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EFFECTIVELY LEVERAGE COLLABORATIVE GAME PLAY **FOR REAL-WORLD RESULTS**

by Tom Goodmanson, CEO, Calabrio

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Tom Goodmanson is the CEO of Calabrio, which Gartner positioned as a Visionary in its 2014 Magic Quadrant for Contact Center Workforce Optimization.

WFO GAMIFICATION BEST PRACTICES

1) Collaborative game play that provides opportunities for team building.

2) Peer mentoring that allows both agent mentors and those they mentor to earn badges and move up to higher levels within the game.

3) Thoughtful and customized rewards/incentives that offer value over long time periods, such as influence over personal work schedules.

"PEOPLE RESPOND TO INCENTIVES," notes University of Chicago economist and best-selling author Steven Levitt. Not surprisingly, incentives are a major component of popular Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOGs), which allow players to cooperate and compete with each other on a large scale. MMOGs engage thousands of people online at any given time, with virtual goods revenue from online games and related social networking totaling billions in real-world dollars. Without a doubt, playing games is a widely popular and engaging activity for all types of people. This has exciting implications for your contact center—if you understand effective agent incentives.

How can playing games improve performance? Research has proven that having fun at work reduces stress, energizes employees and lowers turnover, as well as lowers absenteeism and increases productivity by creating employee loyalty and group cohesiveness. Most importantly, it improves both employee attitudes and customer satisfaction.

At its core, gamification is about increasing employee engagement. Many studies have shown that employee engagement can be increased by a variety of factors including:

- Ongoing communication and feedback from management, especially in terms of conveying information and congratulating good work.

- Having opportunities to work in a team environment.

- Building relationships with team members and other co-workers.

When done properly, WFO gamification offers all of these benefits. As many WFO supervisors have seen firsthand, gamification provides a powerful "win-win" as agents become motivated to work more effectively—so the contact center and its customers also win. In fact, gamification immediately and dramatically improves agent performance, right up until it doesn't work anymore.

A basic understanding of the law of diminishing returns explains why. Research has proven that as wealth increases from zero, each dollar earned

provides a certain increase in happiness, until a certain point. After this point, each additional dollar earned increases happiness by a lower amount than before. This continues to occur until a plateau is hit, when each dollar increase does not increase happiness (and may even decrease happiness).

Now apply the law of diminishing returns to the way gamification typically works in contact centers. Agent players often compete for prizes like retail gift cards. Other organizations give winners virtual dollars to "spend" in the company store on things like T-shirts and water bottles emblazoned with their corporate logo.

If you have a drawer or closet filled with such corporate fulfillment items, you understand why the motivation to "win more" quickly diminishes. More "stuff" just doesn't make people feel happy for long. In fact, it even can have the opposite effect in millennial-age workers who find more value in work-life balance, flexibility and control over their schedules.

Thus, a more thoughtful approach to incentives is required for gamification to improve agent performance for the long term. As Levitt eloquently states, "Understanding the incentives of all the players in a given scenario is a fundamental step in solving any problem." It stands to reason that rewarding agents *over time with meaningful incentives*—along with providing opportunities for collaboration and team building—are the keys to gamification success.

This is why Calabrio has added dynamic scheduling and mentoring options as part of our gamification software for workforce optimization. Dynamic scheduling means top agents can receive true value over time by earning the opportunity to influence their schedules. This reward is infinitely more meaningful than another corporate-logo T-shirt or even a retail gift card. Our contact center customers are finding that virtual games only yield real-world, long-term business benefits if they translate into real-world, long-term benefits to the people playing and winning them.

To learn more about Calabrio's solutions, call (855) 784-2807 or visit Calabrio.com

CALABRIO™

Real-world innovation is changing the conversation about WFO in real time.

Gone are words like clunky, slow and frustrating. The conversation about workforce optimization now centers on personal, intuitive, smarter and faster. We're honored to help visionaries for change reach their goals with continued innovation. In 2014, more than 500 companies switched to Calabrio to accelerate performance with a simple, fully integrated suite of WFO tools with a low cost of ownership and unparalleled support.

Become a visionary for change.

Let's have a conversation about how we can take your customer service to the next level. And find out why Gartner positions us as the only Visionary in the Magic Quadrant for Contact Center Workforce Optimization.

Call 1-855-784-2807 or visit calabrio.com to learn more.

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Contact Center Pipeline is a monthly instructional journal focused on driving business success through effective contact center direction and decisions. Each issue contains informative articles, case studies, best practices, research and coverage of trends that impact the customer experience. Our writers and contributors are well-known industry experts with a unique understanding of how to optimize resources and maximize the value the organization provides to its customers.

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