



# game-based learning **in** **action**



An irresistible  
combination when  
put into practice

**2021**

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## game-based learning in action

The market for game-based learning was already rising steadily before COVID-19 hit, but it has skyrocketed since the digital acceleration that's taken place as a result of the global pandemic. Growth forecasts for the next few years have multiplied. In the corporate world, ever more companies are experiencing the advantages of an innovative methodology that's adapted to our current context.

In this whitepaper, we focus on the components that make game-based learning a winning bet not only in academic environments but also in corporate ones. We zero in on the latter, citing professionals from some of the companies already implementing game-based learning, to prove that this option really does work successfully in practice.



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An irresistible combination when put into practice



## Why talk about **game-based learning** in organizations today?

The digital acceleration we've been experiencing since the beginning of this decade has shone a spotlight on the need to renew the virtual formats with which we develop our teams' talents. A gap has come to light in many companies between what their employees expect from their corporate training and what their Human Resources (HR) departments are offering.

Many organizations have corroborated during this time that merely turning face-to-face training into a videoconference isn't enough. Traditional e-learning's main weakness has become even more clear—the lack of engagement.

As the [Contradictions of Corporate Training 2021](#) report explains, employees maintain that the main disadvantages of the online training they



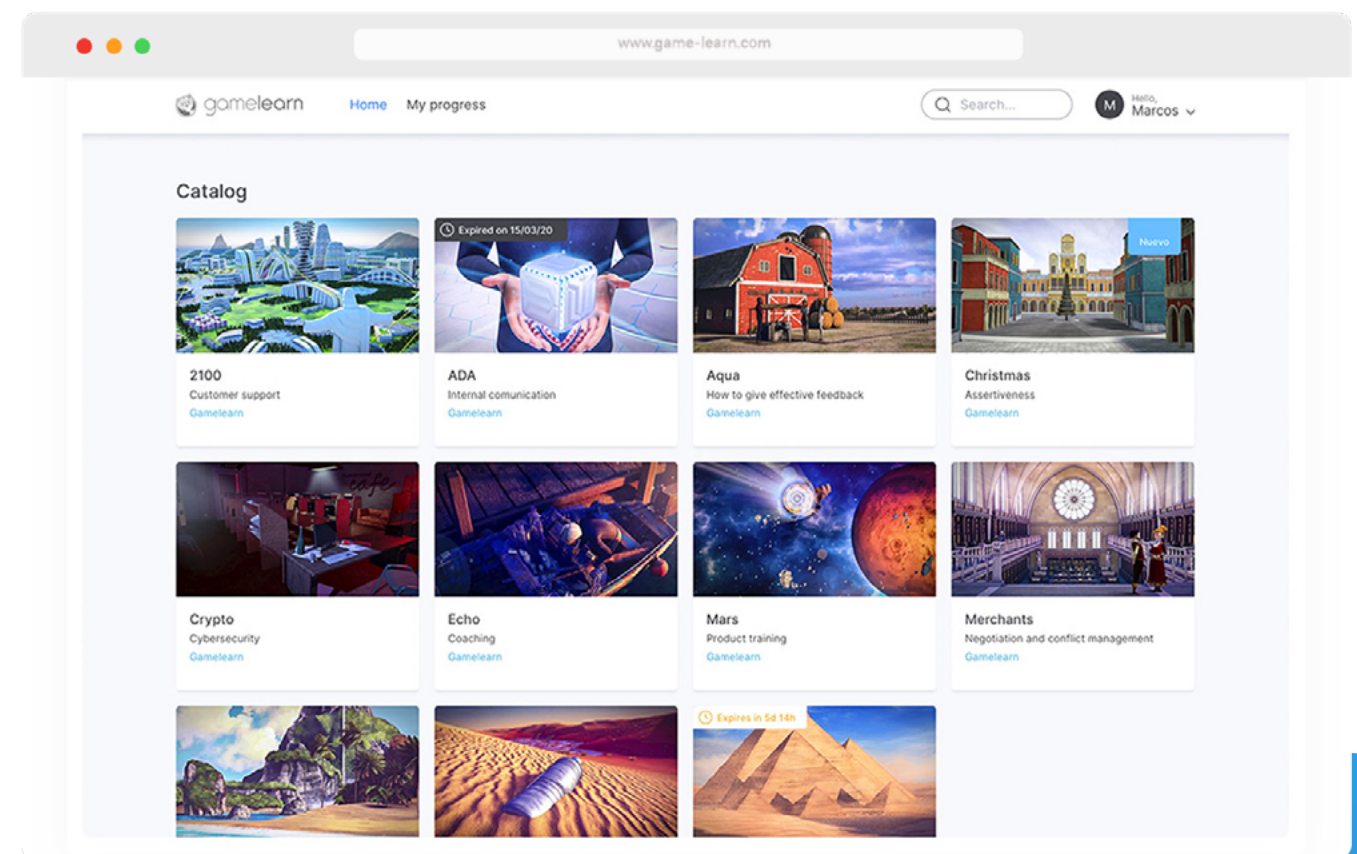
receive are that it's boring (33%) and that it lacks interactivity (19%) and immediate feedback (9%). On the other hand, over half of HR professionals consider that training would be more effective if it included real-life simulations.

