

Marketing is a data game

How to create game-changing
possibilities for your brand

playable

About the study

At Playable, we've always known that the use of game mechanics in marketing to create valuable experiences works better than many other tactics.

We've seen our customers exceed their KPIs, whether it's gaining and acquiring customers, targeting and growing their audience, or retaining and creating loyal customers.

That's also why we commissioned this study from analysis institute YouGov. A total of 5,563 people aged 18-74 were surveyed from Denmark, Finland, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. They were interviewed using the CAWI methodology during the period of 19-26 November 2021.

We hope that the results of this study and our insights are helpful and meaningful.

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Key Findings

1. 40x more engagement time with gamification; from an average of 1.5 seconds to 67 seconds — that's the difference with gamification.
2. Gamified ads work harder. Consumers are 56% more likely to click a gamified ad than a static ad.
3. Consumers value winning prizes. 51% of respondents agree that winning a voucher is more valuable than being given a voucher.
4. Winning is most important. The size or value of a prize is less so.
5. Age is just a number. Game mechanics work whether your audience is 6 or 60.
6. 3x more respondents agree that winning a prize means more than a voucher given to everyone, compared to those who disagree.
7. Want to increase brand value? Only 23% disagree that branded games would positively influence how they see a brand.
8. Know your audience. Millennials are 50% more likely to share data than Baby Boomers.
9. 41% of consumers will share first-party data in return for personalized experiences and better brand experience.





You are

The communicator

You're the perfect communicator. You're good with words and getting the message across, so people read, click and convert.

Did you know that by implementing gamification into their marketing brands quickly see an increase in both engagement time and conversion rate?

Want to know more? No strings attached.

Introduction

As a marketer you may feel that you've been chasing your tail in recent years. In fact, venture capitalist Mary Meeker found that the [average digital engagement](#) was just 1.5 seconds. As consumer interest in engaging with marketing messages has waned, so the intensity of marketing has ramped up in an increasingly desperate bid to grab attention in a nosier market.

But this can turn consumers off more. They can become less likely to engage and more likely to ignore such messaging. Overwhelmed by the volume, and with a greater understanding of the power that they now hold with regards to the data that they choose to share, consumers are increasingly aware they have the upper hand and the power to turn off.

And yet as a marketer your very job is reliant on being where the audience is: engaging that customer, gaining their trust and ensuring you become the consumer's favored brand. You're left wondering what you can do to stand out and turn the customer back on.

The challenge of the value exchange

One of the biggest challenges is creating the right value exchange that ensures the potential customer wants to engage and share the data that allows you to build relationships. The reward, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, needs to overcome consumer reluctance to engage.

But what can you offer?

One of the best ways of bringing your brand personality to life is through meaningful, personalized interactions. It's imaginative, engaging and fun. And it taps into the very roots of human behavior.

“We play because it is in our nature to do so”

Johan Huizinga, Dutch Historian

Put simply, few can resist the chance to play – whatever their age or gender. The brain becomes alert and perceptive – the ideal state to receive a marketing message. And the release of the feel-good endorphins that follows means the experience lingers, building loyalty and engagement longer-term.

Chapter 1

The opportunity to engage

Effective marketing needs to engage the customer in a way that is meaningful for them. By using game mechanics and making your marketing playable, you automatically create an experience that requires an active state of mind. Consumers simply can't resist the urge to engage and will choose a gamified ad over a static ad.

Consumers are 56% more likely to click a gamified ad over a normal static ad

That's a powerful statistic and a pattern of behavior that is consistently replicated across the countries, genders and age groups that we surveyed.

Gamification works to engage the consumer – whatever their age...

Making your marketing gamified attracts consumers by activating their brains and not letting go, and it works whether they are six or sixty. Although we may assume that the desire to play wanes as age increases, our research shows that this isn't the case, with Baby Boomers more likely to click a gamified ad than Millennials or Gen Z.

62%

Of **Baby Boomers** are more likely to click a gamified ad.

60%

Of **Millennials** are more likely to click a gamified ad.

...or gender

Game mechanics also work whatever the gender, although there is a slightly higher propensity for women to want to engage than men.

62%

Of **women** are more likely to click a gamified ad.

60%

Of **men** are more likely to click a gamified ad.

Understanding the impact of gamification

So, consumers prefer a gamified ad over a static one and are more inclined to click through. But how effective are game mechanics in improving brand recognition and building the relationship with the consumer?

