

# Secret to **Motivating** Hourly Employees



*According to the US Department of Labor, nearly three in five American workers—over 75 million—are paid by the hour. But while businesses see significant advantages to hourly hiring, employees aren't so keen. Many studies agree that lower pay, less job security, stricter schedules, non-existent benefits, lacking bonus structures and fewer opportunities for promotion are common. That's quite a list. It's easy to see why hourly workers often aren't the model of engagement employers would like them to be.*

*And the outlook is grim: Mercer's Attraction and Retention Survey for 2012 indicates nearly twice as many organizations reporting reduced levels of employee engagement as did so in 2010. Hourly workers are seriously restless and unengaged, and that can be costly.*

*Businesses, in turn, are searching for a silver-bullet solution that fosters engagement, drives productivity, builds company loyalty, and increases worker longevity. If it feeds the dog and puts the kids to bed, all the better. The emerging solution, however, is closer to a three-step process: First, companies must strive to better understand the core motivations of their workers; second, they must effectively communicate the skills they deem valuable; and third, they must implement a program that responds to core motivations, assigns value and illustrates success.*

## 1. “Get” your employees

Many organizations today aren't exactly in tune with their hourly workers. While they may spend significant time and effort designing programs meant to engage, retain and motivate, they fail to take the key characteristics of their employees into consideration. Programs are too often based on the premise that what motivates salaried professionals will also motivate hourly workers.

In an effort to understand what drives workers, The Wilson Group conducted a research study in which two distinct employee “types” emerged: 1) Professional, career-focused employees and 2) Job holders.

The study found that the top priority for professionals was to gain power and the responsibilities associated with it. To anyone who's ever worked in corporate America, that shouldn't come as a surprise: If Napoleon were alive today, he'd be climbing the corporate ladder at Oracle. Hourly employees, however, were found to shy away from greater responsibilities in favor of work/life balance. And while the hourly worker appreciates additional income, it isn't necessarily the primary driver—and therefore not the best answer to solving a lack of engagement.

What the study did find was that hourly workers are driven by job security and motivated primarily by purpose, mastery and autonomy, which we'll address shortly.

## 2. Communicate what the company finds valuable, and convey success

Workers understand that they're measured against their peers. Sometimes, performance can be easily calculated. If your job is simply to make widgets, and you make six each day and your co-worker Sally only makes five, then your job security is apparently pretty high.

However, there may be extenuating circumstances to consider: Sally may have taken management training courses offered by the company, and she may use her accounting skills to fill in for co-workers in the finance department. Sally may provide valuable assets to the company not immediately visible to everyone. Sally may be running circles around you as you sit, contentedly sewing together your widgets.

Therefore, it's essential to let hourly workers know what's important to the company—which skills and assets are valued and to what degree. Provide workers with a mechanism to make each employee aware of where they stand in relation to others, as well as where they may have opportunities to improve and become more valuable. A bit of friendly competition can go a long way toward motivating employees.

## 3. Implement a program that responds to core motivations, assigns value and illustrates success

Besides job security, the other motivations cited above were purpose, mastery and autonomy. So we're all on the same page, let's briefly define them:

- Purpose is the sense that what you're doing makes a difference.

- Mastery is the desire to get better at something meaningful.
- Autonomy is the desire to direct one's own life.

Companies should incorporate and leverage these key drivers in their engagement and motivation solutions, which will provide the employee with a sense of accomplishment, satisfaction and job security. Solutions implementing these drivers have been shown to have a number of positive impacts, not the least of which is reduced employee turnover.

*“We’re using gamification specifically to motivate members to solve problems and collaborate on a peer-to-peer basis. While we still maintain a close moderating presence to encourage and ensure best practices and proper usage of the tools, we have seen support costs decrease.”*

— Krissy Espindola, Director, T-Mobile

## Gamification motivates, engages and retains hourly workers

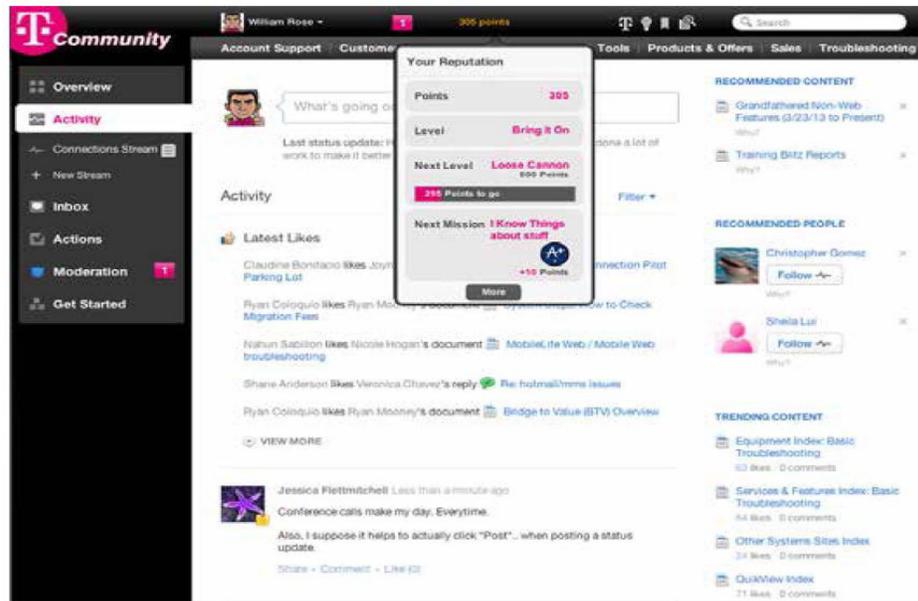
In his book *Loyalty 3.0*, gamification pioneer Rajat Paharia outlines several key intrinsic motivators—autonomy, mastery, purpose, progress and social interaction—that drive participation and create more fully-engaged employees – several are the same ones identified by the Wilson Group and are essential to gamification. Gamification was designed for the specific purpose of motivating and engaging people. It directly addresses the needs and desires of target audiences. It makes clear to employees the degree of value the company

