

Fostering Employee Engagement through Gamification. AirBaltic Forecaster Tool

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Next to the employee productivity or indicators for staff turnover and absenteeism in organizations today Employee Engagement stands out as one of the most significant measurements for Human Resource Management efficiency. A lot of research has been performed in the field to prove that Employee Engagement strongly correlates with the profitability of the organization. At the same time most of companies globally and also in Latvia, struggle to achieve high engagement. According to Gallup, only 13 % of employees worldwide are truly engaged with their workplaces. Many of best management and leadership techniques from the past century are still valid and effective today. Nevertheless, with more and younger generation representatives joining the workforce companies are bound to investigate and pursue some of the new tools and techniques that respond more effectively to the motivators and engagement triggers of generations Y and Z.

At airBaltic corporation in Riga, Latvia, management has been experimenting with gamification to foster engagement of the workforce through introduction of a business game, called airBaltic Forecaster. Forecaster is a unique tool with unparalleled capability in internal communications. The tool is devised as a prediction game with the chance to win prizes for the best predictions. It enables management to pitch ideas in a simple format, and staff to provide insight in a fun way. Moreover, according to management belief, Forecaster has the capacity to save up to 1 million EUR annually due to the resulting better quality management decisions. Tool was launched as a separate website in a simple prediction game format, with the chance to win financial prizes for the most accurate predictions and most insightful comments, thus providing additional incentive for staff to get involved. The comments and predictions are collected on the Forecaster site and taken into consideration by management teams when making final decisions about the project in question, as such ensuring staff participation in the decision making process.

At the end of the trial period, feedback from those involved in the Forecaster prediction game indicated that they enjoyed the process, felt more informed about current projects at management level, project owners felt better prepared to make decisions and, as a result, project owners could make more informed decisions.

Within the article author looks at the theory and research related to application and effects of gamification within corporate settings, as well as reviews workplace environment and potential engagement blocks at airBaltic Corporation. Further in the article Forecaster experiment is described in more detail and its impact on employee engagement and organizational performance is analyzed. Finally, recommendations are drawn by the author for further development.

Keywords: employee engagement, generations Y and Z, gamification, internal communication