One of our main goals currently is to find the ideal midpoint that can satisfy employees' expectations and meet the needs and objectives of HR departments. HR professionals are conscious of the fact that they need to provide more effective formats for their corporate training, but they are limited by various factors, among them their typically tight budgets.

It's clear that one of the main challenges for corporate training managers is finding the balance between employees' preferences regarding online formats and HR professionals' restrictions in terms of costs and objectives.

In that sense, many companies that invest in innovation and digitization across all departments are already on the right track, implementing methodologies that are close to that ideal midpoint in corporate training. And the methodology with the most potential to achieve it is, undoubtedly, game-based learning. With it, HR teams can achieve their training objectives and make an impact on the business, while employees enjoy a format that engages them and allows them to assimilate and retain what they learn while playing.

The training video game is already within reach of any organization that wants to train its teams in an engaging and efficient way. In this whitepaper, we want to examine the essential elements that make up game-based learning's winning formula and how numerous companies already apply it. For this purpose, some companies that have implemented or are going to implement Gamelearn's video games as part of their corporate training strategy have shared their perspectives on the components of game-based learning with us.



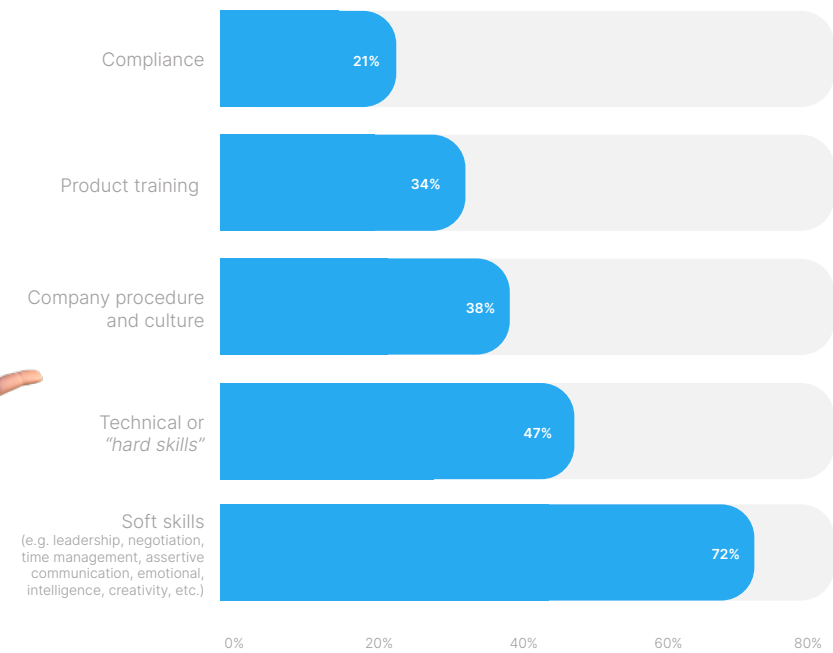
Screenshot of Gamelearn's platform showing catalog of serious games

# The winning formula for effective game-based learning

- 1 Applicable, quality content
- 2 Engaging Storytelling and Gamification
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The [Contradictions of Corporate Training 2021](#) report surveyed over 1,500 HR professionals and employees in different sectors. One of the questions for employees included in this survey

was about the content of the training they received at their companies. The majority (72%) confirmed having mainly received training to develop soft skills.



