The Full Guide
to Website Gamification

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Why gamification matters when your engagement strategy is broken

You've got traffic, you've got leads, but something's still off. Your engagement levels? Low. Conversion rates? Could be better. Traditional strategies often fall flat, leaving you wondering why your audience isn't responding.

But what if the answer lies in making your interactions more enjoyable? If you think it's about throwing random games on your website, you're missing the point.

✓ This ebook is here to show you **why gamification works**, how to implement it strategically, and — most importantly — **how it can reshape your customer experience.**

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1. What is gamification anyway? Definition and some numbers

Rewarding, unconditional. If gamification was a movie, that would be its tagline. While true on the surface level, this complex (and very much marketable nowadays) phenomenon begs further investigation.

(?) **Why?** For one thing, it is not a fleeting trend but an inherent part of how we experience our browsing reality.

(✓) **Let us explain.** Your audience is caught in an endless scroll, mindlessly swiping past the same forgettable ads and campaigns.

> **So how do you break the cycle and make them stop for you?**
> The answer might just lie in **gamification.**

But before we get ahead of ourselves, let's tackle the question:
what is gamification, anyway?

1. The science of play (and why it matters)

Humans are wired for play. Playfulness triggers our brains' reward centers, releasing feel-good chemicals like dopamine. That's why gamification works so well: it taps into our natural desire for entertainment, challenge, and accomplishments.

And when you layer that onto your marketing strategy? You've got a recipe for engagement, increased conversions, and loyalty.

Here's a **quick definition** to keep things simple:

Gamification

is the process of applying gameprinciples to non-game activities to **encourage engagement, participation, and loyalty — think challenges, rewards, and a sprinkle of friendly competition.**

example

Spin the wheel and win 1 month of Pro plan for free!

Spin now
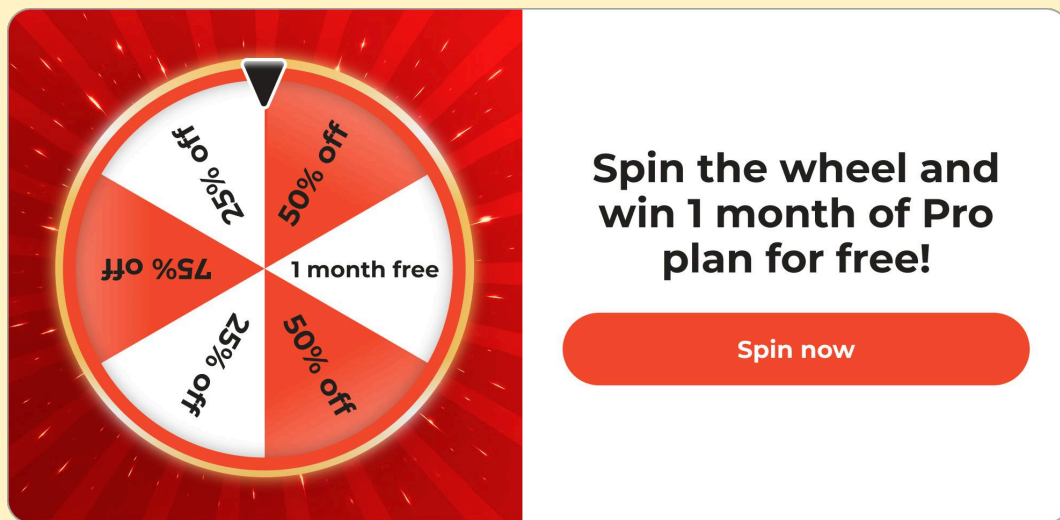
Plus it makes tasks that naturally contain zero excitement — enjoyable.

It's about creating experiences that resonate with your audience and motivate them to take action, turning routine interactions into **something exciting, rewarding, and, most importantly, memorable.** The possibilities are as vast as your creativity.

2. Breaking down the numbers

Still skeptical? Let's talk data.

24.4%

The gamification market **made** a **24.4%** CAGR progress from 2023 to 2024, with **$18.05B** and **$22.45B**, respectively, and is expected to **reach** **$94.1B** by **2032.**

200%

Gamified experiences can increase user engagement. Why? Because people are naturally drawn to activities that reward them for participating.

300%

In industries like retail, gamified campaigns drive customer acquisition, proving their pull in attracting fresh audiences. It results in an increase of ROI.

7x
higher
conversions

Gamified marketing campaigns often outperform traditional approaches by a significant margin. According to Shopify, the average conversion rate for their stores is **1.4%**, and the top **20%** benchmarks go over **3.2%**. By gamifying your users' experiences, you can **multiply** that number by seven times. This is especially true for actions like email signups or completing purchases.

60%

That's how many consumers say they're more likely to buy from a brand that offers a gamified experience. Think of loyalty programs or personalized quizzes — it's about creating moments of fun and value.

68%

Gamification encourages exploration. Sites with gamified elements see more users discovering new content or product categories.

50%

A great game-like mechanic always brings people back. Websites with gamified experiences enjoy an uptick in return visitors, building loyalty over time.

22%

People love to share these moments. Gamification can drive social sharing, turning satisfied users into brand fans.

3. The components of gamification

At its core, gamification relies on a few essential principles.
Let's break them down.

Clear goals
Every game has a mission, and gamification is no different. Whether you're asking users to complete a profile, collect points, or claim a reward, clarity is key. In gamified campaigns, the "goal" often aligns with a business objective: increasing conversions, driving purchases, or growing email lists. Without a clear goal, participants feel lost.

Competition
Leaderboards, challenges, or multiplayer features can inspire some audiences. However, it's crucial to balance competition with collaboration, not everyone thrives under pressure.

Progress tracking
People love knowing how far they've come. Progress bars, milestone trackers, or even subtle visual cues can make all the difference.

Personalization
Games are most engaging when they feel personalized. Whether it's recommending specific challenges or customizing rewards, personalization amplifies the impact.

Rewards
These can take many forms — discounts, exclusive content, badges, or even simple acknowledgments of progress. Rewards provide instant gratification, making users more likely to take the desired action. The key is to make your users feel valued.

4. Gamification isn't just for big brands

We're not saying gamification will fix everything overnight... But we're also not saying it won't make you think **why you didn't start sooner.**

You don't need to be a **Fortune 500 company** to **implement gamification.** Small businesses, startups, and solo entrepreneurs are using gamified strategies to make browsing experiences more engaging and website funnels more converting.

Each of these examples proves a simple truth: **when done right, gamification could transform the way you approach your marketing efforts.**

examples
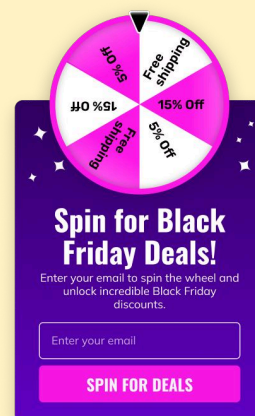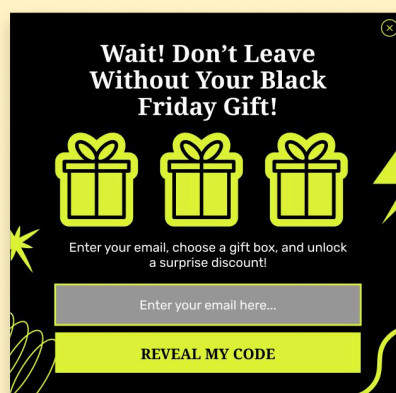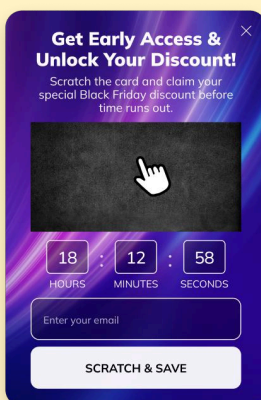
2. The psychology behind gamification, or why it actually works

Today's consumers are overwhelmed with choices, and traditional digital marketing tactics often feel like noise. You are probably familiar with the term banner blindness. Yes, banners back then looked very different (and ugly, let's be real) compared to our present browsing experience.

However, a key take away is that users had consciously evolved to ignore any online ads.

86%
of consumers
demonstrated banner blindness, and this behavior persists.

Thus, marketers strive to:

- ✓ bring back customer attention
- ✓ increase engagement

- ✓ improve user experience
- ✓ keep them returning

When a brand integrates gamification correctly, it makes us want to engage because it's exciting (and rewarding, though). We're no longer rolling our eyes at another 20% off banner, now we're actively checking our points status progress bar, or happily adding that product to a cart just to see if we got an additional benefit or gift.

It's not random, it's our brain's pleasure center lighting up, and big brands know this. It's also a much more organic way to connect, and it also signals that the brand values our time enough to make the experience enjoyable.

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Some recent examples we spotted:

Skyscanner's advent calendar

Skyscanner's adventure advent calendar went live in December 2024 at the Now Building, lighting up Outernet London with massive floor-to-ceiling 16K LED screens. Each day reveals an all-expenses-paid trip across the globe, turning holiday dreams into a real-life possibility. It's the perfect blend of festive and high-tech game-like vibe, making people get that big-screen excitement and come back for more chances to win.

Sourse of image: https://www.outernet.com/

Jacquemus' lottery

Jacquemus turned the usual lottery into a gamified experience, where participants were randomly selected from a pool of online registered users, and the winners were the lucky few whose cards stayed empty after every number was called.

Among the prizes? Everything from scarves, bags, and the ultimate gift — a shopping gift card.

The result? A blend of excitement, exclusivity, and a rewarding experience that left everyone talking in social media long after the last number was drawn.

Three psychological drives

Gamification is not just technology, **it is psychology** — according to LXA's Sarah O'Neill. Indeed, its mechanics are inspired by the fundamental drives of the human psyche, namely curiosity, the need for achievements, and reward-seeking.

Why these? It's about creating emotional experience — because when customers feel like they're playing and winning, they stay engaged longer.

1   **Curiosity** is the inherent human desire to explore the unknown. Curiosity marketing uses this desire to help businesses attract attention.

2   **A desire for achievement** arises when we know exactly what we need to do to get the prize, and we're more motivated to do it because it's bite-sized and achievable. Even the slightest hint at competition fuels a simple human desire to win or be better than others, encourages faster action, and creates a fun and intriguing experience.

3   **Reward seeking** is how we thank our brain for being curious and engaged. Rewards are simultaneously the "more" we want and a stimulus to go after it. Moreover, they acknowledge customer activity, as if saying, "You are seen."

Fun fact

In his book Behave, Robert Sapolsky explains how unpredictability can make rewards even more exciting — the dopamine level can spike even when a reward is received only half the time upon task completion. So the next time you find yourself hitting "play again" on a brand's challenge, just know that the rush you feel isn't coincidental.

Now, let's dive deeper into the behavioral triggers that make people engage, from the thrill of earning points to the satisfaction of leveling up.

The **dopamine** loop

The real impact of gamification lies in the dopamine reward system. Every time a customer completes a challenge, unlocks a reward, or hits a milestone, dopamine is released. This **"feel-good"** chemical drives **motivation, action**, and keeps them **coming back.**

1

Stimulus

a pleasurable experience that comes our way.

A basic **dopamine loop** is made of **four components:**

2

Dopamine release

a reaction to the stimulus, which makes us feel a-mazing!

3

Reinforcement

our desire to relive that pleasant experience.

4

Habit formation

our initiative to seek and find the stimulus.
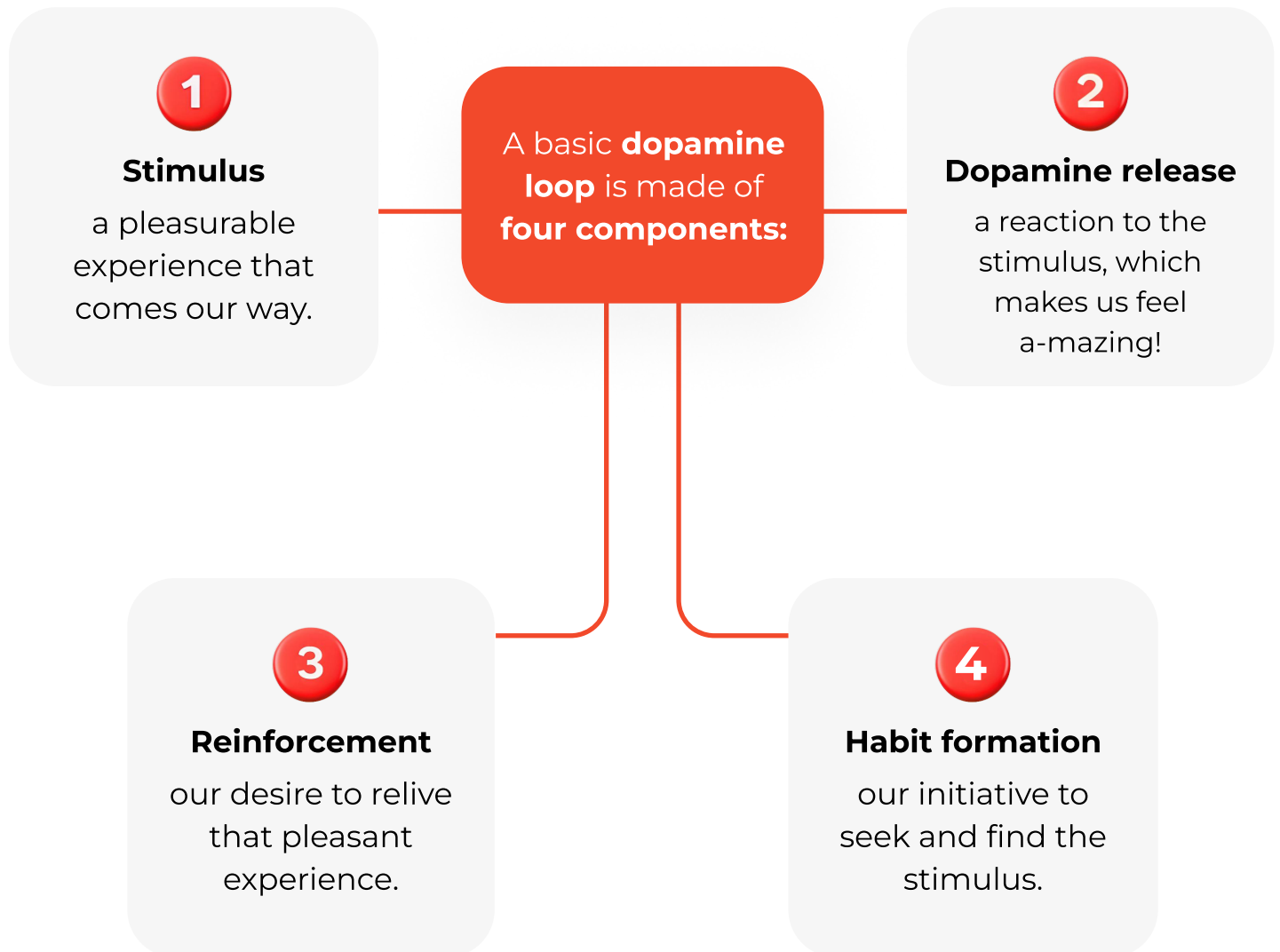
A loop is a loop, but the original stimulus must come from outside in a timely manner. Let's take a look at **some scenarios** on how you can design your gamification strategy to trigger the right dopamine loops at the right time.

