterprises engage with their employees for higher customer service.

At a time when the social media is transforming the enterprise, gamification is emerging as the software component that binds employees, organizational values and objectives.

Gartner predicts that 50 percent of businesses will use gamification by 2020 to encourage staff to be more dedicated and innovative when managing customer relationships. By 2018, more than 70 percent of Global 2000 organizations will have at least one gamified application in employee engagement areas.

Areas of customer service impacted by Gamification

- How to reduce issue resolution time?
- How to promote self-service in certain customer segments and product categories?
- How to track customer's feedback and associate it with frontline customer associates?
- How to deal with an irate Customer in the service counter?
- How to inspire employees to help others?

Apart from the above challenges, rewarding front-line customer care executives for prompt and pre-emptive problem resolution and recognizing customers for their help in enhancing customer service are some of the other challenges faced by organizations, and it can be tackled successfully by adding gamification elements in their training engagements.

Enterprises are realizing the need to have a Learning Management Platform with an ability to integrate gamification and provide for a seamless training experience.

Key attributes of a gamified LMS include:

- Multi-device support – it should be possible for an associate to do the training on her mobile when she has thin crowds at the till
- Concept wise learning through video and VR based learning
- An easy to understand , interactive and fun based learning system
- Ability to dashboard participant performance against peers, locations, departments and subjects and re-target for customer orientation
- Provide motivational messaging for performers and dangle a carrot to the others that egg them to perform

Gamification based LMS-The Overview

Gamification based LMS have the following additional components built into them:

Points

Points are the most basic form of gamification; the exact equivalent of “keeping score” in a game. You might be wondering why you'd need to use Points for this, since a typical LMS already has Grades, but the two serve different purposes. While grades are meant to measure academic performance, points can be used to encourage user engagement in general just as small incentives and rewards motivates one to go to the next level (e.g. by being awarded when one completes a course, for each login to the Learning Management System, etc.). A gamified LMS lets you fully configure the occasions in which points are awarded. Users are informed of the points they receive via a non-intrusive popup message and can check their total tally at any time in the header and measure themselves against peers.

Badges

You can think of Badges as the equivalent of real world medals. In gamified LMS, as in most gamification systems, badges are visual stamps (images) that are awarded to users on certain achievements and are displayed in their header and profile page. The badging system features 8 categories, with each category offering multiple levels of badges, and has been designed to make acquiring badges increasingly difficult as the user progresses (to keep the whole process interesting and challenging).

Levels

Levels are like ranking up in the army or getting a promotion at work. In gamified LMS all users start at level 1 and progress from there, and getting to a higher level makes more courses available just as it is used in actual video games (courses unavailable to a user because of level restrictions are shown with an “Unlocked on level X” label).

Leader boards

Leader boards is just a gamification name for a “high score”. A leader board is basically a page that offers a visual depiction of the user's ranking under various metrics (Points, Badges, Certifications, etc.) compared to fellow learners; including the very best (“high scores”) and others immediately above and below them.

Strategic Implementation of LMS

Gamification based LMS can't just be a light layer sitting atop a website or intranet portal, with social rewards being served up to any associate. Associates should be rewarded for interacting with the LMS in positive ways--like sharing, commenting, chatting, and complimenting peers into the LMS platform. And the only way for that to happen is if the game mechanics of LMS are actually able to interact with your other social functions. It's not an easy task and requires an in-depth understanding of your business goals, objectives, applications, processes, transactions, social elements such as a system of rewards, recognition to be developed.

To leverage the power of gamification in the store, the following approach is recommended:

- Successful implementation of a gamification strategy requires an appropriate way to map business objectives and the organizational goals
- It is essential to identify key actions to be performed by the associates in a given context
- Defining an appropriate point system that could complement the Business context and organizational goals is very critical for success of the LMS gamification strategy. The point system needs to be fair and progressive
- Social transactions such as “liking a video”, “commenting on a case study” and “critiquing a video” play a crucial role for awareness, promotion and recommendation and it needs to be integrated with the overall gamification strategy
- Having meaningful reports and analytics is critical for the success of gamification. Analytics play a vital role in analyzing the overall performance of an employee, a branch or a region and it provides inputs to the L&D teams to improve gamification strategy. It also maps the output derived from the gamification with the overall organizational goals and demonstrates the success factors and emerging trends. Analytics also offers pointers on the areas which needs improvement and can be considered for future implementation

Conclusion

The concept of gamification has reached a broad acceptance as a solution for better engagement and improved participation for businesses. It is being used across departments and industries. Organizations are using game mechanics to not only improve participation but also solve business critical problems such as “better project management”, “improved efficiency of sales & marketing” and “faster resolution of Customer support issues”.

Daemon LMS can help unlock the value of gamification for your business in the following ways:

- **Advisory & Consulting:** To understand business needs, identify the context to be gamified and derive a gamification strategy for your training needs to meet business goals.
- **Implementation:** Implement/customize a LMS based on a gamification engine, integrate it with existing enterprise applications such as websites, communities, intranet portals, internal IT systems and generate analytics and reports.
- **Support Services:** Maintain and support the LMS

We'd love the opportunity to demonstrate how gamification can help your business. Please write to us at sales@dameon.co.in or call +91 80 42101166 to learn more.