



# GAMING YOUR CHANGE

HOW TO MAKE ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS FUN AND MEASURABLE



WRITTEN BY

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# AN INTRODUCTION

## OUR POINT OF VIEW

There's no getting around it, ***change is hard***. Whether you want people to change their behaviors, learn a new skill, or get up to speed on current ways of working, it's a struggle to get employees to engage in the change.

What makes change even harder is that we're often required to move an entire ***company*** at the same time. Convincing departments full of people to adapt their behaviors can feel like a Herculean task—and organizations everywhere are struggling to pull it off. Nine in 10 are experiencing major organizational changes, yet only one-third of them are adapting quickly enough to meet their goals.<sup>i</sup>

Most executives believe organizational change will continue occurring at a rapidly increasing pace and greater magnitude in the coming years.<sup>ii</sup> That means it's vitally important that we know how to provide the right information, at the right time, to the right people, in the right way, to get people to ***want*** to do what they ***have*** to do.

A lot of labor goes into pulling off change. If we're smart about it, we can break through the noise, engage employees early and often, measure our impact, and make the experience of getting ready for change more fun...all using game-based principles.

# GAMES—AT WORK.

You want your change to win the hearts and minds of your people, igniting a desire to participate. There's a snowball effect at play. The more your people are actively engaged in the change, the more they'll encourage their peers to join in. Making change inviting and fun drives participation, which increases everyone's readiness for the change. And all of that directly impacts the success of your project—and your business.

So how do you make organizational change fun and engaging? Invite your people to play (literally).

People like to have fun at work—whether they're new hires or top executives. According to research published by the scientific journal *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 61 percent of surveyed CEOs, CFOs, and other senior executives take daily breaks at work to play games.<sup>iii</sup>

And all that fun really pays off. A positive work environment is one of the top five drivers of employee engagement.<sup>iv</sup> Game research shows that injecting play into any task makes it more impactful, fun, and motivating. Social gamification techniques can create shared experiences that entice your people to participate.

Pairing social game mechanics with change management best practices and behavioral science can lead to a fun, measurable, and integrated approach that gamifies change adoption and organizational readiness.

What we've learned from gamifying change is organizations can use five design principles to inspire behavior change in their people.

**In this whitepaper, we'll cover how to make organizational readiness:**



## RELEVANT

To your audience.



## AN EXPERIENCE

That fits into the performer's life.



## OPTIONAL

With rewards that matter.



## COMPETITIVE

To create community.



## MEASURABLE

To quantify readiness.



# *Make it relevant.*

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*Cutting through all that noise is tricky, but it's necessary for igniting people's desire to participate.*

# MAKE IT RELEVANT.

## IN ANY ORGANIZATION, A CHANGE INITIATIVE IS JUST ONE OF MANY PROJECTS GOING ON.

**There's a lot of noise, content, and messages flying around through email, intranet sites, and the proverbial office watercooler.**

Cutting through all that noise is tricky, but it's necessary for igniting people's desire to participate.