Scenario 1

Problem:

There is low engagement, and customers are unwilling to sign up for your newsletter with valuable offers.

Solution:

Give them a gamified quiz, asking about the problem they're looking to solve and their product preferences. Firstly, people love talking about themselves as well as learning something new. Secondly, you can give them points for each answer provided and add an enticing "You are 1 question away from a special offer!" This combo of immediate feedback and the promise of a reward sustains the dopamine loop.

Scenario 2

Problem:

Your customer has spent over 20 minutes on the website, actively browsing, but hasn't added anything to the cart.

Solution:

Show them a centered content-blocking widget, inviting them to spin the wheel for a surprise discount. Say they get three tries. With every spin, the anticipation of winning triggers more excitement. The spinning animation builds suspense, and the eventual reveal — whether it's a 10% discount or a freebie — releases dopamine, rewarding the user and encouraging further interaction.

Scenario 3

Problem:

As a SaaS marketer, you know your customers want a free trial, aka the reward. To do that, they need to fill and submit a form, but still they drop it half the way through.

Solution:

Add a progress bar to your form showing how many steps remain for your customer to complete, but also add a discount for the next purchase on the completion. You can stress how much is done with — "75% complete" or how much is left — "25% to complete." Now, on top of getting a free trial, they've also completed the task. The event releases a dopamine rush, reinforcing the behavior and making them more likely to engage in similar activities.

So, by strategically designing gamified experiences that align with the dopamine loop — offering timely stimuli, rewarding actions, and reinforcing behaviors — you can bring back customer attention and grow long-term engagement.

Decision fatigue and gamification

? Ever notice how you can spend half an hour scrolling through Netflix's endless catalog only to end up watching nothing?

? Have we always had this much choice?

Fun fact

In The Paradox of Choice — Why More Is Less, its author, Barry Schwartz, argues that the explosion in choice has led to increased anxiety in consumers, so narrowing that pool would be a welcome change for both parties — customers and business owners. Apart from anxiety, customers also experience decision fatigue: they are just tired of having to research and make choices all the time. Too many choices lead to zero action.

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But it is impossible to reduce the proposition, which will only keep growing on the market. Luckily, with gamification you can create a healthy "tunnel vision" by simplifying the decision-making and guiding customers toward the actions you want them to take.

Tapping into achievements and decision-making

Humans are hardwired to seek out achievement. The satisfaction of completing a task plays a huge role in driving customer behavior. But it's not just about making customers feel good, it's more about influencing their decisions.

By guiding customers toward the path that feels most rewarding, you can drive them to take the actions that matter most, whether that's making a purchase, signing up for a newsletter, or spending more time on your site.

There are several types of ecommerce shoppers, with the four common ones being:

1 **Impulse buyers**

3 **Bargain hunters**

2 **Cautious shoppers**

4 **Brand-loyal customers**

Importantly, these types are defined by their **behavior** and the **goal** they want to achieve by browsing your website, knowingly or unknowingly.

1. Impulse buyers

Impulse buyers usually act on a whim, making purchases without planning, and they seem to enjoy it overly. To incentivize them, you can add a count down timer to any gamification element to create a sense of urgency and play into the FOMO.

2. Cautious shoppers

Cautious shoppers are the opposite of the previous type. These customers do meticulous research before they enter the site, which is good. But what if they don't find what they want within a minute? A personalized quiz can provide even more insight into a product, thus extending their knowledge and stars or other points of recognition, which could be a welcome additional reward.

3. Bargain hunters

Bargain hunters want to find the best deal, and all their activities are built around this filter. Finding it already is an achievement. A scratch card with a promo code could be a worthwhile option for them. You can set it to trigger seconds after a user comes to the website so that they get what they are after as early as possible.

4. Brand-loyal customers

Brand-loyal customers might seem like a given because they already trust your business enough to make repeat purchases. However, the smallest pick on your behalf may trigger them to look elsewhere. You should be ready to fight for their attention with exclusive offers encased in a set of gift boxes triggered to appear after a failed purchase event occurs, for example.

By guiding them toward these rewarding micro-achievements, you're effectively motivating them to make decisions. For example, people love crossing items off their wish lists. That's our brains saying, **"Let's do this again."**

Gamification takes that satisfaction and weaves it into everyday decisions. Instead of drowning in options, customers are guided by bite-sized achievements and every small win keeps them coming back for more, resulting in loyalty.

3. The marketing tasks that gamification fulfills

Traditional marketing tactics sometimes feel like we are already inside The Zero Theorem, with discounts, offers, and newsletters being thrown into our... interfaces. They still work, sometimes, but most visitors hit 'close' faster than you can say '10% off.' And what would you expect from popups that feel transactional, not engaging?

⊘ You might still think it's not for you, as your business has been hitting targets, and it is obvious that customers will keep buying, so **why bother?**

⊘ **The answer is simple: gamification** lets you do much more with less effort. Unlike tit-for-tat transactional popups, these experiential popups more closely intertwine with a brand's value proposition or wider purpose — something marketers say is key for resonating with millennials and Gen Z.

Apart from growing sales, you can strengthen your funnels, reduce bounce and churn rates, and improve retention by transforming passive visitors into active participants. Your goal isn't just a quick email grab — it's an engagement that leads to long-term loyalty.

Amazon Prime Day 2024 made headlines with record online sales of **$14.2 billion.** Apart from exclusivity, this huge retailer employed several gamification techniques, including:

1 Countdown timer

2 Interactive trivia quiz format for ads

3 Spin-the-wheel mechanics

Not to suggest that the impressive **11%** revenue increase (compared to 2023) is all thanks to gamification, but it surely played a great part in keeping the customers engaged and prompting them to take action.

1. Lowering customer acquisition cost

There are commonly known strategies to bring new customers to your website such as paid advertising campaigns with targeted ads, influencer marketing with word-of-mouth referrals, and SEO-optimized content marketing. One thing all of them have in common is the high investments they require.

Claspo's **data** show that interactive popups increase conversions by up to **7x**, as customers are more likely to purchase when they **enjoy the experience.**

Interactive is not synonymous with animated because the latter just moves, while the former is designed to engage a user by asking a question, offering a perk, or, and it's rather rare, boggling their minds. Interaction is always a hook and a mutually beneficial one as it motivates a visitor to take that action.

By adding gamification to your customer acquisition routine you will be able to spare the retargeting costs of Google or Facebook Ads, increase newsletter signups, and collect significantly more quality emails for your future campaigns. With the said popups, you typically pay once and enjoy the benefits, compared to the varying PPC ranges and the growing budget unpredictability they entail.

Recipe: When you need a cost-effective way to attract new customers.

Instead of treating referrals as one-time transactions, turn them into a journey with a visual progress bar that fills up as users bring in new customers. The key to engagement is **milestone-based rewards** — small incentives at early stages keep users motivated, while the end reward helps them push forward. Social sharing adds another layer of motivation, with referral bonuses tapping into goal-oriented psychology, making them more likely to complete the challenge.

2. Improving conversion rate

The ultimate conversion equals purchase, and its average success rate for ecommerce is only **2-4%.** The purchase might not happen on the first try, but you still need to capture all your browsers and come up with highly relevant offers to try to convert them.

You can enhance your efforts with popup widgets, attaching them to different funnel stages that need re-enforcement. Static or traditional ones might yield some results, but the customers will take any of the targeted actions with more motivation if you choose to create a sense of excitement and curiosity.

> "No one wants to just be offering discounts the whole time. Everyone knows it's a part of retail, but there's a bigger opportunity to build that brand love."
>
> **Charlie Wade,**
> *global head of experiential and partnerships at the marketing agency VML.*

66%
of marketers
have noticed a spike in engagement thanks to interactive content.

91%
of buyers
prefer interactive and visual content over traditional and text-heavy

Recipe: **When you want to create a game-related shopping experience and motivate purchases**

Turn shopping into an adventure by introducing a quest-based purchasing experience where customers complete challenges to unlock rewards. Instead of traditional discounts, this mechanic transforms buying into a game where users progress through levels, collect achievements, and earn exclusive perks.

Each specific action — such as leaving a review or sharing on social media — counts as a "quest" that fills up a progress bar or earns points. As customers move through different stages, they unlock better discounts, limited-edition products, or double their points. The key is progression and surprise, the more they engage, the more valuable their rewards become.

3. Increasing lead-to-customer conversion rate

Gamified popups offer an effective way to lift ROAS by increasing conversions and the value of existing traffic, making your campaigns cost-effective.

Sounds great, but **how do we get there?** Let's take a moment to focus on those leads.

In essence, they are pre-identified newcomers, a motley crew of possible customers that are hard to understand without a behavior log. Nevertheless, they do have **some common features:**

- Curiosity to explore
- Skepticism toward commitment
- Lack of brand familiarity
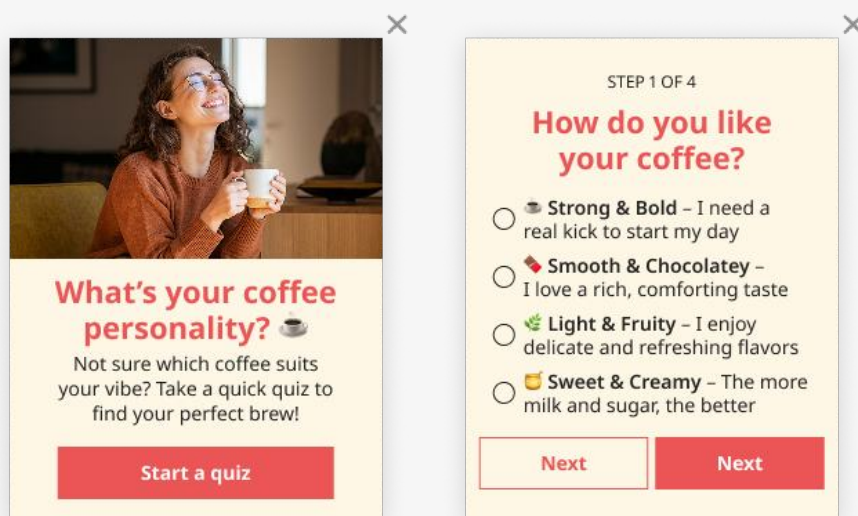- Desire for immediate value
- Need for guidance

Together, they create a **buyer persona that wants to know more and could use help doing it** — and that is enough to choose the right strategy to tell about your brand and its value. The more time they spend with your brand, the more likely they are to sign up or even make the first purchase.

How do you win time? On average, users spend 3-6 minutes on static content, while websites with gamified content see an average increase of 60% in session duration. Moreover, not only does it prove more engaging to customers, but it also plays a huge role in educating them on the product. A lead is more likely to become a customer, when they know and are aware of the value your product and service will give them.

Recipe: When you aim to decrease the time to the first purchase.

One of the **best ways** to tell your prospective customers about your brand and increase engagement is to **offer them a gamified product quiz.** This type of popup is usually realized through several screens — a multi-step form. Each screen asks a question to bring a user's needs closer to how you can satisfy them.

example


For example, a user completes a product-related survey and instantly gets a personalized selection to browse. They're also invited to share their email to receive the list with explanations. This keeps them engaged — ready to buy now or return later when they're ready. No need for a discount; they share their email simply for the useful info, with no pressure since it's available right away.

4. Increasing average order value

Just above, we covered the strategy you could use to convert leads into customers. You also know it as one of the three main ways to increase sales. To see if we are on the same wavelength, the other two are: **growing the average order value** (AOV) and r**e-engaging returning customers.**

> The average order value metric is not about pushing more products onto your existing customers. Its core is about building loyalty and trust.