Our research shows that almost a third of consumers say that gamification helps to boost their opinion of a brand.

36% of respondents agree that fun and seamless branded games would positively influence their opinion of a brand

And this is the case across most countries and ages, with the majority of respondents agreeing that interacting with a meaningful experience would positively influence their opinion of a brand, although receptiveness is greater for Gen Z and Millennials than Gen X and Baby Boomers.

Although game mechanics can be integrated at any point of interaction with the consumer, from social media to newsletter, our survey shows that consumers are most willing to engage with a game if it's integrated into a website. This may be because having navigated to the website with a specific mission in mind, the consumer is already more open to engaging.

45%

of **Millennials** say that games positively influence their opinion of a brand.

36%

of **Gen Xers** say that games positively influence their opinion of a brand.

27%

of **Baby Boomers** say that games positively influence their opinion of a brand.

Chapter 2

Gaining value from intrinsic and extrinsic incentives

So, consumers are willing to play, more attracted by a gamified ad than a standard ad, but ensuring a consumer clicks through depends on you getting the value exchange right, creating value for both your brand and the consumer.

You need to have a clear idea of your aim here. Often this is about building a data profile but simply building engagement can also be key. The intent must be clear. For instance, with a new product or service launch, you will be keen to educate the consumer about your new offer, while other campaigns may focus on incentivizing customers to buy.

Ensuring the right value exchange – or reward – for the potential customer is critical. Is the value for them in a prize or a more intrinsic value such as learning more about your brand? And, if prize-led then what incentivizes them most and how does that tie in with your marketing aims?



Our research shows that across all countries, genders and age groups over half of respondents say that winning a prize or voucher from a game is more valuable than a coupon code available to all. That's three times the number that say they disagree. Put simply, consumers feel a prize is worth more when they have earned their reward than when they feel like everyone gets it.

51%

of respondents agree that a prize or voucher **won individually by doing well** in a game would be more valuable to them than a coupon code that everyone receives

Intrinsic versus extrinsic incentives

So what rewards, or incentives, work best for consumers? Incentive theory suggests that behavior is motivated by the desire for reinforcement or incentives, and these can be intrinsic or extrinsic.

The [American Psychological Association](#) defines intrinsic incentivization as “an incentive to engage in a specific activity that derives from pleasure in the activity itself”. This is rather than external – or extrinsic – benefits.

In this case, game mechanics can simply be tailored to three different types of intrinsic incentives.

- 1. Educate the consumer about the product or service being offered**
- 2. Challenge the consumer to do something new, or beat old scores**
- 3. Stimulate or provide enjoyment to the consumer**

By contrast, extrinsic incentives offer a tangible reward, whether that's a discount or a physical prize.

Understanding prize value for the consumer

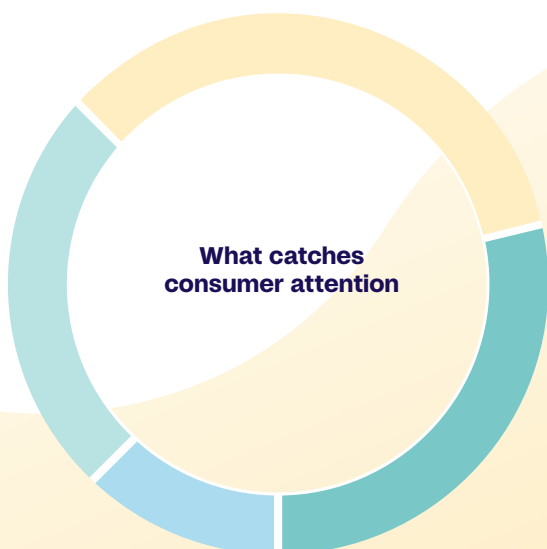
The 'value' of such extrinsic incentives can also vary. But the basic need is the same. Consumers love the feel-good factor of a win and are more likely to take part if they have a greater chance of winning, even if the value of the prize is lower.

When given the chance of winning a prize, people are more likely to engage with a campaign with a higher probability of winning, even though the value of the prize is smaller.

This value can be seen below, which shows that when faced with the opportunity to opt-in to a brand's permission database, there is a direct relationship between the chance of earning a reward and the willingness to opt-in.

Engagement is higher where the chance of winning is greater, with consumers more likely to engage in a game for a purchase discount or small prize with a high probability of winning than playing for a car that has a lower probability of a win.