⬆ Data obtained from Gamelearn's survey of 1,500 HR professionals and employees from various sectors conducted in December 2020



Natasa Basic  
FastForward and Management Trainee Program Manager



“Rather than singling out one specific element of game-based learning, I would say that it is the fine blend of all that makes the Gamelearn serious games impactful, both on experience and development of the learner: quality content for each skill being developed interwoven with an interactive storyline and gamification that makes learning more engaging and fun, as well as personalized feedback and materials the learner can download and keep for future reference as a reminder and inspiration for further application in real day-to-day work what (s)he has been learning and practicing in the simulated environment”.

[Josh Bersin](#), HR and talent development expert, cites an IBM study pointing out that 120 million professionals will need to upskill and reskill in the upcoming years to be prepared for the new corporate environment. And this skill gap doesn't affect technical, hard skills (mainly digital) as much as interpersonal or soft skills. Professionals are therefore compelled to use more and more intersectional skills, such as analytical thinking, active learning, creativity, critical thinking, complex problem solving, emotional intelligence, etc. In essence, the skills that allow us to take on the tasks where machines have been shown to be even less efficient.

Game-based learning is a format able to achieve the objective of developing these highly demanded skills better than any other. Quality training video games favor the experiential learning of applicable educational

content, with a solid theoretical base and relevant practical cases.

It's essential to make content directly applicable to real life for it to be truly practical and useful to any workforce. That's why it's so important, no matter what skills we want to develop, to have a solid theoretical base to nurture and give meaning to the realistic simulations that allow the player to learn while immersed in the video game.

We mustn't forget that content rules in the learning process. Whether our learning objectives are related to cognitive skills (learning comprehension), psychomotor skills (requiring our motor skills like in flight simulators), or emotional skills (involving our emotions to work on new attitudes) we must always keep them as a priority.

Serious games must incorporate educational content that students can assimilate in order to achieve their learning objectives. Only then can learners improve the professional and personal skills which the training program seeks to teach. The goal is to balance fun with the educational function, to “encapsulate” learning within an entertaining, irresistible format. That is the secret.



Darrin Martin  
**Training and Development Manager**  
en Volkswagen of America Inc



“Quality content is first and foremost the most important thing for effective learning. Without quality content, I believe any of the other elements will fail to have the intended impact”.

“Storytelling I believe is the most powerful of these in my opinion, and could be incredibly impactful to our learners. In the automotive industry, every customer journey has a story, and every employee’s job is to better understand that story in order to properly sell, diagnose, and service vehicles. The better job we can do helping them familiarize themselves with these “story” concepts, the more effective they can be at their jobs!”

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Gamification and storytelling are intrinsically tied together. Every game has a story. How can a board game keep us engaged for hours, moving pieces around a board, exchanging tokens, following clues...? Because they tell a story and we want to know how it ends. The beginning of the story is already defined, but the ending is determined by how you play the game.

At Gamelearn, what we’ve done is take that very principle and applied it to the online world. We create strong stories and gamify them. That’s what keeps people engaged throughout our training courses. Ultimately, the fact is that people, no matter what age, like games. We like being part of a story, finding out where it’ll go next, getting rewards and points, and competing to be the winner.



Ibrahim Jabary,  
**CEO of Gamelearn**



“Simply put, gamification is the introduction of different game playing elements — such as point scoring, competing with others, and rules of play — into a traditionally non-game environment in order to encourage user engagement.”