> **Think about it:** when your customers know you have their best interest in mind, they will not feel the urge to question your every recommendation.
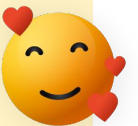
Gamified popups are designed to encourage customers to spend more by offering **higher-value rewards** in exchange for larger purchases.

44%
higher AOV
that's what popups can deliver.

However, it is important to set the trigger at the right moment, like when a customer confirms they will be checking out.

Recipe: When you aim to decrease the time to the first purchase.

As customers browse the site and add products to a cart or move to a payment page, invite them to participate in a **limited-time offer** where rewards depend on their cart total.

You can show them a popup saying, "Spend $100 to **spin the wheel** for a chance to win a full-size product" which could guide them to raise their cart value. Set this message to appear if the cart value is 15-20% below $100.

In this scenario, you get a **good shot at increasing the immediate AOV** and potentially having your **customers return in the future.**

⊘ According to **Statista,** around **93%** of Americans return to redeem a coupon or apply their discount throughout the year.

⊘ **Leave it that way** if you are feeling generous and optimistic about the future, or set a time limit on when your customers can use their reward.

5. Decreasing churn rate

Whereas it is easier to conclude this event for the ecommerce customers who drop forever after their first purchase (**77%** on average), other segments may not have a clear-cut moment of churn.

Certainly, you will not be able to eradicate this issue, but you can work towards building particular customer habits that will, in the long term, convert into brand loyalty.

Yes, you guessed our **suggestion correctly** — **gamification,** which can, by the way, **grow brand loyalty.** There are a number of gamified mechanics that are designed to **encourage** users to return, spend more, and recommend.

😍

Gift Cards and eGift Cards
The perfect gift, every time.
SHOP NOW ▶

SEPHORA

Sourse of image https://www.sephora.pl/

Let's look into the real-world cases of Cult Beauty or Sephora's Beauty

Insider programs — tiered loyalty initiatives that reward customers with points for purchases. Higher spending unlocks premium tiers, offering even more benefits such as free shipping, special gifts, Birthday gift cards, and access to VIP events.

Recipe: **When you need to retain customers and reduce turnover**

If your company isn't ready for a full loyalty program, gamified promotions can help build habits. For example, ahead of Christmas or another major holiday, encourage customers to visit daily for a month and spin the wheel for a chance to win a high-value prize. Set low odds for the big win in the widget's prize pool settings — its exclusivity will keep people coming back. The more they visit, the more familiar they become with your brand.

Another approach: offer a daily scratch card for a set period. Each visit reveals a new deal — like a category-specific discount or a small gift with a purchase. Unlike the wheel example, every participant wins, increasing the chances of converting visitors into buyers. Plus, the surprise offer keeps them engaged directly on your site.

6. Decreasing bounce rate

First churn, now bounce. Many digital businesses lose customers before they can explore the value in the products offered. Bounce rate is the percentage of visitors who leave a website after viewing only one page, without interacting further or navigating to other pages, during a specified period. Usually, this 'one page' means a main page, and to be more precise — a hero section.

The utterly short attention span is definitely not the only reason your customers lose interest. To combat their drive to press 'close,' you need to captivate their attention and prompt them to act. The best way to achieve both of these goals is to put the value right in front of your customer.

Gamified popups can reduce bounce rates by offering them something of value before they leave the site. When a visitor is greeted with an interactive experience, they are more likely to stay and explore rather than bounce off.

Gamification breaks the monotony of a linear user experience, offering a fair exchange:
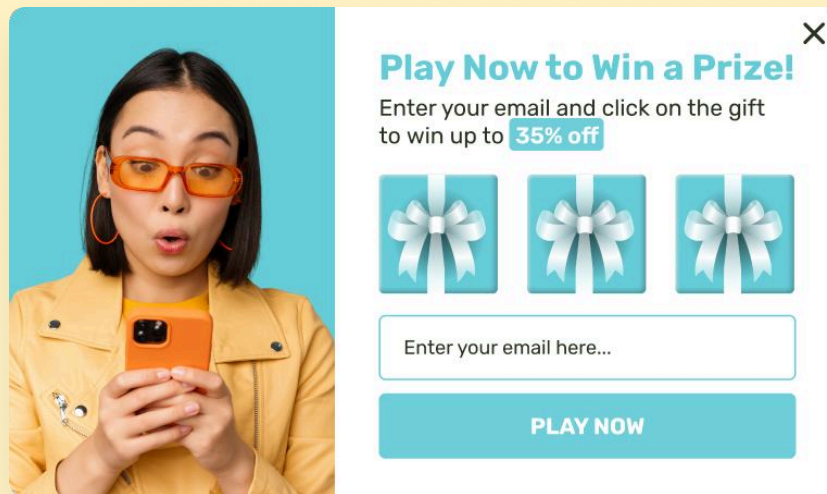
User's proactivity
for a chance to win the reward

User's time
for product awareness

User's email
for a discount

Recipe: When you want to lift engagement during sales seasons

A business has a limited-time offer on particular products, but its customers barely make it to the SALE page. An exit-intent **mystery deal unlocked** can help solve this problem by making a value proposition clear and immediately available. The popup features a pick a deal game where users select one of three **gift boxes**, each hiding a different incentive. To claim their reward, the visitor must click through to the SALE page where they can apply the offer, redirecting them to discounted products. For returning visitors who have seen the popup before, the game can dynamically change the reward, preventing fatigue and keeping engagement high throughout the sale period.

example

Play Now to Win a Prize!
Enter your email and click on the gift to win up to **35% off**

Enter your email here...

PLAY NOW

7.   Decreasing time to first purchase

Gamified popups can offer an immediate reward for visitors who make their first purchase within a limited time frame. The interactive nature of gamification creates a sense of urgency and excitement that can guide users toward quicker action.

Admit it: if you've ever tracked your users' behavior in real-time, seeing how indecisively they add products to the cart and then remove them without buying surely made you want to yell, **"What is there to think about?"** And you would be totally justified.

In this case, urgency and relevance are the answer. Gamification reduces friction in the decision-making process by making the first purchase more rewarding and accessible and creates a connection with the brand. Instant rewards combined with slight time pressure and personalized offers lead to increased curiosity.

Recipe: When you want to speed up initial conversion

A user has spent 15 minutes browsing through the website but added nothing to their cart. As the visitor continues exploring but hasn't committed to a purchase, an "Unlock your first-time shopper reward" popup appears, offering an interactive quiz and asking them to "Answer this quick quiz to find your perfect match — and **get 10% off!**". The catch? The reward is personalized based on the browsing behavior, aligns with the user's intent, and drives faster decision-making.

For additional motivation, a soft urgency message "This special discount expires in 24 hours!" adds a time-sensitive push without feeling overly aggressive.

8. Improving retention rate

Re-engaging existing customers often costs 5 to 25 times less than acquiring new ones, with existing customers more likely to try new products and costing up to **67%** less to keep. While it is clear that you should keep your old customers, the question is how.

1

Customer retention is the emotional connection a brand establishes with its audience. And you can trigger all the right emotions with gamified mechanics.

We have covered how loyalty and trust contribute to reducing churn and bounce rates. On top of that, letting customers have fun and enjoy themselves will make their shopping experiences not only memorable but also desirable.

2

Maintaining customer engagement and fostering loyalty can be challenging, especially when customers lack a clear incentive to return.

Gamified popups are proven to improve retention and increase LTV by offering rewards for return visits, re-engagement, or completing specific actions.

There are several gamified mechanics highly functional for improving retention rates:

Progression mechanics
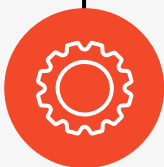
Rewarding milestones

Friendly competition and social sharing

Recipe: When you want to reward loyal customers and make them come back again

To encourage repeat visits and deepen customer engagement, implement a daily streak reward featuring gift box popups that turn repeat visits and purchases into an engaging journey.

What's more, a **"Come back tomorrow to play and win even bigger rewards!"** message motivates customers to revisit your site regularly, promising increasingly valuable rewards for consecutive interactions. To further increase engagement, customers can use their rewards by making a purchase within a limited period. This approach creates a compelling loop that keeps users coming back, strengthening emotional ties to the brand and increasing customer lifetime value.

example
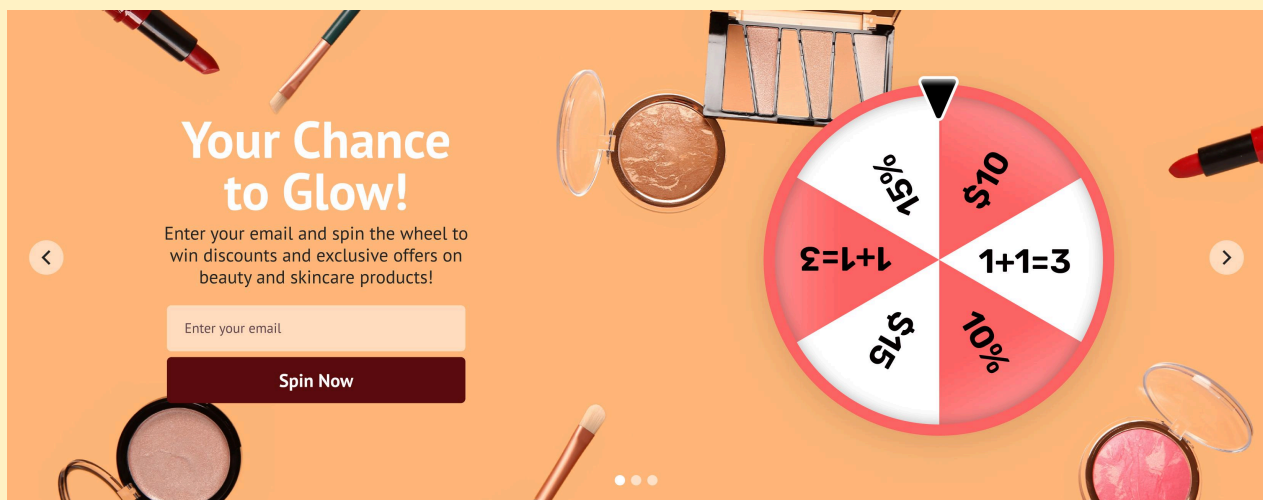
4. Mapping your audience's journey and when **gamification** is **relevant**

? A mental sunrise that transforms confusion into insight is...?

✓ Your immediate guess would probably not be **"aha-moment,"** but it surely is something we want our users to have almost immediately as they arrive on our websites. Moreover, it is a point of the customer journey where business- and user-centered funnels meet. Generally, aha-moment is most likely to occur during the decision stage of the customer journey, but you can trigger it in your visitors anywhere you deem necessary.

> By definition, **aha-momen**t is a point when a user experiences a **breakthrough** or a **deep realization** of the **value** a product or service offers (**a mental sunrise**, if you will).

Gamification can be of **great help** as among other things,
it can support your marketing efforts by providing:

1 | Instant gratification and rewards

3 | Surprise and delight

2 | Clear goal orientation

4 | Earnest reasons to feel curious

And that will all work well if you truly know your customers. However, there's no point in introducing gamification if you don't know when and where it will have the most impact. Because if you don't understand the journey, you can't gamify it.

The customer journey — where engagement falls short

Before you can figure out where to insert gamification, you need to know where your current engagement strategy is falling flat. Is it during the discovery phase when users first encounter your brand?

Or maybe they're losing interest during the decision-making process, bouncing right before purchase. Users may drop half the way through (or even sooner) and have multiple JTBDs that will not culminate in at least one purchase.

There are several types of ecommerce shoppers, with the four common ones being:

1 Awareness

2 Consideration

3 Decision

4 Purchase

5 Post-Purchasee

6 Advocacy/Loyalty

It's common knowledge, but we'll say it: apart from analyzing your own data by means of business intelligence, consult with the benchmarks of your niche to detect the stage(s) where you need reinforcement. Here is what their numbers — actual and aspired — have looked like for ecommerce in the past couple of years.

For the first four stages, benchmarks suggest that:

50%
of consumers

move towards viewing the product
(i.e., dwindle around the decision stage)

15%
of consumers

add products to a cart

2-4%
of consumers

decision-to-purchase conversion)

Post-purchase or repeat customer rate of **20-40% is considered** good, whereas **50%** and above — excellent. One real-market example for this stage is the data **Metrilo** collected from their customers in 2023-2024: on average, **28.2%** returned to make at least one more purchase.

Advocacy/Loyalty benchmarks are harder to track and thus measure, but there are several indirect ways to infer them.

For example:

✓ See the percentage of customers that are only loyal to one brand to benchmark your numbers. **12-15%** of customers are loyal to a single retailer, yet they represent **55-70%** of total sales.

✓ Check the percentage of customers from referrals; surely, you will not be able to verify every customer stream, but affiliate links and promo codes will give you enough to draw baseline conclusions. Online businesses receive **60%** of sales from referrals by brand advocates and superfans.

Depending on when your user became authenticated and thus trackable for your analytics, you can choose a different approach to **mapping their journey.** Keeping in mind all the "ideal" steps they should take and smaller JTBDs that usually escape our eye, start with the first confirmed step and map 3-5 steps before and after. This approach can support you when you feel lost for ideas on how to detect where you are losing engagement.