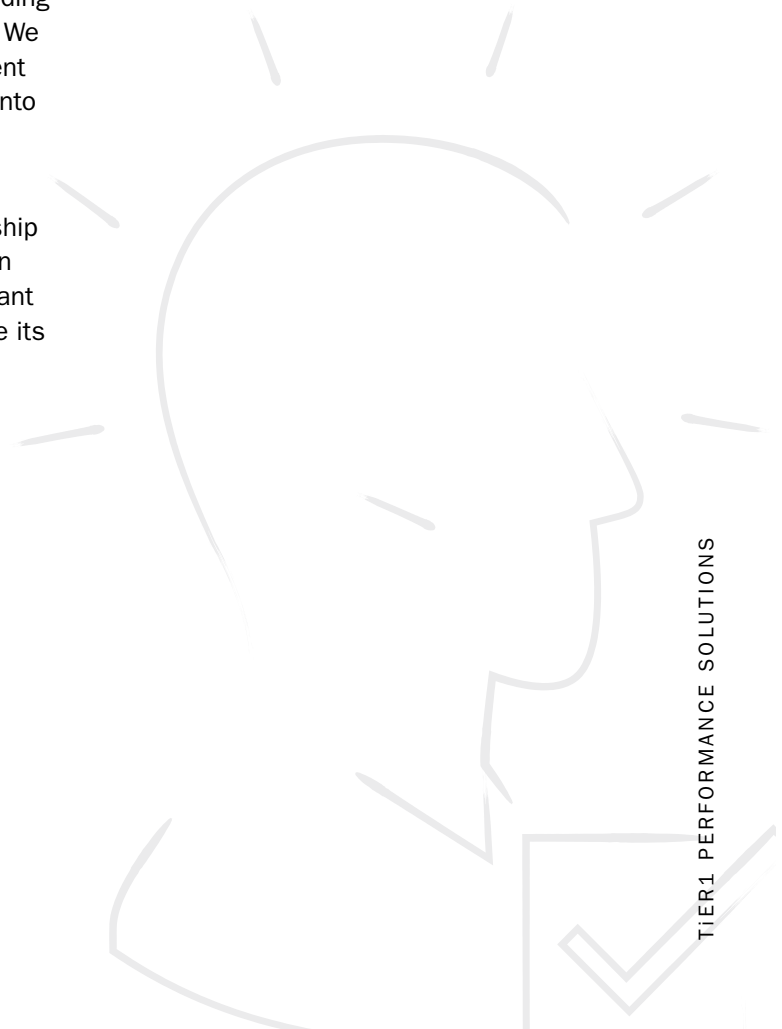
Your audience wants to understand why your change should matter to them, their job, and the customers they serve. Otherwise, they probably won't devote time or energy to care about the desired behavior change (let alone learn it). Making your change relevant to your people's interests, goals, and responsibilities will get them engaged, participating, and contributing to the change.

So how do you do that? Most change management plans involve push communications, like sending out emails, to "push" information to people. We recommend infusing your change management with game design tactics that "pull" people into your message instead.

Gamifying your change can invite people to participate by giving them a sense of ownership over their journey and a sense of belonging in the overall change narrative. When people want to participate in something because they see its importance and feel its relevance in their day-to-day lives, engagement soars.

### **How to make change relevant to your audience:**

- Create a meaningful narrative with compelling visual design.
- Inspire change through interesting challenges or scenarios at the right level of difficulty.
- Provide your people with choice to encourage participation.





*Make it an experience.*

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*Bonus points if you provide  
people with opportunities to  
practice the desired behaviors.*

# MAKE IT AN EXPERIENCE.

## AS KIDS, MANY OF US SPENT HOURS PLAYING GAMES.

**Whether they were video games or just playing pretend in the backyard, time wasn't important back then—only the game mattered.**

Now that we've grown up (and are juggling jobs, families, and other responsibilities), we spend our time more selectively. We choose games and activities that fit into the cadence of our lives, and we ignore ones that don't.

The same can be said for how we work. We want our tasks and to-do items to fit within our work. Yet change initiatives, by their very nature, ask people to adapt their work, behaviors, and skills to fit the desired state. The change might be time consuming, actively taking people away from doing their day jobs. This creates resistance to participating in the change.

By following game design principles, we can craft accessible experiences that make it easier for people to engage in the change. For example, most people are willing to spend five or 10 minutes learning something new. So, break down large tasks into digestible experiences that are short, easy to absorb, and crafted to fit someone's learning style and work environment. (Bonus points if you provide people with opportunities to practice the desired behaviors.)

### **How to make change an experience that fits into people's lives:**

Make content elastic and flexible so that it can be experienced in small chunks over time.

Keep content, objectives, and challenges short, time-bound, and role-based.

Find ways for people to practice the desired behaviors on the go or in the workspace.





# *Make it optional*

WITH REWARDS.

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*By tailoring rewards to people's preferences, you'll engage various types of people in your organization at the same time.*

# MAKE IT OPTIONAL WITH REWARDS.

## CHANGE CAN BRING ABOUT NEGATIVE EMOTIONS.

(From the moment you announce impending change to well beyond implementation)

People may feel out of control, uneasy, and overwhelmed with the new behaviors and tasks to manage. They may even feel as if the change is happening to them or being forced upon them.

A gameful way to alleviate these feelings is to create a voluntary experience around the change that people want to be part of, and then follow up their participation by rewarding them in different ways. By tailoring rewards to people's preferences, you'll engage various types of people in your organization at the same time.

A quick lesson in game design. There are three common types of players: competitors, completionists, and collaborators. Competitors are pretty self-explanatory—they want to be number one! (And they really want everyone to know they're number one.) Completionists

want to explore and finish things; they love checking things off a list. Collaborators enjoy working as a group towards a common goal. They value social rewards gained from a community more than competitive ones.