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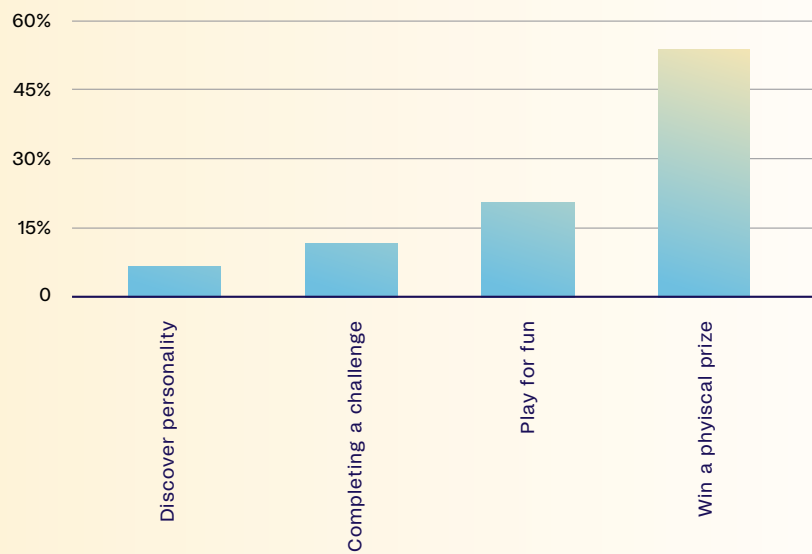
- Sign up for a newsletter and get 20% off your next purchase (high chance of winning) **36%**
- Play a game to win a small physical prize (high chance of winning) **29%**
- Play a game to win a prize worth £400 or less (medium chance of winning) **24%**
- Play a game with the chance of winning a car (low chance of winning) **11%**

Preference for game mechanics

Gamification can comprise several different game mechanics to turn the unengaged into engaged. At Playable we use five: **challenge**, **reward**, **mirroring**, **compete** and **fun**. Each of these have different psychologies behind them, different motivations for taking part and different expectations of reward at the end.

In our survey, we found that the greatest motivation to engage is driven by physical prizes (56%), but it isn't just about winning, other influences are at play too. For instance, 22% of consumers just want to play for fun, 10% want the sense of accomplishment from completing a challenge and 6% want to discover their personality type or revel in the fact that they know more than their peers about a certain topic.

What motivates consumers to engage



Quiz-based games such as discovering personality type or assessing consumer expertise about a product, service or company are an important, but sometimes overlooked, element of gamification, particularly given their appeal to younger customers.

Our research found that mirroring – where the person gets to see how they compare to others – is particularly popular with younger customers. Examples such as ‘Discovering personality type from a quiz’ is almost four times more popular with Gen Z and Millennials than Baby Boomers.

Mirroring, such as ‘Discovering personality type from a quiz’ is more popular with younger consumers where 3.4x as many Millennials report that as their preferred outcome as compared to Baby Boomers

Similarly, game mechanics based on the competitive nature of play, such as 'Finding out that you're more of an expert about a certain topic than 40% of the other respondents' is nearly 1.5 times as popular with Gen Z and Millennials as it is with Gen X or Baby Boomers.

Competing, such as 'Finding out that you're more of an expert about a certain topic than 40% of the other respondents' is more popular with younger consumers with 48% more Millennials reporting that as their preferred outcome compared to Gen X or Baby Boomers.

Understanding the value equation

Consumers know that sharing information allows your brand to better personalize and target your marketing to them and, providing they see you acting on their data and giving them something of value in return, are generally willing to share preferences. In our survey, more than a third say they would be open to sharing personal preferences regarding a topic in a quiz if it means they will get better offers from the brand in the future, with women slightly more willing to do so than men.

41%

of **all consumers** say they are open to sharing data and preferences if it means they get better offers from a brand in the future

with

43%

of **women** doing so.

38%

of **men** doing so.

Younger consumers are also more willing to share personal preferences in return for a more personalized experience, with nearly half of Gen Z and Millennials willing to share, compared to less than a third of Baby Boomers.

50%

of **Gen Z** and **Millennials** are open to sharing personal preferences in a quiz in exchange for more targeted offers.