Discovery with gamification — creating a first impression that sticks

You never get a second chance to make a first impression — that's why welcome experience is so important. It's when new visitors decide if your brand is worth their time. If the experience is dull or overwhelming, you'll lose them fast. Gamification during discovery can be a game-changer — literally.

Discovery corresponds with the consideration stage, meaning your potential customers are at least willing to hear you out.

On top of that, an effective guided introduction to your product can:

- Reduce friction by helping users navigate the site and find what they're looking for

- Build trust by presenting your brand's value proposition and credibility

- Increase engagement by encouraging users to explore more products and features

- Drive conversions by leading users toward making a purchase.

> At the beginning, we talked about the power of the aha-moment without mentioning how it plays into user activation. Yes, discovery, **aha-moment,** and user activation are parts of a broader customer journey (or product adoption lifecycle: in brackets to mitigate the confusion).

You might appreciate analogies, so think of the connection between these three as a complete communication loop, where a sender (your business) shoots a **message (clear value proposition during onboarding)**, and a **receiver (your user)** gets it **(aha-moment)** and gives **positive feedback** on it.

1 **2**

Starts using
your product
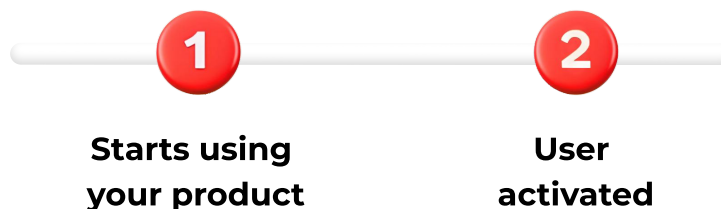
User
activated

Here's how they fit with each other in product marketing terms under the ideal conditions:

1. Discovery introduces the product's core value ➜

2. The core value sparks the aha-moment, encouraging deeper user engagement ➜

3. Aha-moment leads to user activation, which increases the likelihood of retention and long-term loyalty.

Planned persuasion

When we say that aha-moment is to be sparked, it sounds a bit vague, as if magic should happen. However, behind the "spark," there always stands intentional persuasion carefully planned by the marketing team. In his book **"Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion,"** Dr. Robert B. Cialdini suggests that there are six principles of persuasion. High on the list is reciprocity: having received a favor, a user is more likely to return it — quid pro quo.

Make discovery interactive and rewarding

Your audience doesn't know you yet, so make that first interaction count. Think interactive quizzes with mystery rewards that help them discover their perfect product match and reveal a welcome surprise offer when they reach the end. Playful first-touch experiences turn passive scrollers into engaged visitors. In addition, let your shoppers' voice guide your marketing. Pull winning phrases straight from reviews and weave them into your gamified campaigns..

Gamifying the decision-making stage — turning browsers into buyers

Your visitors are interested. They're browsing product pages and comparing options, but they're not fully committed. You need to give them a little push in the right direction. However, before that, you should look into why they are still hesitant. Knowing common reasons will help you find the appropriate means to address and leverage them.

Apart from decision fatigue and lack of urgency, there are two more whales of indecisiveness:

1. Price concerns

Price concerns are an umbrella term for wanting to turn the tables on destiny: your visitors look for a better deal, be it on your or your competitors' website

a. For both cases, timing is crucial, and you need to introduce your singular or better manifold value either after a certain number of pages viewed or at the exit-intent — in our experience, these triggers work best
b. Offer an interactive discount or gift through a gift box or spin the wheel

2. Uncertainty about product fit

Uncertainty about product fit, especially with items like clothing, tech gadgets, or subscription services. Even if your user added something to the cart, they may well abandon it

a. Naturally, hesitation occurs due to the lack of information or inner confidence. Persuasion by authority conveying a perceived value increase can mitigate both kinds. If a business were to say it as a phrase to their indecisive customers, it would sound like this: "We know what will suit you, and so will you in just a bit."
b. Use product recommendation games

By addressing these hesitations with well-timed gamified elements, you not only guide visitors toward making confident decisions but also enhance their overall shopping experience.

The **more enjoyable** and **engaging** the process, the more likely they are to complete their purchase and **return** for **future interactions**.

Make a buying experience feel experiential

The moment of decision is where hesitation steps in, so make commitment exciting. **You know what's trending?** Special gift editions! Try a limited-time challenge that lets them do specific actions for a special gift and reward them instantly.

Little surprises = big dopamine. To take it further, implement gamified price drop surveys, where customers vote on which item gets a flash sale next, making them come back again.

Post-purchase engagement — Using gamification to build loyalty

The customer journey doesn't end when they click **"Buy."** Post-purchase engagement is crucial to building long-term relationships, especially in ecommerce, and gamification can help you nurture them in a way that feels rewarding and fun.

Yes, big news: customers still exist after purchase, and, as we learned, the likelihood of them coming back is quite high. Apart from encouraging repeat purchases, you can gather valuable insights while keeping post-purchase communication engaging through interactive experiences, deepen brand connection, and promote product usage, say, through challenges.

If you are a fan of looking at things differently, think of a post-purchase stage as the start of a new interactive relationship with your customer rather than a continuation of the old kinda transactional one.

Keep the excitement going
Limited editions can be as simple as refreshing your best-sellers or collaborating with like-minded brands. Try scratch cards or gift boxes to reward your subscribers, first-time customers, repeat buyers, top reviewers, and VIP members with early access to exclusive discounts or limited gift editions.

Remember: it is not about pushing giveaways on your customers but creating emotionally charged and memorable experiences that will play into a stronger brand ties in the long run.

Retargeting and re-engagement — bringing back lost customers
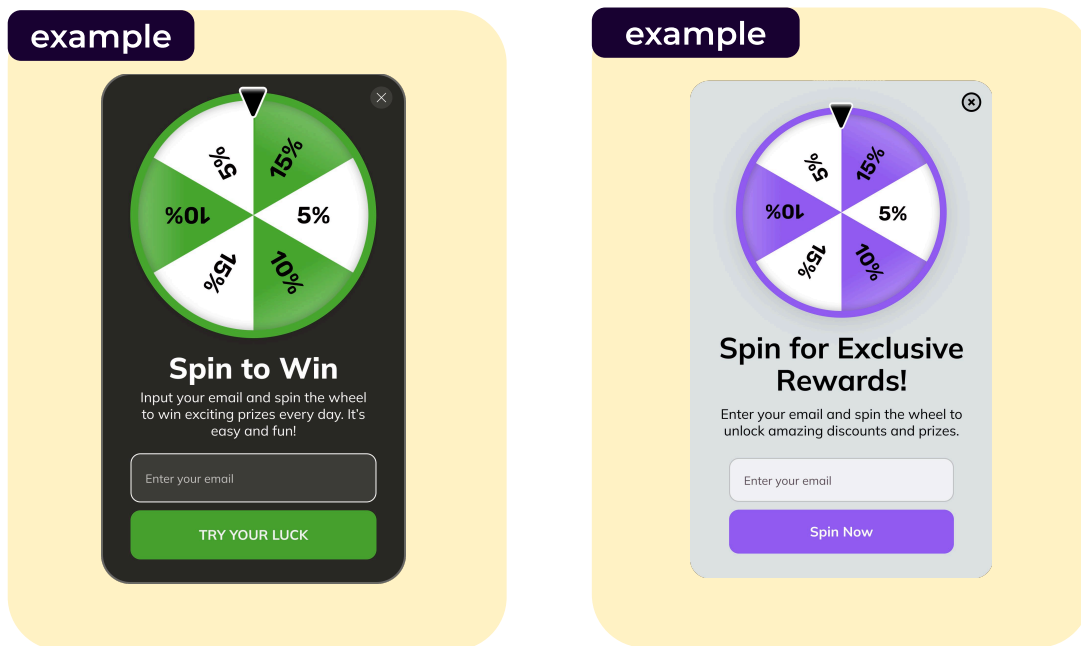
Fact

you will always lose customers. How many — depends on you. You can strike a chord with your drop-off wanderers by combining traditional retargeting efforts with gamification strategies..

While planning your campaign, remember these retargeting basics:

- ✓ Monitor engagement metrics to adjust timing and frequency

- ✓ Avoid over-messaging to prevent customer fatigue

- ✓ Use personalization and gamification to make outreach more appealing and less intrusive

Curiously enough, an **aha-moment** can be kindled even in churned customers. Even though statistically the majority experience it around consideration and decision stages, some of your users can finally be struck by the value you provide long after they have seemingly parted ways with your business.

example

Spin to Win

Input your email and spin the wheel to win exciting prizes every day. It's easy and fun!

Enter your email

TRY YOUR LUCK

example

Spin for Exclusive Rewards!

Enter your email and spin the wheel to unlock amazing discounts and prizes.

Enter your email

Spin Now

Reward engagement, not just spending

- Personalize campaigns to each customer segment's preferences. Create dedicated segments based on past purchases to spotlight products they'll love most and offer bundles or gifts tied to their profiles to drive engagement.

- In addition, you can tempt them with an exclusive program. The catch is that it doesn't have to be something costly — just a bit different from the rest of your offers.

Claspo

5. Gamification techniques and components breakdown

Luck and chance games, points, badges, leaderboards — each element of gamification has a purpose and a place in your strategy.

⑦ But how do you know **which mechanics** will resonate with your audience?

⊘ Here we'll detail the different gamification elements and break down when, where, and how to use each. It's not about adding "fun" for the sake of fun; it's about **adding elements that align with your business goals.**

Let's start on a fun note: what is the basis of gamification to you? We have prepared several options to consider

1. Action-reward pair

A fundamental feedback loop where a user performs an action and receives a response (e.g., clicking a button and receiving a badge).

2. Trigger

A prompt that encourages user action (e.g., "Spin the wheel now!" or "You have one more step to complete!").

3. Progress indicator

A visual cue showing advancement (e.g., a loading bar or percentage completed).

4. Point

The most basic quantifiable reward.

Commonly used grouping criteria for gamified components in ecommerce are two: **motivation** and **engagement horizon.**

Motivation is the drive that prompts a user to act, and it can come from within as well as from outside. By engagement horizon we mean how long a user is expected to keep interacting with a certain gamified component.

		Engagement horizon	
		Short-term	**Long-term**
Motivation based on	Luck/Chance	• Wheel of fortune • Gift box • Scratch card • Advent calendar	• Wheel of fortune • Gift box • Scratch card • Advent calendar
	Progression	• Countdown timer • **Tiered rewards**	• Wheel of fortune • Gift box • Scratch card • Advent calendar
	Achievement/Skill	• **Badge** • **Quiz** • **Challenge** • **Matching game** • **Treasure hunt** • Free lunch	• Point • **Badge** • **Leaderboard** • **Quiz** • **Challenge** • **Matching game** • **Treasure hunt** • Social sharing • **Gated content**

You are definitely not surprised by the fact that a component can have both a short- and long-term engagement horizon.

Let's still consider three of them from this perspective:

1. Badges

Badges provide gratification to users the moment they've earned it, i.e., almost instantly. Kept over time, badges become status symbols that create a sense of personal accomplishment.

2. Quizzes

Quizzes satisfy a human need for new knowledge almost on the spot; they give feedback, instant scoring, or rewards. If the system offers quizzes based on product updates or new features at regular intervals, it can improve users' mastery or brand affinity.

3. Tiered rewards

With **tiered rewards**, early levels are easier to achieve. Therefore, they motivate users quickly and effectively, encouraging immediate interaction and initial excitement. Higher tiers offer increasingly valuable or exclusive benefits, motivating users to stay consistently engaged over longer periods. Users remain committed to achieving higher status or rewards that require ongoing effort and loyalty.

Another observation you might have is that **most smaller retailers choose the luck/chance short-term mechanics.** The reasoning behind that is clear: luck/chance-based games are the shortest way to excite your visitors and ignite their curiosity. 🔔

Agency: player types

Why do we need player types?

Presented with gamified components that call for interaction, each visitor becomes part player. The ways players choose to engage also differ, hence the types. By knowing what they are, we can employ the most effective strategies and tools to cater to broader audiences. According to the most popular classification, the Hexad framework, there are six player types.

Players	Socializers
Achievers	Free spirits

1. **Players** come for the prize. They would appreciate a mix of instant wins and long-term rewards. They might already understand how the system works and expect an elevated performance from it.

2. **Achievers** need clear goals and rewards that equal their efforts; they want to test their brain and skill and be acknowledged.

3. **Socializers** thrive on being connected and able to compare themselves — they need others to acknowledge their presence and witness their achievements.

4. **Free spirits** get the kick of autonomy to explore and discover things on their own, take control of the incentives

What activities do these groups commonly enjoy participating in?

Type	Gamified components	Metrics
Players	• Instant-win scratch cards • Countdown promotions • Flash discounts and limited offers	This group is motivated by immediate, tangible rewards. Players tend to be highly responsive to limited-time offers, flash sales, and quick incentives.
Achievers	• Tiered loyalty programs • Achievement badges • Progress bars towards rewards	Driven by structured loyalty programs, clear progression, and recognition. IRL, they could be zesty project managers who appreciate milestones, achievement badges, and status symbols.
Socializers	• Leaderboards • Social sharing of achievements • Community-driven reviews and ratings	Written in the name is the need for environments with strong social components, user-generated content, or visible status. They frequent brands with community-driven or social media-heavy strategies.
Players	• Customizable reward selections • Product personalization quizzes • Interactive browsing experiences	These players respond best to personalized experiences, especially when they can choose them. You can spot a free spirit in product categories where exploration and customization matter (fashion, home décor, tech).

