

Recruitment:

time to up your game

Job candidates will drop out of your recruitment process if your assessments have too much gamification, says Andreas Lohff



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When assessing job candidates, gamification can help to differentiate your hiring process, engage your candidates and boost your employer brand. But be careful. Our research shows that if your assessments have too much gamification – or if you include the wrong type of gamification – your candidates will start to ‘tune out’.

In assessment, gamification is an umbrella term which covers games, gamified assessments and game-based assessments. Interactive games are an enticing option if you’re looking to attract (but not measure) applicants. They can become viral marketing tools that promote your employer brand. However, if you’re looking to assess candidates, you’ll need something different.

Gamified assessments are proven psychometric instruments which feature game-style elements. These are different to game-based assessments, which are purpose-built games that review a user’s behaviour by the way they ‘play’ the game. The reason for considering either of these options is to make your assessment experience more engaging for candidates.

The goal of assessment is to improve the job-person match in your organisation. Get this match right in your selection process and you can reduce attrition, absenteeism, interpersonal conflict and burnout across your organisation. However, there’s a fine line between delivering an assessment experience that is acceptable to candidates – and providing something which is perceived as disrespectful or insincere.

Getting a job is a very serious business for a candidate. They only have one chance to shine, so assessment is a high-stakes situation for them. Their assessment results could potentially have a significant impact on their life (and on the success of your organisation).

As a recruiter, you clearly want your assessment process to be robust, fair and valid. Candidates also want to be assessed fairly and objectively. But, more than that, they want to be sure that what is measured in the assessment process is a good representation of what is needed in the role. They certainly want their application to be taken seriously – and, ideally, they’d like a process that is engaging. The challenge for employers is to balance all of these requirements. The best way to do this is to use assessments that are both valid and engaging.

This is where gamified assessments have the upper hand. At its core, a gamified assessment is a psychometric test that will provide insights about a candidate’s job-relevant cognitive ability or personality. However, game elements – such as levels, badges and rewards – are built in, to appeal to candidates.

In contrast, the core of a game-based assessment is a ‘game’. These tools are better suited to low-stakes situations, for example keeping candidates engaged whilst they are in your applicant pool. If you used a game-based assessment for selection purposes, rejected candidates could challenge the basis of your selection decision. There is little evidence of the validity of game-based assessments, so it would be difficult to legally-defend any decision and prove that you made it for job-relevant reasons. Fundamentally, every assessment that you use should have detailed supporting evidence to confirm that it actually measures what it is supposed to measure.

What is ‘too much gamification’?

Our research shows that certain aspects of gamification should – and should not – be included in the assessment experience. For example, we found that candidates like completing designated challenges that unlock different levels and enable them to progress. They like receiving immediate feedback and they like assessments that are interactive and challenging.

However, anything which identifies too strongly as a ‘game’ is perceived as inappropriate for recruitment and unprofessional. Candidates don’t like sound effects, such as button-click sounds or background music; they didn’t like ‘dissolves’ or other fancy transitions from one section to another.

The conclusion here is that gamification elements can enhance the assessment experience for candidates ... up to a point. But beyond a certain threshold, the benefits tail off. If you use too much gamification – or if you include the disliked elements – your candidates will drop out of your selection process.

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Gamification is certainly not the only option for assessment. Our research shows that millennials (digital natives) tend to prefer gamified assessments – and candidates in certain sectors such as the media, advertising and IT may prefer a gamified approach. Sometimes, traditional assessments – or a combination of different assessment approaches – may be the best option. It greatly depends on the likely preferences of your applicants.

New ways of gamifying proven psychometric assessments will undoubtedly be introduced in the future. New levels of customisation will further enable employers to differentiate their recruitment approaches with brand-specific gamified assessments. These will be underpinned by cognitive technologies and Artificial Intelligence to create a highly engaging and interactive candidate experience.

Whether you're considering introducing gamification into your talent acquisition process now or in the future, always make sure that the assessments you choose are grounded in scientifically-validated psychometric rigour. Ensure that the assessment feels appropriate to the role; give every applicant an equal chance of success, with no adverse impact, and explain to your candidates what you're assessing and how their performance data will be used. Remember, if an assessment doesn't provide meaningful, job-relevant insights, it won't help you to make a fair and objective selection decision.

A new white paper from cut-e, entitled 'Gamification in assessment', can be freely downloaded from: www.cut-e.com/white-paper-gamification



About the author & cut-e

Andreas Lohff is a strategic assessment specialist and a distinguished business psychologist. As CEO of Aon's Assessment Solutions, he leads the company's growth and manages its international development within the Global Talent, Rewards and Performance practice. Andreas co-founded cut-e Group, a global talent management and assessment specialist, in 2002 and was its managing director when the company was acquired by Aon plc in 2017. cut-e and Aon, as Aon's Assessment Solutions, undertake 30 million assessments each year in 90 countries and 40 languages.

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More about gamification?

www.cut-e.com/online-assessment/gamification-in-recruitment



About cut-e

Founded in 2002, cut-e (pronounced 'cute') provides online tests, questionnaires and gamified assessments for attraction, selection, talent management and development. The company's smart, valid and innovative psychometrics have made it the preferred partner of multinational organisations.

In May 2017, cut-e was acquired by Aon plc, a leading global professional services firm providing a broad range of risk, retirement and health solutions. cut-e now operates as part of Aon's global offering in talent solutions, helping clients achieve sustainable growth by driving business performance through people performance. cut-e and Aon, as Aon's Assessment Solutions, undertake 30 million assessments each year in 90 countries and 40 languages.