GAMIFICATION CAN EVEN CHANGE  
PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOR AND HABITS

Game mechanics can turn any boring task into an adventure. If you've ever been immersed in a game, you've probably noticed the enormous power gamification has over us. When used correctly, gamification can even [change people's behavior and habits](#). Add a compelling story to that, and you have a surefire way to keep your employees engaged and motivated, which has been demonstrated to increase productivity and commitment to the organization.

Gamification has long been integrated into education because it addresses the perennial challenge of making learning fun, interesting, and engaging. Let's face it, training can be boring. Watching a long PowerPoint presentation or reading a block of text aren't exactly thrilling activities. But it doesn't have to be this way. What if employees could have fun while learning? That's exactly what we can achieve with gamification. Studies confirm that [95% of employees](#) enjoy using gamified tools at work.

The evidence from dozens of companies is clear—gamification increases the time dedicated to training and course completion rates. By making learning fun and incorporating an interesting story, employees get involved in the course. They want to know the ending, they want to keep playing, and they want to finish it. The result is that employees spend more time learning and retain more knowledge, which directly impacts the organization's results.

There's no question about it, training that uses gamification and storytelling creates a more motivated, committed, highly skilled, and productive workforce. Which is why [many companies](#) are already using this disruptive methodology to transform their corporate training programs.

Diana Cubero  
Talent & People Experience Manager



"When a person is interested in Kiabi and goes into our employment site, the first thing they do is play. In those games, we calibrate the candidates' cultural fit through their interaction in different minigames. And once they become 'Kiabers', we offer them gamification as an alternative to traditional soft skills development."

Diana Cubero  
Talent & People Experience Manager



"Storytelling is so important in capturing our kiabers' attention and having them live the games as if they were the main characters. In this way, when they apply what they've learned in their daily life, with their coworkers, clients, or teams, the knowledge has been internalized in the first person and the recall is faster."



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The final components of effective game-based learning are simulations and personalized feedback. At the core of these methods is the concept of experiential learning—learning by doing. Experiential learning, as the name suggests, is about learning from your own experience and practice. It's the evolution of the famous [70:20:10](#) model that has established itself in the training sector in recent years. This model was developed by Michael M. Lombardo and Robert W. Eichinger. Its main premise is that a person's development is divided into the following three proportions:

70%

### Experiential Learning

70% of learning comes from experience.



20%

### Social Learning

20% is acquired through observation of our surroundings and of other people.



10%

### Formal Learning

10% comes from courses, readings, and structured programs.



Simulations represent the core of “learning by doing” because they allow students to fully immerse themselves in the course material and experience the real consequences, or rewards, of their actions while remaining in a safe environment. That means students are free to make mistakes and experiment without hurting anyone or causing any real damage. This ultimately leads to a deeper understanding of the content and creates a sense of security and confidence to apply that knowledge in real life.

Simulations promote the use of critical and evaluative thinking. Because the results depend on the decisions the user makes, students are [encouraged](#) to contemplate the implications of a scenario. The simulation feels real and leads to higher engagement levels from learners. This helps them understand the more complex aspects of the course material even better—by experiencing the outcomes of certain situations firsthand.



José Antonio Armendáriz  
Training and Development Manager



“I think personalized feedback is a useful tool to make people reflect on their behavior. Practicing again and again, receiving feedback, lets the user acquire the key messages to be conscious about the change in conduct.”



## personalized feedback

When we learn by doing, it's easier to receive personalized feedback. As simulations are open-ended, there are many possible outcomes. When a player makes a decision, they immediately receive feedback based on that decision. This means the feedback they receive is adapted to that particular situation in the game, making it more relevant to the student's personal experience.

Personalized feedback has been [demonstrated](#) to positively influence learning outcomes and increase students' motivation. Receiving personalized feedback on their decisions and, especially, their strengths and weaknesses is key. This reinforces what the student has learned and immediately corrects what they get wrong, avoiding the possibility that they might interiorize those incorrect behaviors.

By immersing themselves in a realistic simulation, students can practice what they learn, and so be more prepared when they need to implement it in the real world. Realistic simulations are so important because employees want what they learn to be applicable to their jobs. A simulation is the implementation of applicable content within a realistic scenario. This is crucial in corporate training, as we need employees to be able to use, and be confident in, the skills they learn.