? Sounds great and very clear on paper, but how do you know **which types** are **your actual customers**?

✓ We suggest that you focus on the first two to test how well your initiatives resonate with your visitors.

Definitions

Wheel of fortune — an interactive spinning wheel that randomly distributes rewards or prizes to users.

Gift box — a virtual package containing surprise incentives or rewards users can open.

Scratch card — a digital interactive card that users "scratch" virtually to reveal hidden rewards.

Quiz — an interactive question-and-answer content used to test knowledge, entertain, or engage users.

Matching game — an interactive game where users pair identical or related items to earn points or rewards.

Advent calendar — a daily-reward calendar providing users with sequential surprises or offers, often used seasonally.

Treasure hunt — a game involving clues or tasks that lead users to discover hidden incentives or rewards.

Streak — a recognition of consecutive actions or behaviors maintained over a period of time.

Challenge — a task or activity designed to motivate users by providing clear goals and rewards upon completion.

Gated content — exclusive content accessible only after performing specific actions, such as signing up or earning points.

Countdown timer — a visual clock indicating the remaining time available for an action or offer, creating urgency.

Progress bar — visual indicator showing how close a user is to completing a goal or task.

Point — a numerical reward assigned to users for completing specific actions.

Badge — a visual symbol indicating achievement or completion of milestones.
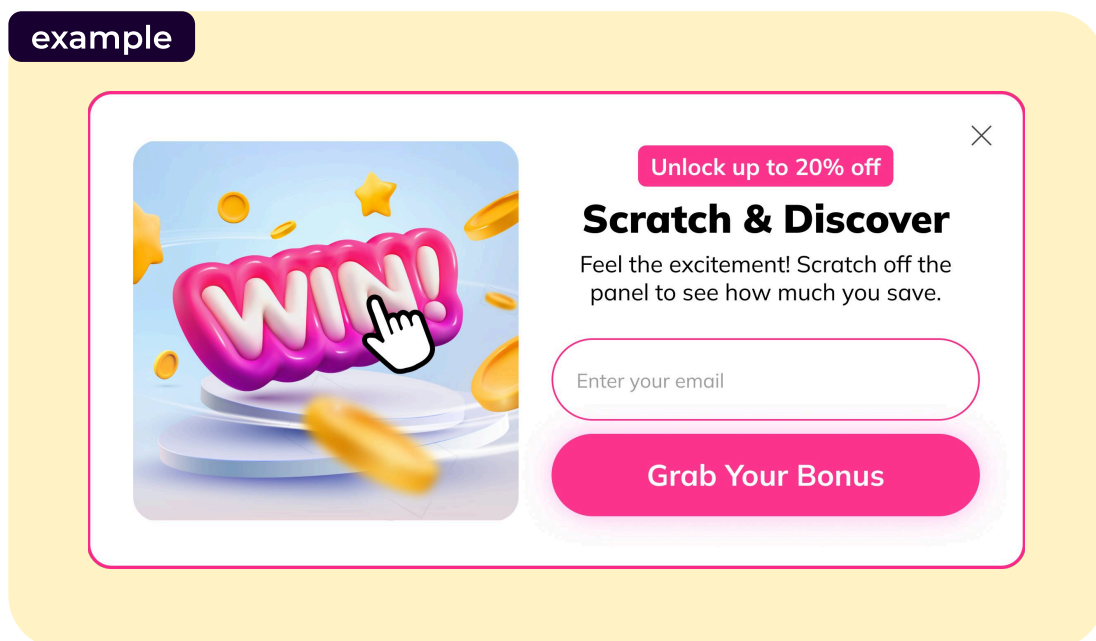
Tiered rewards — a reward structure offering progressively valuable benefits as users achieve higher milestones.

Leaderboard — a ranked list comparing user performance or achievements to foster competition.

Social sharing — a feature enabling users to publicly share achievements, rewards, or content via social media.

6. Creating gamified experience that people actually want to engage with

? First and foremost, each business should understand the pragmatics of implementing website gamification, i.e., **why do they need it?**

✓ Hopefully, the answer is not: **"Because it's trendy!"** By gamifying your users' experiences, you can achieve greater engagement and higher conversions — and these are just a few of the benefits.

example

Unlock up to 20% off

Scratch & Discover

Feel the excitement! Scratch off the panel to see how much you save.

Enter your email

Grab Your Bonus

Unlike most digital products that exist for utility, gamified websites serve for motivation and work outside of the core value exchange (in ecommerce, its formula is money for a product).

However, they are not standalone components but parts of a larger ecosystem — a website that keeps evolving and is shaped by how customers interact. Therefore, your gamification strategy needs to be simple, clean, and easy to use or, in other words, unifunctional, to fulfill their purpose of **motivating customer behavior.**

6,000 consumers consumers across the US and Europe **were surveyed** about their online shopping behavior and how website functionality influences it.

Relevant to our discussion are the following data:

Customers: 60%

choose to abandon their carts

Ecommerce companies:

each consumer made an average 5 purchases less than usual per year

Guided by bias and misconception, some people quickly give popups negative aura points, believing they are annoying and just about discounts, too complex to implement, suitable only for ecommerce, slowing down websites, and so on.

But are they all that, or are we just not doing it right?

Thought-through popups that fit into the overall website engagement architecture can help you address your customers' pain points and work towards resolving them. Gamified popups don't have to be annoying. They should feel like a reward in themselves. However, it's one thing to know the techniques; it's another to design an experience that works. We'll go over layout, timing, and storytelling strategies that turn curiosity into action.

Designing for simplicity — why less is more

When it comes to gamification, simplicity is key. Overloading users with too many options or complex gameplay mechanics can quickly lead to disengagement.

Simplicity
is the quality of being easy to understand or do. In terms of gamification, your users need to know immediately what you expect of them and what they will gain from the interaction. **Why immediately?**

Cognitive load theory,
as a psychological framework, suggests that our working memory has a limited capacity, and so too much information at once can make our brain say **"Hard pass, but thanks."**

So, limit the number of choices or actions your users need to take to get the reward. If you want to further streamline your efforts, avoid multiple goals or ambiguous instructions.

Let's break this concept further down to get to its **semantic core** built on the ideas of

Clarity

Minimalism

Consistency

Efficiency

Accessibility

1. Clarity

Here, we mostly concentrate on the content of your popup. Information is presented in a straightforward, easy-to-understand way.

The language is simple, there is no unnecessary jargon, and the messaging contains no ambiguity and fully conveys the goal you want your users to achieve.

	Do ✅	Don't do ❌
Instruction	Spin the wheel to win a discount!	Click here for a chance to win something amazing!
CTA	Spin now	Get started
Analysis	Concise instructions, no verbal ambiguity, users understand the value of this exchange and are motivated by it	Vague messaging, unclear reward, and even more confusion added by the CTA — what are users to get started with? **NB:** Such instruction (minus the CTA) can work well for narrowly themed niches that deal with fantasy fiction, magic, and surprise gifts, so this element of mystery may be contextually advantageous

2. Minimalism

Mainly perceived as a visual style that should appease customers, it calls for your popups to be clean, truthful, and honest in that they use only basic elements and don't distract from the core message.

All the listed ingredients, done properly, have the potential to make an intuitive user interface, as they will improve customer focus and enhance information perception. As for the game mechanics, stick to their core features.

	Do ✅	Don't do ❌
Elements	One mechanic, short instruction, single CTA button	**Multi-step form in 3 screens:** • 1st asks for an email, • 2nd offers to play, • 3rd reveals the actual mini-game
Intuitiveness	Buttons and CTAs are placed where users expect them	Busy background, multiple fonts, and overlapping elements
Analysis	No distractions, unnecessary graphics, or text	Users are forced to actively restore the interactive flow to understand what's happening on the screen which usually results in frustration

3. Consistency

Uniform design patterns and behaviors across the user experience help users predict outcomes and navigate effortlessly.

When elements function the same way throughout the interface, users build familiarity and confidence. This way you shape their expectations, reduce friction, and enhance overall engagement.

	Do ✅	Don't do ❌
Elements	A popup uses the same color scheme, font, and button style as the rest of the website	A popup that made its goal to stand out from the rest of the website design as much as possible
Analysis	User perceives it as a natural part of the experience; no interruption, no unnecessary questions and actions are provoked	User is most likely to feel like it's an alien intrusion and might be a scam **NB:** This radical approach might work well for the niches, where grabbing attention is key: • streetwear as it is disruptive by nature; • nightlife and entertainment to convey the energy drive; • creative, influencer, and art niches to show the edginess, especially relevant for younger user audiences. The key to knowing if it's for your business? TEST!

4. Efficiency

Unlike its related concepts, efficiency focuses on how quickly and effortlessly users can complete a desired action.

To achieve efficiency, you need to eliminate all extra steps, integrate your popup smoothly into the browsing flow, and prioritize quick decision-making.

	Do ✅	Don't do ❌
Steps	Three: enter email, click on a box, collect the reward	Many: fill out a form, watch a quick promo video, pick a box, rate your experience, collect the reward
Progression	Clearly linear, supporting one intention, which concludes with an actionable result after step three	Fake-linear, following multiple intentions and requiring more than one feedback from the user
Analysis	The process is ultraquick and requires minimal effort	Such design creates unnecessary friction and may lead to user drop-off if not negative reviews

5. Accessibility

Simple is accessible to broader audiences, and the more users understand how to use your widget, the more of them will.

Another building block here is cross-device functionality, which might seem like a default best practice. However, not everyone actually takes pains to implement it.

	Do ✅	Don't do ❌
Devices	Popup works seamlessly on desktop and mobile devices	Popup is optimized for mobile devices, making the wheel hard to spin
Instruction	Click to spin for desktop and swipe to spin for mobile	Swipe for both device types
Analysis	Even if the same user interacts with the popup on different device types, they will enjoy the experience	User might not find the way to interact with the widget right away and thus lose patience to proceed

Timing your popups — when to engage for maximum impact

Even the best-designed gamified popup will fall flat if it appears at the wrong time, leading to the user's frustration rather than sheer excitement. Luckily, years of running tests and evaluating their results have helped us establish best practices for when your popups should appear.

There are triggers based on user behavior and customer journey stage, ensuring the popup appears at the optimal moment to engage visitors who are most likely to convert.

Behavior-based triggers and what might set them off:

Time

Engage your users after a specific duration on the page:

- a user has spent **60** seconds on your website and had a chance to look around
- a reminder popup after **2** minutes of a user being inactive on the website

Scroll

Activate popups at certain scroll percentages:

- at **50%** down the page, show them product recommendation quiz
- at **75%** — a scratch card with a reward if they signup for your newsletter

Exit-intent

Detect when users are about to leave and present a last-chance offer:

- a user moves cursor to close the page
- they can also aim for the address bar, in both cases you can ask them for the reason they are leaving, provide a special offer in exchange for an email, etc.

Action

Respond to specific user interactions:

- clicking a button
- hovering over an element

1. Awareness stage

Awareness stage: use gentle, informative popups for first-time visitors to introduce your brand

2. Consideration stage

Consideration stage: offer incentives (like discounts or exclusive offers) to guide hesitant users toward conversion

3. Decision stage

Decision stage: use time-sensitive offers to create urgency for those close to purchasing

Avoiding popup fatigue

As you remember, we talked about decision fatigue, and now there's a popup one. Yes, people can get easily tired of different things, so always evaluate your ideas. We have collected some to get you started:

⊘ Space out popup triggers to prevent overwhelming users with repeated interruptions. If your user saw a welcome popup, don't show another one for at least 30 seconds on the website.

✓ Limit the frequency of popups to maintain a positive experience. It can be maximum one per visit or per page or per user depending on the session.

✓ Ensure that popups don't interrupt critical user tasks. You can test different trigger times (e.g., 10 seconds vs. 30 seconds on-site) to see which results in higher engagement.

✓ Testing and optimizing trigger points for different user segments. Show different popups for new visitors vs. returning customers or engaged users vs. those about to leave.

Use previous user data (like browsing history or past purchases) to trigger **highly relevant popups** because personalized timing ensures the popup feels **helpful rather than intrusive.**

Storytelling: the how of gamification design

Case 1

A fitness website that frames daily workouts as training for a **"heroic marathon."**

Case 2

A language-learning platform that turns lessons into a journey to **"unlock ancient secrets."**

Both cases are examples of storytelling as is: they concentrate on the "what" and strive to transform a user experience into a quest. However, it can also be very helpful as the design technique that addresses another question — **"how?"** How do we make our users' experiences cohesive? **How do we help them get more than our products or services?**

As always, let's start with the definition:

Storytelling is the connection between parts of any complex entity like a brand's marketing campaign and reality as a whole. Unlike narration that exists to give account of events, storytelling provides cohesion and purpose for anything it ties in together.

- For example, you can design gamified popups along with the actions you want your customers to take.

- However, the way and frequency of their interactions, further actions they will or will not take, and how that will influence the development of your business — may be conditioned, prognosed, and then measured, but not predetermined.

- Understanding your product from this perspective allows you to find more opportunities for growth.