places on specific attributes, skills, certifications, etc. It illustrates where each employee stands with regard to his or her peers. It provides a set of goals that inspire the employee to participate and engage, and rewards them for doing so. A gamified environment can act as a platform and a catalyst for engagement, which leads to career development for hourly employees, adding more value to your business.

Let’s take a look at how two world-class companies—T-Mobile and LiveOps—are incorporating gamification into their environments:

# T-Mobile®

The rapid evolution of mobile devices makes the jobs of customer service representatives at T-Mobile extremely challenging. Reps must be deeply engaged with the company and the product line just to keep up. In an effort to drive exceptional customer service, T-Mobile completely redesigned its “T-Community” social business environment—a peer-to-peer collaboration tool that helps customer service and in-store reps quickly and efficiently respond to customer queries.



To promote internal adoption and usage of T-Community, T-Mobile integrated gamification into the environment, allowing it to reward users when they search for information, post new questions, answer peer questions, and “like” content they find valuable. Today, more than 30,000 T-Mobile customer service call centers and store employees are using T-Community to its fullest potential. Below are the results after implementing the gamification module into T-Community:

- Widespread employee collaboration resulting in
  - 96% increase in participation
  - 583% increase in contributions
  - 783% increase in responses
- 31% improvement in customer satisfaction scores
- 40% improvement in call deflection resulting in reduced support costs
- Month-over-month improvement of call resolution rates and customer satisfaction scores

# liveops

Interested in how they could further engage, motivate and enhance performance and productivity, and at the same time drive collaboration and knowledge sharing among its highly distributed workforce, LiveOps added gamification to its “My Work Community” online agent portal.



Through the gamification platform, employees complete certifications and participate in a given number of interactions within the community, which ultimately leads to tangible rewards including the ability to apply for high-value (and highly coveted) job opportunities. The gamified environment allows agents to indicate training and performance accomplishments, provides real-time feedback, reinforces positive agent behavior, and enables agents to know how they're doing in relation to the rest of the community.

Following the gamification of the LiveOps My Work Community:

- 80 percent of agents opted into the program
- Average time to handle a customer inquiry decreased by almost 15 percent
- Service levels improved by nearly 10 percent
- Sales performance improved by 8-12 percent
- The on-boarding process decreased from 4 weeks of classroom training to 14 hours

*“Engaged workers can drive meaningful increases in productivity, profitability and product quality, as well as less absenteeism, turnover and shrinkage. Given the benefits, it’s imperative that businesses figure out how to engage their employees in a scalable, cost-effective manner.”*

— Rajat Paharia, Loyalty 3.0

## A final word

Benefits aside, consider this: The Wilson study above showed that overall satisfaction with one’s life tends to suffer among lower-wage, hourly employees. While positive workplace characteristics are unlikely to be a fix-all for employees’ lives, employer-provided training and education programs designed to increase job skills are strongly associated to upward socio-economic mobility and greater life satisfaction.

So, provide your hourly employees with the opportunity to learn and nurture new skills. Give them a platform upon which to express their aptitude and talents, and reward them for their accomplishments. Give them something to strive for and let them see how they progress in comparison to others. Be a catalyst through which they can achieve upward economic and career mobility and they will respond with gratitude, loyalty and a deeper sense of engagement. It’s good business.

To learn more visit [www.biworldwide.com/gamification](http://www.biworldwide.com/gamification)



## About Bunchball

BI WORLDWIDE's Bunchball Nitro is the industry's leading engagement technology powered by gamification. Purpose-built for the enterprise, BI WORLDWIDE's proven engagement solutions motivate employee, partner and customer behaviors while delivering the performance intelligence needed to drive business results. An early visionary, Bunchball wrote the book on gamification with the 2013 best seller *Loyalty 3.0*, and is widely credited for numerous market innovations, including a patent for Gamification as a Service. More than 400 enterprise customers rely upon Bunchball for the company's expertise, innovations and proprietary analytics that deliver proven business results, and Bunchball is the partner of choice to industry leaders. In April 2018, Bunchball was purchased by BI WORLDWIDE to increase its impact on employee motivation and sales effectiveness. Learn more at [www.biworldwide.com/gamification](http://www.biworldwide.com/gamification), read the blog at [www.biworldwide.com/blog](http://www.biworldwide.com/blog), or follow @biworldwide on Twitter.

[www.biworldwide.com](http://www.biworldwide.com)  
U.S. Patent No. 8,768,764  
U.S. Patent No. 9,779,421

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