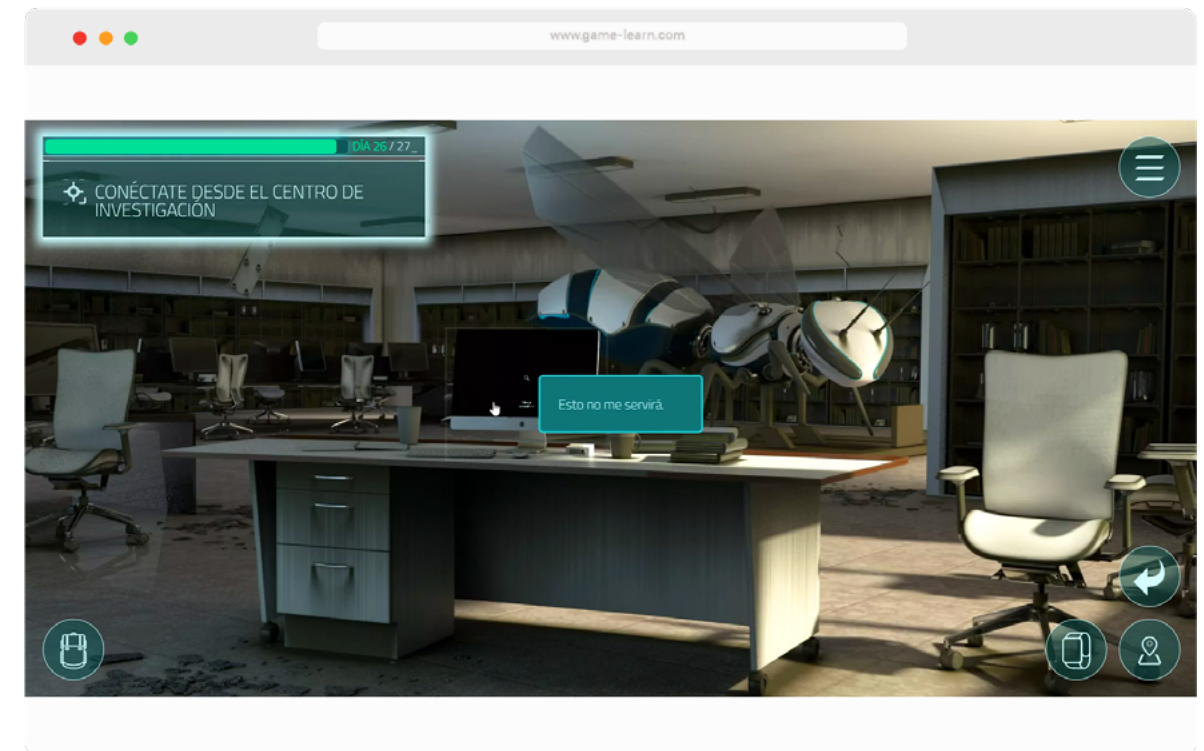
The personalized feedback that goes along with these simulations serves to course correct. It fosters the change in behavior that's necessary to truly learn new skills and impact the organization.

Claudia Ivette Zepeda Guerrero  
**Coordinadora de Capacitación**

**abbvie**

"Personalized feedback is one of the most useful elements in training, as it's an additional element that students have at the moment when they're playing the game. Our students' response to Gamelearn's games' simulators has also been very positive, they've really embraced this style of training."

## An irresistible combination when put into practice



Screenshot from ADA, a training video game developed by Gamelearn

In the previous sections, we confirmed the powerful combination of the elements of game-based learning. This methodology has been making its way into various sectors, including the corporate one, for years, but recently its rates of acceptance and growth have skyrocketed.

The continuous advance of technology, which has allowed us to perfect video games' simulators and capacity for interaction, has also contributed to their democratization. The explosion of the leisure video game market is evident, but

this format's positive reception for educational purposes in academic and professional environments is also noteworthy.