- As we've established how storytelling is the connection, we should also name the system itself — a gamified popup incorporated into a website and user experience.

example

UNLOCK
CYBER GIFTS

Enter your email, spin the wheel, and claim exclusive Cyber Monday savings

5% 15% 10% 5% 15% 10%

Enter your email address

UNLOCK SAVINGS
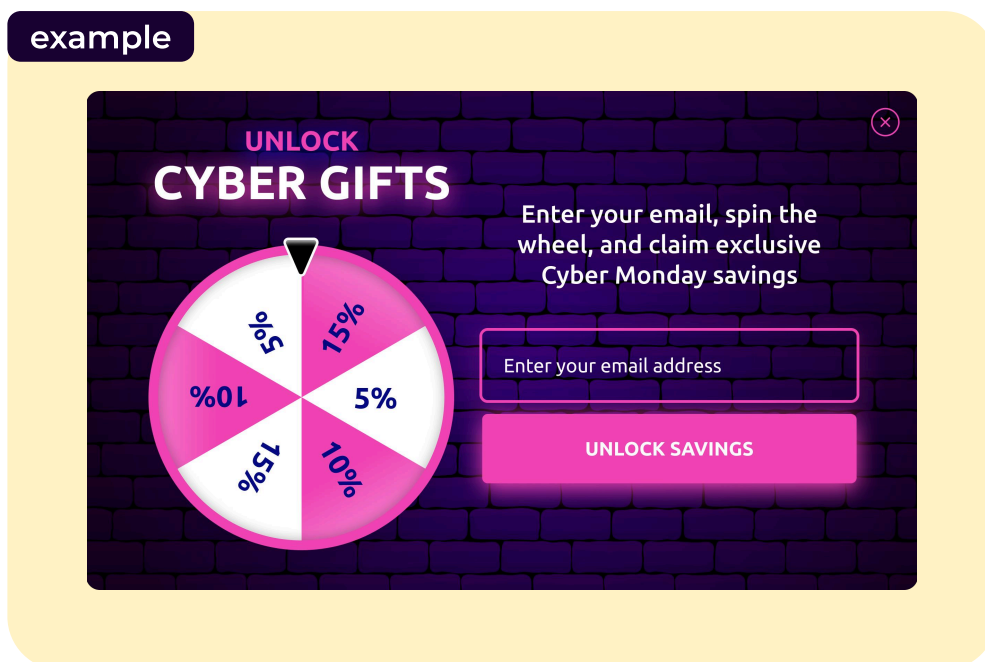
Now let's see what its **elements** and **goals** are.

Elements

1. Characters

In marketing, each customer should feel like the main character at the epicenter of events — the chosen one, if you will. With countless visitors to your website, how can you make sure everyone tries on a hero cape?

Personalize and call them by their name. Not only will they feel seen but also become more attentive and engaged, experience a dopamine release, and have their sense of self-worth reinforced.

✅ Not to get too techy, but we need to talk about how to make that happen. In Claspo, we can use Data Layer events to, among other things, display the names of logged-in users as dynamic content in widgets.

✅ The Data Layer is a standardized tool for data exchange in digital marketing and web analytics, especially in e-commerce. It acts as a bridge between your website and services like Google Tag Manager or Claspo.

✅ Using the Data Layer, your website can retrieve stored user information (such as a name from a login) and dynamically display it in popups, banners, or product recommendations. This level of personalization transforms generic interactions into deeply personal experiences.

2. Conflict

We usually attribute negative connotations to this word, but it is actually neutral and means a clash or incompatibility between forces, ideas, and even states.

In gamified widgets, such oppositions are choices your customers need to make. To illustrate, let's look at the **mockup questions** they might be asking themselves:

1 **"Should I take this reward or wait for a better deal?"**

2 **"Do I need to act now or lose my chance to win a prize?"**

3 **"Which choice will give me the biggest benefit?"**

3. Setting

A setting is time and place, where time means when they interact with your business, and the place is where it happens. The first one refers to the actual time of the day, season, whether there is a special occasion or holiday as well as how fast your popups appear. The second one is the overall visual and strategic design that frames their experience.

4. Plot

Here, a plot is a structured sequence of events that moves users from initial curiosity to meaningful interaction. If we were to break it down with examples, it would go like this.

example

Spin to Win Exclusive Discounts!

Join our loyalty program and spin the wheel for special discounts on children's clothing. Enter your email to start!

Enter your email

Claim Your Prize

example

Join & Reveal Your Beauty Bonus!

Become a member of our loyalty program and scratch to reveal your exclusive beauty reward!

Enter your email

Reveal My Reward
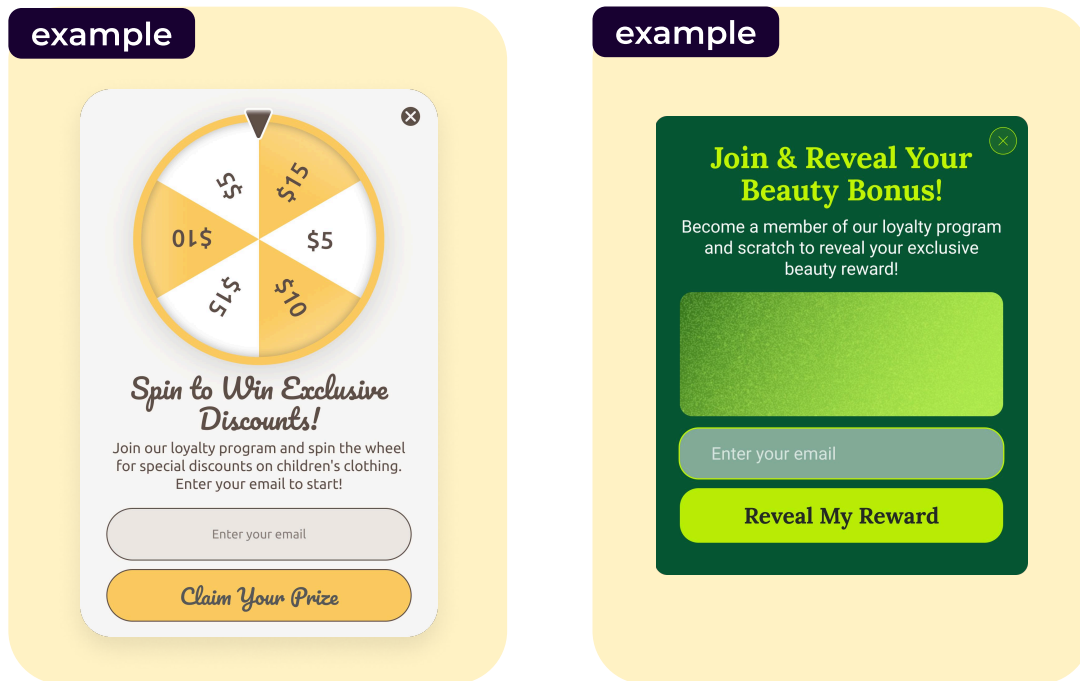
1 The hook captures your user's attention: a spin-the-wheel popup appears with the message: **"Your luck is calling! Spin for a surprise discount!"**

2 Engaging them with your mechanics translates to the rising action: they spin the wheel, scratch a card, or pick a mystery box, triggering excitement and an emotional investment in the outcome.

3 The climax is when they make a decision and get rewarded for it: **"You won 15% off! Redeem now or try your luck again tomorrow?"** — but it is not the end!

4 You need to encourage your user to act further — make a purchase, sign up for your newsletter, etc. — and this makes the resolution: a **"Redeem now!"** CTA button that will take your customer to perform the action on the right page.

FYI Resolution is also the final element of storytelling. Now let's see what **purposes storytelling** in marketing through gamified **popups pursues.**
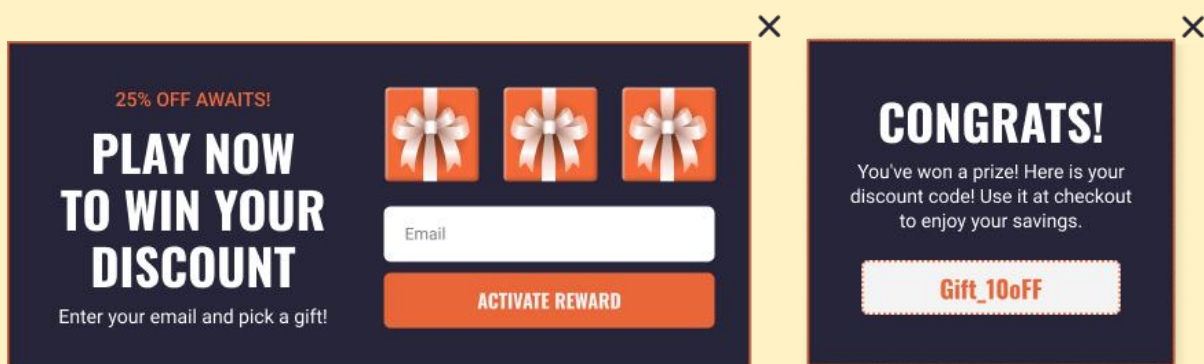
5. Purposes

The main purposes of using gamified popups to enhance user experience are to captivate, persuade, and entertain, making the audience feel connected to the message.

Storytelling in gamified popups isn't just about adding narrative elements — it's a strategic framework that structures user interactions, making them more engaging, intuitive, and purpose-driven.

By integrating storytelling elements, businesses can guide users through a seamless, emotionally compelling journey that drives action, improves personalization, and enhances user experience.
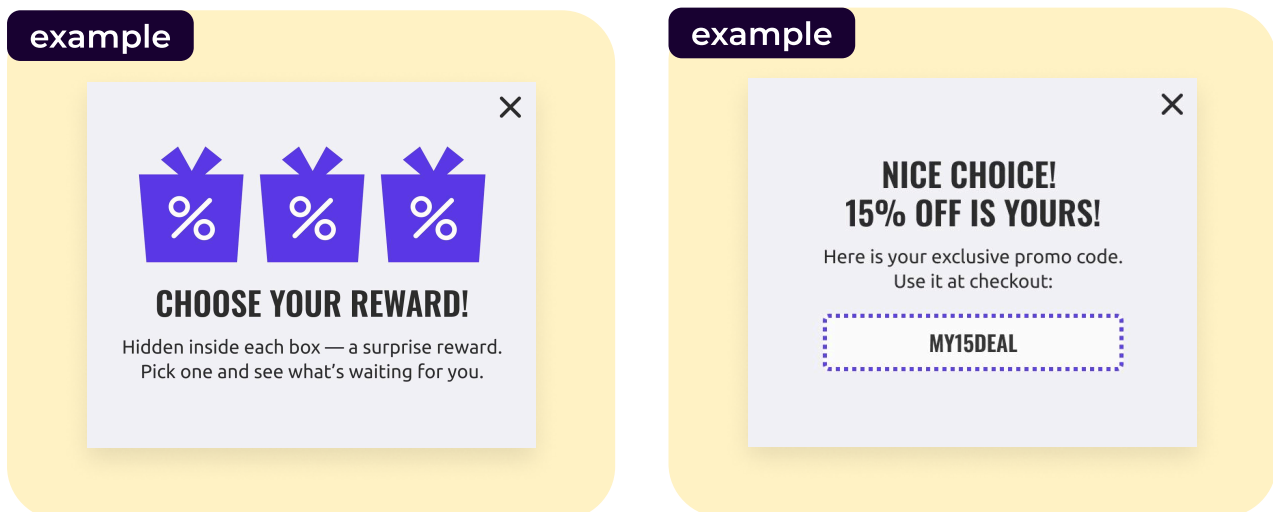
example

25% OFF AWAITS!

PLAY NOW TO WIN YOUR DISCOUNT

Enter your email and pick a gift!

Email

ACTIVATE REWARD

CONGRATS!

You've won a prize! Here is your discount code! Use it at checkout to enjoy your savings.

Gift_10oFF

7. What about irresistible rewards?

Generation G is all of us who prefer game mechanics and engagement-driven experiences. We are used to **interactive marketing strategies** and might appreciate it when businesses take great pains to get our attention. And they reward us when we play along.

Fair, but transactional and quite mundane. With the abundance of rewards, no one cares about a 5% discount on their next order. **So, what do you do?** Increase it, you might think. No, well, sometimes it works, but be aware that people are getting used to viewing ecommerce through a discount lens. In turn, it leads to the lower perceived value of products, which is just one disadvantage.

example

CHOOSE YOUR REWARD!

Hidden inside each box — a surprise reward.
Pick one and see what's waiting for you.

example

**NICE CHOICE!
15% OFF IS YOURS!**

Here is your exclusive promo code.
Use it at checkout:

MY15DEAL

(?) It is also true that if the reward doesn't feel worth the effort, your gamification strategy will fail. So, how do you come up with incentives that **make customers want to engage?**

(✓) **We'd say:** create meaningful rewards that go beyond discounts. From exclusive access to experiential prizes, personalize your offers, make them valuable, and use a tiered approach to encourage repeat actions. Hear us out: in the long run, all your efforts will drive higher lifetime value.

The psychology of reward: Why the right reward matters

The reward system makes the core of gamification, but not all rewards are created equal. This is not to say that some are better than others, but to highlight how different their impact is.

Within the framework of motivation theory, rewards fall into two categories: **intrinsic** and **extrinsic.**

1. Intrinsic

Intrinsic (autonomous) rewards come from within the individual. Assuming humans are designed to strive for growth, we seek challenges, receive new experiences, and celebrate ourselves. We get feelings of accomplishment and enjoyment and often develop a more cohesive sense of self. An exemplary internal motivator is the need for achievement, which is reinforced through external mechanics such as badges, rankings, points, personalization, etc.

2. Extrinsic

Extrinsic rewards come to us from outside sources — objects like gift cards, free products, loyalty points, discounts, and so on.