For competitors, use leaderboards and friendly competition to give them what they really want: bragging rights. A missing check mark is highly motivating to completionists, so give them a daily number of challenges to complete. And make sure you include team-based play and interaction to appeal to a collaborator's need for community.

### How to make change optional with rewards that matter:

- Make participation voluntary so that it feels optional (even if the change is required).
- Reward participation iteratively throughout the change process, not just after it's rolled out.
- Define the behaviors that matter and create positive feedback loops.
- Craft rewards that align with your people's intrinsic motivation and values.





# *Make it competitive*

TO BUILD COMMUNITY.

*Successful change requires everyone to work together toward a common end goal.*

# MAKE IT COMPETITIVE TO BUILD COMMUNITY.

## CHANGE CAN BE AN ISOLATING EXPERIENCE.

**Each person is focused on how their individual skills and behaviors fit (or don't fit) in the desired state.**

Without a support system, it can be easy for people to struggle in silence by themselves.

Yet, successful change requires everyone to work together toward a common end goal.

When everyone in an organization adapts their behaviors to the desired state, then everyone wins. (And if we don't get ready for the change, we all lose.)

Earlier we discussed three types of players and the different rewards that motivate them. Another key insight we can gain from game design and player types is understanding how these three player types can interact and play together. By incorporating competitive and collaborative game mechanics, you can create a social community centered around your change initiative.

Social communities serve multiple purposes:

- Alleviating frustrations and fears to remind participants that they are not facing change alone.
- Acting as a support system in which participants can compete against and learn from others.
- Facilitating conversations with management so that everyone feels in the loop.

A social community can help your teams work together when preparing for the change. By embarking together on a quest for readiness, they can share information, practice, collaborate, and offer peer support. The community also unites your people with the common goal of co-creating the change. Instead of feeling like change is happening to them, your people build the change together.

### **How to incorporate community-building game mechanics into your change:**

Create a common end goal that depends on everyone's participation.

Establish dynamics where teams depend on each other to win and succeed in challenges against other teams.

Incorporate social pressure by publicly bragging on winners and calling up laggards.



GO TEAM!



*Make it measurable.*

*Data can help you predict  
where adoption may be lacking  
and quickly address it.*

# MAKE IT MEASURABLE.

**ONE OF THE HARDEST PARTS OF ANY BIG CHANGE IS KNOWING JUST HOW READY EVERYONE REALLY IS.**

**The worst feeling is investing considerable time, money, and effort into a change initiative, only to wonder whether everyone will be successful on Day 1 of the future state.**

Leaders want immediate visibility into the organizational adoption rate so they can compare the progress of one department, region, or business unit to another. Incorporating real-time data in your change management plan will help you know where your people are throughout the process.

Data can help you predict where adoption may be lacking and quickly address it. It can also spotlight the individuals who are truly championing the effort. Plus, when leaders can pinpoint readiness and engagement levels across the organization, they can plan for and mitigate potential gaps or performance issues. When you can quantify your organizational readiness and adjust your efforts accordingly, you'll lose less sleep wondering if your people will be ready for the big day.

Case in point: When a specialized services and products company incorporated game design and measurement into their change management plan, they saw a population of about 1,200 participants complete 95% of their challenges with a rate of 91% challenges completed on time.<sup>v</sup> Company leaders could identify risks and readiness across multiple locations and teams well before the go-live date of their change.

Games use data for more than administration and reporting. Gameful data can motivate and incentivize people to keep striving and working toward the end goal. By making progress toward readiness visible and personal, you get the added benefit of individual engagement and loyalty.

#### **How to think about measurement like a game designer:**

Define success through what you track and measure to fully understand your readiness.  
Visualize progress towards readiness at the organizational, team, and individual levels.  
Use reports and metrics to focus leader energy and provide insights, not just information.



# GAME ON.

## YOUR PEOPLE ARE AT THE HEART OF ANY CHANGE.

**Their success and readiness determines the success of the overall change.**

So how do you help your people be more excited, more productive, and more ready? **GAMES.**

A gamified change adoption plan can make organizational readiness fun and measurable. Using game design principles, you can invite your people to “play,” igniting a desire to participate across your organization. (After all, being invited to play a game is way more engaging than being told what to do.)

