

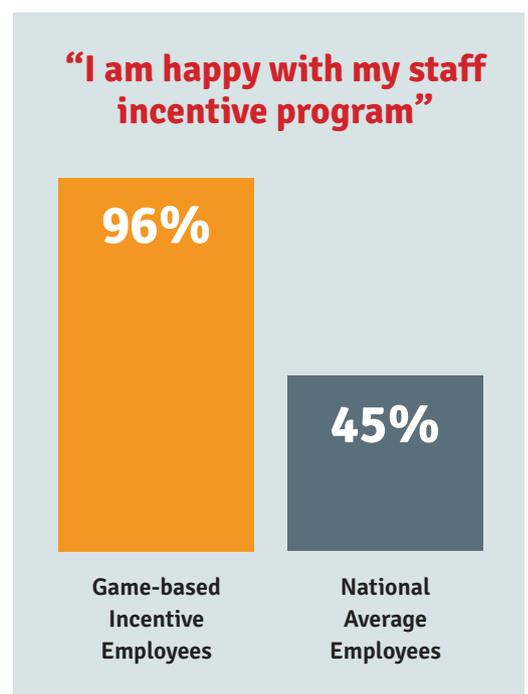
# Games in the workplace

**While there may be obvious benefits for employees, what are the benefits for employers?**

**In recent decades with advances in technology, computer games have becoming increasingly more and more popular. People can now access games at home through PCs and games consoles, while people on the move can access them through mobile phones, tablets and hand-held devices. Today people spend more money on games than on movies and DVDs combined. But why is this good news for businesses and organisations?**

There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that people who play computer games have many of the talents and skills that the modern employer is seeking. Research shows that game players are more attentive to tasks and more loyal to their employers than their non-gaming counterparts. In a recent news article by the BBC, it published the results of a study undertaken by Dr. Jeffrey Goldstein of the University of Utrecht, Netherlands. The article called “Games at Work May Be Good for You,” stated that there is clear evidence to suggest that the idea of allowing people to play games at work increases worker morale and productivity, concluding that instead of games being a waste of time at work, they can help with personal productivity and make people feel better about their jobs.

The study also indicated that different types of games can have different effects on the people playing those games, and went on to say that introducing competitive games within a competitive environment (such as a sales floor or call centre) could play a significant part in increasing this competition. This may not be unfamiliar to anyone who has worked in or managed a call centre environment, as many such organisations operate games designed to motivate employees to reach daily or monthly objectives. But what might be surprising are some of the facts and figures revealed by studies and reports into this field. For example, 96% of employees who are currently enrolled in a game-based incentive have a positive opinion of the scheme (with 91% reporting that the games helped them focus on organizational goals), compared with just 45% of those who participate in an “ordinary” incentive scheme. These figures suggest that not only are game-based incentives more desirable to employees, but also indicates that careful consideration should first be given into the type of incentive programme that you plan to implement - getting your staff to buy into the scheme from the beginning (as employee participation in the design of incentive system leads to greater performance gains than would be otherwise be realised if the incentive system is simply assigned to employees) would appear to be another key to the success or failure of any incentive scheme.



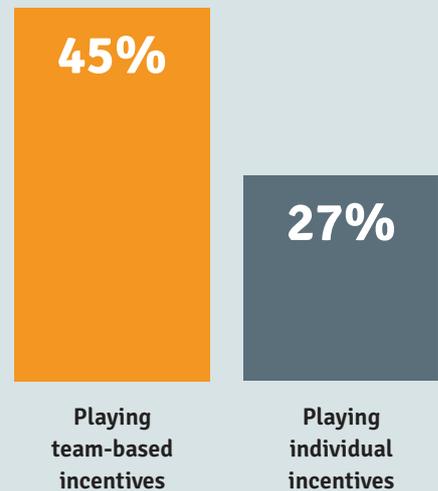
This is all well and good that employees who play games are happier employees than those who don't play games, but what about the bottom line, what does the company get out of it? Well, according to a recent report published by the Incentive Research Foundation, they found that incentivised individuals increased their performance by 27% on average, while when an extra element of competition was added, like team based games, performance almost doubled to an incredible 45%. It is thought that this dramatic increase proves that peer pressure adds significant value to the success of the incentive programme. Further evidence can be found in Anne-Marie Tobin's article called "Video Games May be Beneficial to the Brain". She reports the findings of a study at McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada, which concludes that "When non-gamers are compared to gamers, gamers are much more accurate at their tasks".

The knee-jerk reaction to the thought of introducing games into the workplace often sounds something like "it's a place of work, not an amusement arcade". Managers and Senior Management often imagine that employees will spend most of their day playing games and little time doing what they are being paid to do, but studies have shown that on average just 9.5 minutes per week are spent playing the games, and the average person logged in to play 3.5 times per week. Added to this, games that could be played over the internet showed that a large proportion (42%) of employees played their games at home, with some employees reporting that they let their children play the games as a reward for completing homework and chores.

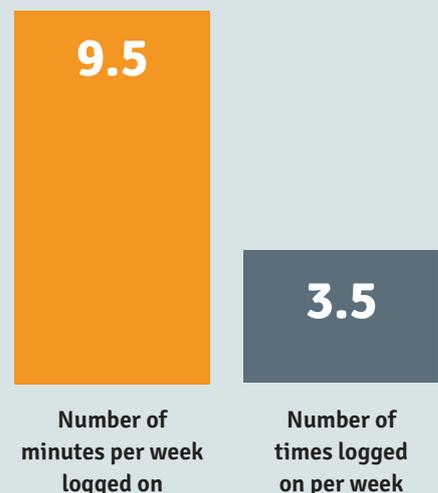
Another key finding is that employees who regularly play games are up to 12% more loyal and care more about the fate of the business they work for. This is not just a key finding in younger players, but around the same percentage was found in older players too. At a time when companies are looking to increase staff retention figures, this increase in employee loyalty could save UK businesses millions of pounds in lost revenue, when you consider the cost of recruiting new members of staff (including advertising, interviewing, training, lost productivity, and lost sales).

In conclusion, the consensus by experts and researchers in this field seem to suggest that combining a gaming element with staff incentives produce higher levels of motivation, performance and staff retention. Yet simply deciding to implement a game-based incentive programme is just the beginning of creating a successful staff incentive scheme. There are many other factors to consider in order for it to be a success, including the type of rewards, the frequency of the reward process, the length of the scheme and the perceived chance of winning to name just a few. These are topics will go into more detail in future publications, but for now we will leave you with a quote from Aubrey Daniels (one of the world's foremost authority on applying the scientifically-proven laws of human behavior to the workplace) about games in the workplace and one of the key components to shaping and managing human behavior in the workplace, "If the popularity of games is pervasive, then why not use games as a reward for good behavior?".

### Increase in work related performance



### Time spent playing game-based incentives



**Incentive Maker makes it quick and easy for anyone to build and implement a professional game-based staff incentive programme for their company with very little investment and with no technical skills. For further information about Incentive Maker, visit [www.incentive-maker.com](http://www.incentive-maker.com)**