Extrinsic motivation fills the gaps the intrinsic one can't:

- It is an immediate hook and a tangible confirmation of progress

- It makes naturally non-enjoyable tasks more appealing

- It can bridge the gap to intrinsic motivation and reinforce it

- It provides clear and measurable goals

- It appeals to a broader audience

88%
of customers

state that the experience a business provides is as important as the products or services they sell

73%
expect deep personalization:

companies should understand their audience's unique needs and expectations

Fun fact

Social proof may fit the criteria for both categories, depending on user perception. It falls under extrinsic rewards if the user is mainly after the external validation, aka the opinion of others. However, it becomes intrinsic when it aligns with the user's internal values or gives them a sense of belonging.
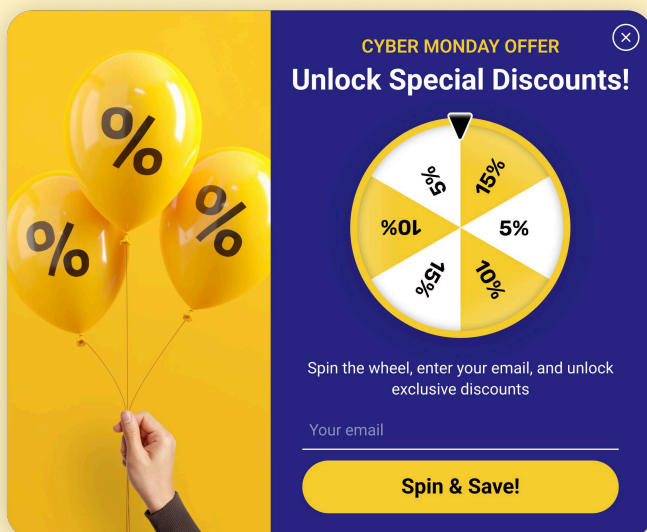
Discount weariness and profit margins

Profit margin is a key measure of a business's financial health, and the overuse of discounts can significantly hurt it. Bombarded with "best deals," customers may grow unwilling to pay the full price, eventually leading to lower perceived value and brand loyalty.

Hold on: we are not trying to demonize all discounts, but want to bring your attention to the blanket ones. This term describes the reduced prices offered to all customers, covering multiple (if not all) products or services without requiring special conditions. Effective as a short-term strategy that gives quick sales boosts and tends to attract new customers, it will not be viable in the long run.
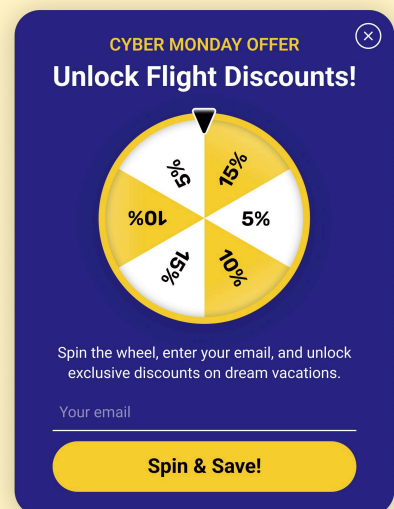

A discount should still contain the fleur of exclusivity, even if it offers only 5% off. Why? Customers are more likely to perceive value in discounts when they feel rare, personalized, or part of an achievement. In addition, you can make them time-sensitive so that there are clear limits on when the value exists. Finally, there is a good old scarcity bias: when something is hard-earned, we automatically perceive it as more valuable.

Here are some ways to prevent discounts from becoming a mundane experience:

✓ **Use gamification** (spin-to-win, tiered rewards, or exclusive VIP perks) because, unlike being given something without strings attached, your customers must act up to earn their reward. Since such discounts are randomized, they don't know what to expect but are curious

✓ **Offer value-driven incentives** (free shipping, early access, loyalty points) — not every step towards your customer needs a price cut. You will avoid training your customers to expect discounts, maintain a positive brand image, and pave the path to long-term engagement

✓ **Implement intelligent segmentation** so only at-risk or new customers get special offers. You will be discounting only where necessary and increasing retention by rewarding the right customers

> On top of that, not all rewards should be readily available. On the one hand, this practice has to do with literally hiding the numbers. For example, you can cover a part of your spin-to-win sectors or use a gift box mechanic where the user will eventually see the contents of only one container.

On the other, you can set the likelihood of your users winning certain types of discounts in percentages, as we do in Claspo, like this:

- Frequent rewards: small, attainable prizes (e.g., 5% off, bonus points)

- Rare rewards: bigger discounts or exclusive perks (e.g., free product, 20% off, VIP tier access)

Always look into alternatives to direct discounts: loyalty points, exclusive perks, and non-monetary incentives to maintain engagement without eroding pricing power.

Perceived vs real value of rewards

Here's the concept of perceived value: it is subjective to the recipient and grows out of the benefits it holds for them. The said benefits are manifold, and not all of them are tied to the actual cost of the reward. Winning a small discount through a gamified popup may feel more exciting than receiving a standard promotion. A loyalty program that offers exclusive VIP perks can be more enticing than a one-time coupon, given both are of the same monetary value. As we see, a well-thought reward system activates psychological triggers like scarcity, achievement, and social recognition, enhancing the perceived worth of the incentive.

On the other hand, the real value of a reward is its objective cost to the business — determined by factors like actual monetary expense, logistics, and long-term profitability. Unlike perception, it is a fixed reality that can be measured through its impact on revenue and margins.

Together they make up a total value of the reward:
how value is formed

Real Value (Business) —— Total Value —— Perceived Value (Customer)

Real value   **Perceived Value**
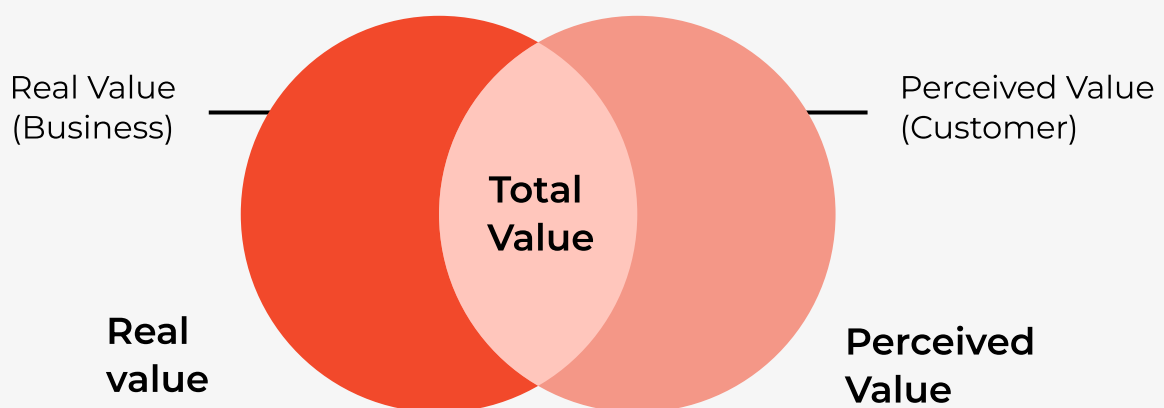
It might be tempting to say that perceived value matters most to the customer, while real value is the business's primary concern (after all, it affects costs and profitability).

However, customers respond to both, and it's up to you to shape the perceived value of your rewards without drastically increasing costs.

Here's how:

1	Make rewards feel **exclusive**: use tiered or limited-time offers to increase desirability

2	Employ **gamification:** interactive elements like spin-to-win popups and mystery rewards boost excitement

3	Highlight **experiential** benefits: a personalized thank-you email can add emotional value to even a small reward

4	Create a sense of **achievement:** let customers unlock better rewards through engagement milestones

5	Ensure a **coherent** redemption process: a reward that feels effortless to claim after the customer took action has more impact than one with friction

Remember: gamified rewards don't need to be valuable — they **need to feel valuable.**

To end on a good note, look at the examples of how you can balance the rewards in your prize pool to maximize ROI and not hurt your profit margins.

Get the best of both worlds:
high perceived value and low-cost rewards

- Digital products (exclusive guides, early access, premium content)

- Free shipping vouchers or extended return periods

- Small discounts framed as limited-time exclusives

Mix tangible and psychological rewards

- Tiered reward structures (e.g., "win up to 30% off" rather than a flat discount)

- Achievement-based bonuses (e.g., earn a freebie after three purchases)

- Personalized rewards based on user behavior (e.g., VIP-only perks)

Limit high-cost prizes with probability control

- Set probabilities to ensure costly rewards are won less frequently

- Use scarcity marketing (e.g., "only 10 available" badges)

- Provide alternative incentives (e.g., extra loyalty points instead of a discount)

Tiered reward systems: engaging different customer segments according to your business's size

The five Ws and one H are the core questions for establishing the nature of events and phenomena. So far, we have talked about everything but the **who?** or the customer and the **what?** or the business — as both will benefit from the right reward implementation.

(?) **Who?** Assign weight to rewards based on the customer lifecycle stage:

- First-time visitors are more likely to be drawn to extrinsic rewards (discounts, free shipping)

- Returning customers tend to be more receptive to loyalty-based rewards or gamified achievements (VIP status, early access)

- High-value customers might appreciate exclusive experiences over discounts

(?) **What?** Small businesses and startups operate on a limited budget while having a high need for engagement. They may primarily benefit from introducing loyalty points, small-value discounts, and community engagement rewards. At this stage, the main development focus is building brand trust without heavily cutting margins.

Mid-sized businesses mainly concentrate on balancing growth and customer retention. Exclusive perks, experiential incentives, and gamified discounts work best for these purposes. These businesses have more resources to invest in gamified engagement without compromising profitability.

Enterprises and large businesses are predictably after increasing brand loyalty and high-ticket purchases, which are best achieved through experiential rewards, VIP treatment, and premium partnerships.

? **Why?** Large businesses need more than just discounts — they focus on emotional connection and exclusivity to create brand loyalty.

	Small businesses and startups	Mid-sized businesses	Enterprises and large businesses
First-time visitors	**Spin-to-Win** – Visitors play for a chance to win small rewards like 5% off or free shipping	**Product Quiz** – A quick, interactive quiz that suggests the best product and offers a small reward for completing it	**Gamified Onboarding Challenge** – Users unlock an extended return window or a discount after completing key onboarding steps (e.g., signing up, exploring features)
Returning customers	**Loyalty Points** – Earn 1 point per $1 spent and redeem after hitting milestones	**Exclusive Access Game** – A "Scratch & Reveal" popup for early access to limited collections or birthday rewards	**Leaderboard & Status Badges** – Customers earn priority support and exclusive perks based on their engagement level
High-value customers	**Tiered Rewards & Achievements –** Unlock perks like early access and content based on engagement milestones	**Exclusive Access Game** – A "Scratch & Reveal" popup for early access to limited collections or birthday rewards	**VIP Quest Game** – A series of tasks (e.g., referrals, purchases, engagement) that unlock high-value experiences like meet-the-founder events or private shopping

Best practices for tiered gamification

- Encourage progression by making the next tier's benefits bigger, clearly visible, and desirable

- Use dynamic popups that display personalized rewards based on the user's engagement level

- Incorporate gamification mechanics (e.g., milestone progress bars, leaderboards, or achievement badges) to reinforce continued participation

> A well-structured tiered reward system keeps customers engaged over time, increasing retention and lifetime value while ensuring rewards are allocated efficiently to maximize ROI.

Motivating beyond the initial interaction

Engagement shouldn't stop at the first click, the first purchase, or the first customer review — it is the river that keeps flowing. Having managed to capture your customer's attention, you should put effort into sustaining and reciprocating it, and even outgive something in return. If your gamification efforts only focus on the first touchpoint, you risk losing momentum, leading to drop-offs and lower retention rates.

How do you sustain engagement through the **power** of **motivation**? Rewards?