Change that is relevant, experiential, rewarding, part of a community, and measurable will engage people at all levels of your organization. These tactics can move people from resisting behavior change that they *have* to do, to participating in games that they *want* to complete with their peers. By gamifying change adoption and readiness, you can ensure the long-term success of your next change initiative—and have some fun along the way.

## THIS STUFF REALLY WORKS.

We recently used game mechanics to help a large health insurance company roll out three new enterprise systems across six teams and nine roles. They achieved **100% user readiness** for the systems rollout, and one-third of their users became change champions.

*“I’ll never do another change project without this strategy.”*

**Sr. Director of Customer Care and Project Sponsor**

*“This is brilliant.  
Thanks for appealing to  
my competitive side!”*

**Participant and End User**

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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## **RICH MARMURA**

### **Senior Gamification Consultant**

Rich has a strong background in designing, developing, and managing video games, toys, and amusement park attractions. Prior to joining TiER1, he worked as a lead game designer for Zynga, WGT Media, and TinyCo, working on games such as *Farmville* and *Family Guy: The Quest for Stuff*. Rich has also served as the digital engagement content supervisor and project manager for the City of Pittsburgh.

Rich received his MET in entertainment technology from Carnegie Mellon University and his BA in theatre and political science from Westminster College.



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## **CAITLIN ROBIE**

### **Senior Solutions Change Management Consultant**

Caitlin has successfully partnered with leadership teams and project stakeholders to design and execute communication and change management strategies for large system implementations including SAP, Oracle, Siebel, and PeopleSoft. Her project experience and background support a variety of change management, HR, operations, and organizational development initiatives.

Caitlin is also a skilled researcher and a member of TiER1's Research and Innovation Team, leading research projects with the United States Air Force. Her research experience helps her collect and analyze data to create innovative solutions for engaging audiences and promoting desired results.

Caitlin received her MA in industrial and organizational psychology from Seattle Pacific University, and her BA in psychology and business administration from University of Dayton.

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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## DUSTIN SHELL

### Director of Innovation

Dustin is passionate about people, learning, and technology (in that order). He loves pushing the limits of technology to help people and organizations do their best work and realize their full potential.

Dustin has a strong background in multimedia production, eLearning authoring, instructional design, curriculum design, and learning strategy. He also has experience designing, implementing, and researching learning space design and online scenario-based environments. Currently, Dustin specializes in mobile learning strategy, implementing enterprise social intranets, and gamifying learning environments to improve engagement in the workplace.

Dustin is a published author on topics such as learning space design, scaffolding and motivation, and writing for eLearning. He recently spoke on gamifying change at FocusOn Learning 2016. Dustin received his master's in instructional design from the University of Cincinnati, and his BA in music composition from Cincinnati Christian University.

# WANT TO LEARN MORE?

This whitepaper only scratches the surface of using game mechanics to drive organizational change and readiness. We really geek out on this stuff, because we've seen firsthand how effective game design thinking is in helping people perform beautifully.

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I'd like to talk to somebody about this topic.



*improving*  
**ORGANIZATIONS**  
*through the*  
**PERFORMANCE**  
*of PEOPLE* *to* **BUILD**  
**A BETTER**  
*World*

**WHO IS  
TIER1?**

TIER1 was founded in 2002. We're an employee owned company, so we believe in long-term success—in the way we design solutions and in how we operate. We're passionate about developing people-centric solutions to solve business challenges in organizational evolution, strategic change, and talent development.

We've done this for many high-performing organizations including GE, P&G, NASA, Delta, Humana, Pier 1 Imports, SAP, AbbVie, Macy's, Carnival, McDonald's, and FedEx...to name a few.

We believe that the potential of organizations is rooted in the potential of people. By unleashing the best of both, we will change the world.

**LEARN MORE AT [TIER1PERFORMANCE.COM](http://TIER1PERFORMANCE.COM)**

# REFERENCES

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- <sup>ii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>iii</sup> Jane McGonigal, Reality Is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World (New York: Penguin Books, 2011).
- <sup>iv</sup> Josh Bersin, “The Five Elements of a ‘Simply Irresistible’ Organization,” Forbes, April 10, 2014, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/joshbersin/2014/04/04/the-five-elements-of-a-simply-irresistible-organization/#7e0f594951b1>
- <sup>v</sup> Case study (TiER1).