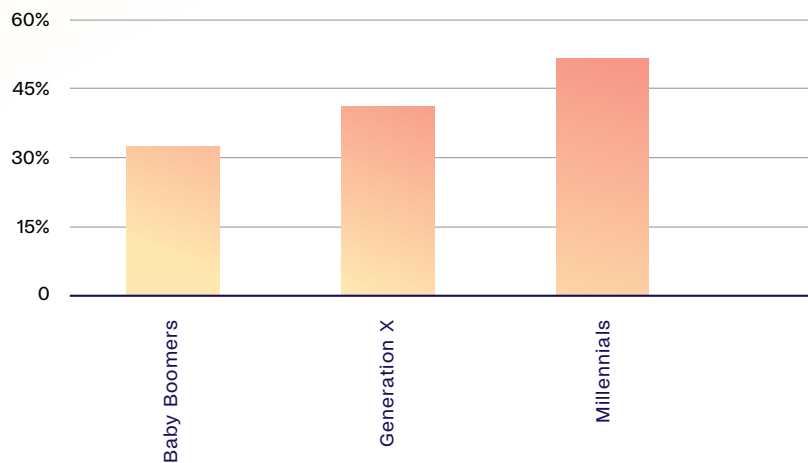
43%

of **Gen Xers**.

32%

of **Baby Boomers**.

Openness to sharing first-party data to receive better personalization



Chapter 3

Data: the marketer's reward

While the consumer may have several reasons to engage with game mechanics – from financial to physical or emotional rewards – for you as the marketer the biggest win is the first-party data opportunities that it enables.

This is essential since such data helps to better direct marketing, moving away from the ‘spray and pray’ marketing tactics of the past to a more personalized, targeted strategy.

But, given the intricacies of the value exchange, brands must deliver on the data promise, ensuring that what you ask for is not only used but used in the way you have pledged – i.e., personalization rather than spamming.

We saw earlier a consumer willingness to share data, so the trust is there. Indeed, only three in ten (29%) respondents say that they aren't open to sharing personal preferences regarding a topic in a quiz if it meant they'd get more relevant, personalized offers from the brand in the future.

But this isn't the case everywhere. Consumers in the UK and Denmark need a little more convincing to share their data, forcing you to work even harder to stand out and do something different, ensuring you deliver not only a relevant, but desired offer to get your audience to engage.

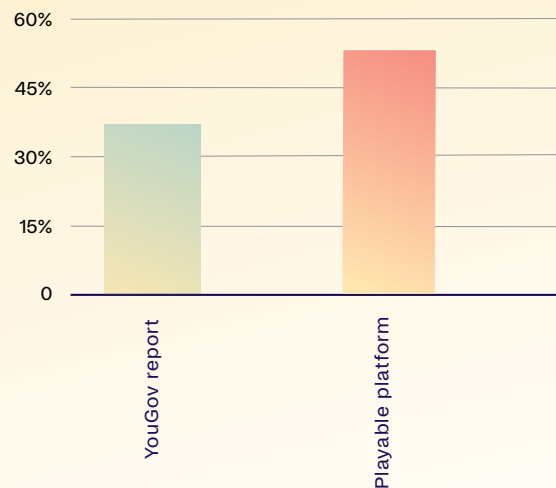
And we have seen that age also plays a part, with younger customers more willing to share data than older ones. This means that you may want to vary campaigns and game mechanics dependent on the segment or focus more specifically on where you want to drive engagement and sales.

Millennials are 57% more likely to share data than Baby Boomers

Willingness to share types of data

The information that consumers are willing to share can also vary, with consumers more open to sharing information such as gender and age than they are location, for example. Meanwhile, in the UK consumers are especially private about data sharing, meaning again that you need to work harder as a marketer, defining the data points you require and putting extra effort to extract information from consumers more reluctant to share.

Willingness to share zip code during a brand's gamified experience



Conclusion

5 Key Takeaways

We know that gamification works. Consumers are not only wanting to play but are willing to share their data when doing so provided the reward offered suits them.

- 1. Game mechanics have a wide appeal, allowing you to connect with your audience by tapping into an inherent desire to engage as well as positively influencing their opinion of your brand.**

That time spent is a multiple of traditional digital marketing. 67 seconds is the average time spent with a game powered by Playable.

- 2. It works. With consumers more likely to click a gamified ad compared to a normal one, it cuts through marketing noise to grab attention.**
- 3. Game mechanics help brands undergoing a digital marketing transformation by giving you the customer data that you need, although the willingness to share data can vary.**
- 4. Engagement in gamified marketing doesn't have to depend on high prize values; consumers value a range of rewards so long as the opportunity of winning is high.**
- 5. Consumer engagement varies by age so as a brand you need to understand your customer base and how best to engage to maximize results and ROI.**



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