1. Progressive rewards and challenges

- Implement multi-step rewards that unlock over time, encouraging users to return

- Use a **"Come Back Tomorrow"** scratch card where users reveal progressively better rewards over multiple visits

- Encourage goal-setting by using milestone-based incentives, such as unlocking special discounts after multiple purchases

2. Loyalty & VIP tiers

- Reward continued engagement by offering tiered loyalty benefits for repeat interactions

- Introduce a **"Spin-to-Win Elite"** feature available only to returning customers or those who refer a friend

- Show progress toward the next tier with gamified progress bars and personalized messages

3. Behavior-triggered popups and offers

- Keep engagement high by triggering new offers based on past interactions

- If a user abandoned their cart, a **"Second Chance"** popup could offer a limited-time bonus for completing their purchase

- Use dynamic content to tailor messages based on browsing behavior or previous game interactions

## 4. Social and community engagement

- Gamify social sharing to increase engagement outside of your website

- Example: Offer bonus spins or mystery rewards for users who share their win on social media

- Implement leaderboards or interactive badges to encourage community participation

5. Email and retargeting reinforcement

- Extend gamification beyond the website with email campaigns and retargeting ads

- Send a personalized **"You're Close to Unlocking X"** email to remind users of pending rewards

- Use retargeting ads to show users their unfinished game progress or promote an exclusive second-chance offer
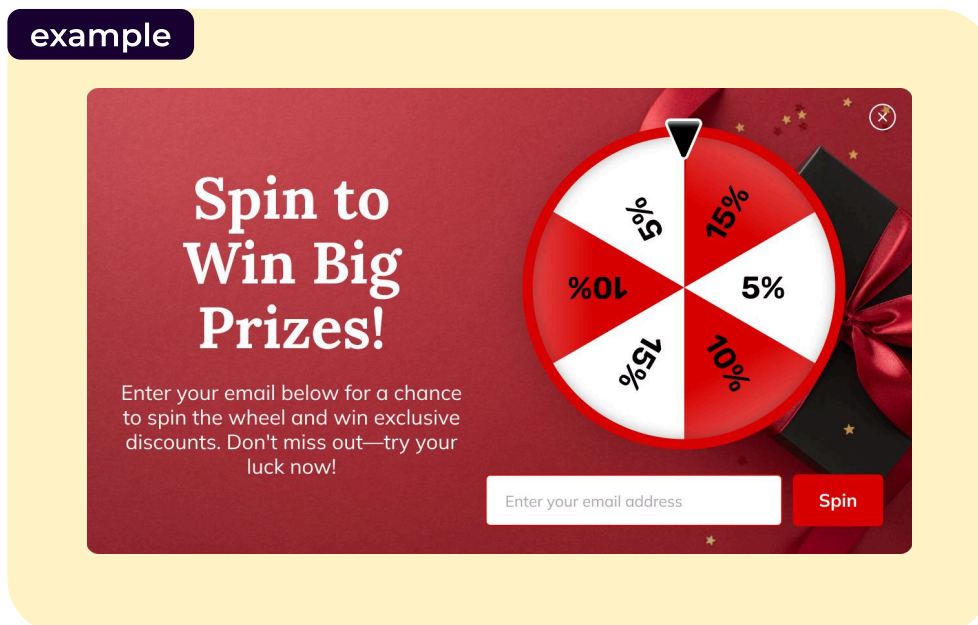
Gamification **shouldn't be a one-time trick** — it should be a continuous engagement loop that encourages customers to return, interact, and stay loyal. By integrating long-term motivation tactics, you can keep your audience involved well beyond their first click, increasing conversions and retention rates over time.

8. A/B testing for gamified experiences

❓ You've designed a gamified experience, but **how do you know** it's working?

✅ That's where **A/B testing** comes in. From testing layouts in game design to optimizing reward structures, you'll learn how to use data to refine your strategy.

This chapter isn't just about tweaking small elements: it will help you understand which components of gamification actually drive conversions, and which might be distracting or ineffective.

> **A/B testing** is a method of comparing two versions of a digital experience to determine which performs better.

A/B testing ensures your gamified experiences aren't just appealing — they deliver real, measurable value to your audience.

A/B testing in gamified marketing

Everything that can help cut budgets should be considered crucial for business. A/B testing fits this statement perfectly, as it leads to making data-informed decisions, choosing the most effective engagement strategies, and improving performance metrics.

Sounds like a dream come true, right? Yes, in many ways, this method is one of the most powerful and reliable ways to identify what resonates with customers.

Relevant to our discussion are the following data:

1 Empirical evidence that relies on clear, quantitative data

2 Precision which is achieved through isolation of specific variables — that's how brands know things like what font to choose and mechanics to avoid

**3** Reduced risk due to small-scale experimentation before going live towards larger audiences

To eliminate the chance of this chapter becoming an ode to A/B testing, we need to admit that it will tell you what works better but not why. Also, it won't offer valid insights in the long term because it typically measures immediate effects.

For example, while an A/B test might show that increasing discount percentages results in higher conversion rates, it won't reveal whether this is due to the psychological effect of larger discounts or simply increased value for the customer.

Over time, such tests can offer valuable short-term data but may not explain underlying trends or long-term brand loyalty. Finally, if you ain't got sufficient traffic, your test results may lack statistical significance.

A/B testing in gamified marketing

We'll define key terms and give you good and bad examples for each one, helping you understand not just the theory behind them but also how to apply them effectively in real-world A/B testing scenarios. By the end, you'll be equipped to craft precise hypotheses, test the right elements, and avoid common pitfalls in your own experiments.
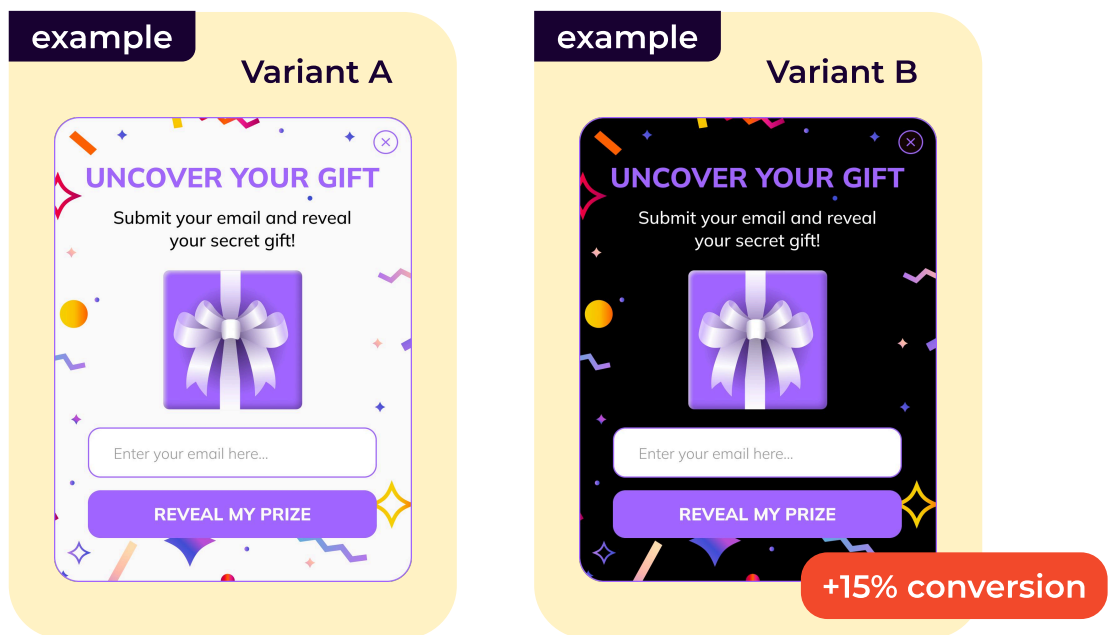
1. Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a clear, testable statement predicting the outcome of your A/B test. It sets the foundation by clarifying exactly what you're testing and why, guiding all subsequent decisions — from test design to metric selection and result interpretation.

Well-formulated hypotheses contain three ingredients:

- Clearly defined element and control group to be tested

- Specific, measurable, and achievable criteria

- Explicitly stated outcome

We all know this in theory, but we often casually omit one or several of them in practice. Let's look at the examples of poorly formulated hypotheses and how we suggest to fix them:

Weak hypothesis	Why?	Improved version ✅
Changing widgets will increase sales.	So many questions! What widgets? How big of an increase are we talking about? Compared to what?	Replacing our gift-box widget with a scratch card widget will increase product purchase conversions by 15%.
Countdown timers encourage more users to buy.	Sounds like something heard on the grapevine: where do we use these timers? For how long? How many more users?	Adding a countdown timer to promotional offers will lead to at least a 12% increase in same-day purchase rates compared to promotions without timers.
Using a spin-the-wheel might improve customer experience.	At least we know it needs improvement! What part of customer experience though and by how much? What will help us measure?	Implementing a spin-the-wheel widget instead of the current scratch card will increase average session duration by at least 10%.

2. Variant

A variant is a version of your test that differs from the original in one or more aspects, such as design, content, or functionality. A starter pack to give you the idea of what to look into in these three categories is common sense, and, at this point, you might scoff.

Please don't just yet: we will explain why these are good and give examples of something you should not waste your time on. Hoping you find out tips helpful, let's dive in!

Design	
Test	**Let it go ✅**
Widget placement: above or below fold; center of the page or anchored to the bottom	**Decorative details and small tweaks:** color shade change or font size
Visual styles: playful colors or minimalist aesthetic; in line with brand colors or daring to stand out	**Irrelevant imagery:** images or graphics unrelated to the incentive or the overall goal
Animation usage: static or animated elements like CTA button, headline	**Complex visual layouts:** with too many details, you will be unlikely to get valid insights

Content	
Test	**Let it go ✅**
Crucial wording: reward messaging, what verbs introduce the action to collect the reward	**Vague wording changes:** minor grammatical tweaks
CTA: test different language formulas to accentuate specific drives, e.g., "Spin now!" to reach urgency-susceptible customers and "Try your luck!"	**Unclear value propositions:** ambiguous or overly creative copy that doesn't directly communicate benefits
Urgency indicators: explicit countdowns or subtle urgency hints (we covered this distinction in Chapter 6)	**Excessively technical language:** complex terms or jargon might only confuse your audience

Functionality	
Test	**Let it go** ✅
Progress visibility: visible progress bars or hidden achievement systems	**Rarely-used features:** not enough users interact with them to deliver accurate results
Reward types: will your customers prefer immediately available discounts or free product incentives?	**Non-actionable outcomes:** testing elements that users can't directly act on or respond to
Engagement method: quick (gift box) or more involved interactions (quiz)	**Overcomplicated mechanics:** widgets that require extensive user effort or cognitive load without clear reward or benefit

3. Control and variant groups

Control group is the baseline group exposed to the original or standard experience, used as a benchmark to evaluate the performance of variants. In contrast, a variant group is made of users who see a modified version of the original experience, containing specific changes under test conditions. Performance is measured against the control group to determine if these changes lead to improved outcomes

Common sense rules to run your test properly are:

- **Randomly** assign users to the control and variant groups, ensuring they are both similar in size.

- Run both versions **simultaneously** under **identical** conditions; this way you will accurately measure the difference in user behavior

(?) **The eternal question:** how many users do I need for the test to yield statistically significant results?

(✓) The acceptable bare minimum is **100-200** conversions per group. Note how we say conversions because you must measure how many users completed the target action. In an ideal scenario, this number would equal **1,000-2,000** per variant.

It often seems that to test small things like a discount difference of 10% and 15%, you would need fewer users, but it is the other way around: the subtler the difference, the bigger the sample size. On the contrary, drastic changes don't require that large of a crowd. If we take discounts, 5% and 25% would be considered such a change; different mechanics like spin-to-win wheel vs. scratch card, a widget done in pastels will starkly contrast to the one in vivid brights — you get the idea.

> Reality check! With widgets — do you need that many tests? Not necessarily. Focus on **high-impact tests** that provide meaningful insights, especially when your traffic or sample size is limited.

Start with tests that involve substantial changes (e.g., a significant shift in rewards, gamified mechanics, or design) where even small groups can yield actionable results. Even with fewer users, these tests are more likely to show clear, actionable outcomes.

On the other hand, for smaller changes, you might need a larger sample to detect a meaningful difference.

Remember that external factors like seasonal trends, ongoing marketing campaigns, or brand promotions can skew your A/B test results. These factors may influence how users engage with your gamified experiences and should be considered when analyzing outcomes.

So, rather than focusing on the quantity of tests, focus on the quality and relevance of the tests you run. Prioritize changes with a high potential impact, which will help you refine your gamified experience more effectively.

Typical interface

Widget builders facilitate A/B testing for their customers; some do it the old-school way, while others introduce AI-powered assistants that may even suggest what elements to optimize and run the actual test. However great, that solution may cost more and not be necessary for small to medium-sized companies.

> **We will list common core features your widget provider should contain for a smooth A/B test:**

Variant testing and **split traffic distribution** are clearly important as they are the core of this method.

Real-time performance analytics give you immediate feedback, helping you save time-solving problems that may arise.

User segmentation allows you to target smartly, saving budgets and making results more relevant.

Reporting and data export collect all your findings in one place, making tracking metrics and spot insights easier.

Some other features that might be a bit advanced are heatmaps and click tracking, behavioral targeting, and multivariate testing for when you need to test multiple variables at the same time.

Identifying metrics to test

Metrics are the little helpers of your big business goals, and it's advisable to align them, which is common sense. We want to suggest that you also include player types in this equation. **Why would you?**

Player types explain what drives your audience and how you can make them perform certain actions more efficiently and with greater zeal on their part. Different types are motivated by different mechanics and rewards. Knowing this, you will be able to build the most adequate hypotheses.

For instance, achievers may feel a sense of satisfaction from accumulating rewards, which is why tracking milestones or badges earned will be more meaningful. In contrast, free spirits crave freedom and exploration, so engaging them may require dynamic, customizable experiences rather than rigidly defined paths.

Goal	Possible Metrics	Player Type	Aligned Metrics
Increase sales	Conversion rate, Average order value	Players	Conversion rate, Participation rate, Instant reward redemption
Customer retention	Repeat purchase rate, Churn rate	Achievers	Milestones completed, Badges earned, Tier progression
Customer engagement	Session duration, Interaction rate, Engagement rate	Socializers	Social shares, Referral rate, Engagement in community features
Customer loyalty	Points earned, Rewards redeemed, Loyalty tiers reached	Free Spirits	Exploration rate, Personalization engagement, Unique interactions

Remember that you don't need to measure everything — select a few key metrics that directly link to your primary goals and dominant player types. Typically, 1-3 metrics per goal provide focused, actionable insights.

Once your A/B test concludes, review the results with an eye toward iteration. Did the winning variation meet your business objectives? What insights can you apply to future tests? A/B testing isn't just about finding a winner — it's an ongoing learning process.

Create **a gamified widget** and watch your **conversions growing** — up to 4x higher!

Claspo