As we already explained a few years ago, all innovative technological applications, including game-based learning, are subject to a [progressive acceptance process](#). After indifference, denial, and trial, comes acceptance, supported by empirical evidence of the improvement in engagement and knowledge retention reported by numerous studies.



MANY ORGANIZATIONS ARE  
ALREADY EXPERIENCING THE  
ADVANTAGES OF GAME-BASED  
LEARNING FOR THEMSELVES

Training video games have become a top choice for renewing corporate training programs in increasingly digitalized environments. Many organizations are already experiencing the advantages of game-based learning for themselves. Some of them make it clear in this whitepaper, through the testimony of their training managers, who have overcome the stage of acceptance to fully reach the stage of success. They're already able to make digital game-based learning their own and adapt it to their needs. They recognize the ingredients of the formula we've described in detail and internalize them, taking advantage of everything this methodology can offer.

Game-based learning is no longer an unreachable chimera in most companies' corporate training. On the contrary, it's a realistic and accessible option that responds to the demands of HR professionals and their employees, who require virtual training that motivates them and immerses them in experiential learning, which makes them feel more involved.



José Antonio Armendáriz  
Training and Development Manager



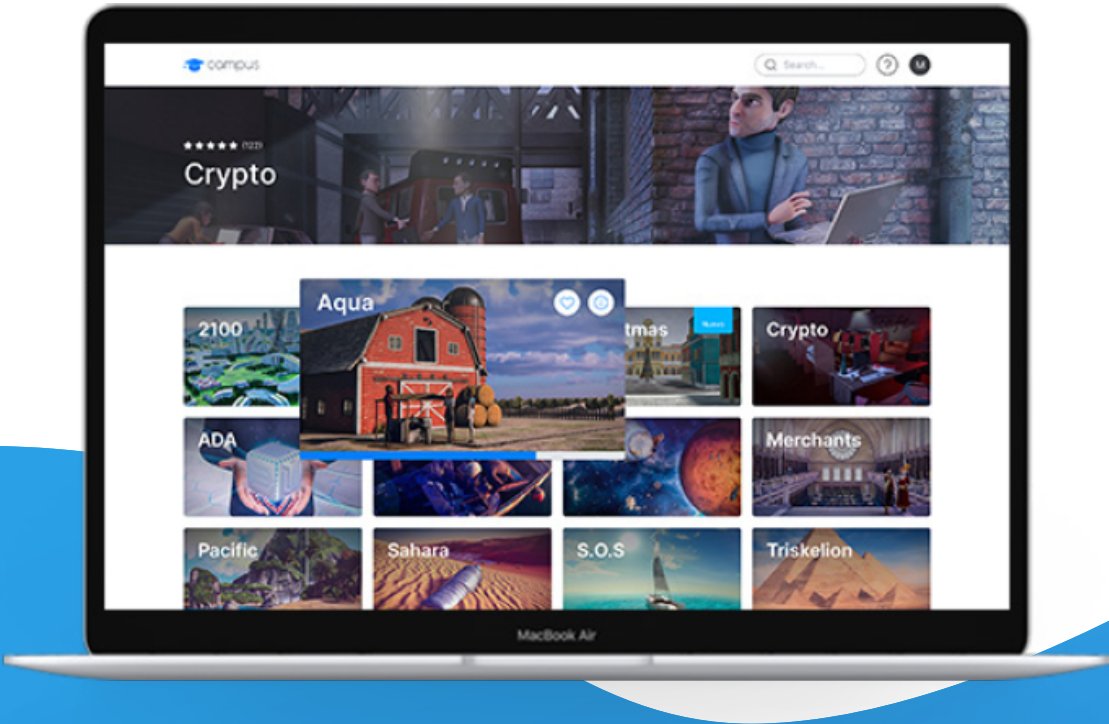
"The combination of practice with feedback, as well as the theory the simulations are based on, offer a solution 100% adapted to the user's development process, through a different learning experience."



OFFER YOUR EMPLOYEES  
the training they  
expect ...

... AND YOUR ORGANIZATION  
the results it needs

with the leading platform in  
game-based learning



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