



## GAMES: IMPROVING THE WORKPLACE

As the generation that grew up with video games enters the workplace, computer and video games increasingly play a role in business operations. A growing number of major companies, from automobile manufacturers to beverage producers, use video games to recruit and train employees, and increase sales among their tech-savvy customers.

### RECRUITING

In recent years, organizations across all sectors have discovered that computer and video games are effective tools for raising awareness and generating excitement among young job candidates and current employees.



In 2011, Marriott International launched its own Facebook game to help recruit new employees for its expanding global network of hotel locations. The game, My Marriott Hotel places players in a hotel kitchen, and challenges them to shop for ingredients, purchase cookware, hire and train chefs, and complete food orders. The game also features a “Do It For Real” link that connects players to the career page of Marriott’s website. According to Francesca Martinez, Marriott VP of Human Resources, players from 120 different countries are running their own virtual kitchens at any given time, and more than one third of players visited the company’s career site.

The use of video games as a recruiting tool has led to the creation of new companies to serve this growing demand. Tech start-up Knack.it Corp is leveraging video games to change the way employers assess potential talent. Knack developed a series of games to augment the traditional interview process, offering employers much greater insight into candidates’ potential, behaviors, values, and qualities. Knack’s most popular game, Wasabi Waiter, challenges players to run a virtual restaurant by distributing menus, cleaning dishes, and delivering food, while also responding to patrons’ facial expressions to provide the best customer service. Wasabi Waiter collects multiple pieces of data every millisecond to determine whether players are empathetic, risk

**\$7.2 billion**

Expected global market for in-game advertising by 2016, according to DFC Intelligence.



averse, cool-headed, perceptive, quick thinking, agreeable, introverted or extroverted, or one of several other attributes. Potential employees benefit too by demonstrating hidden talents that would not come across in a standard face-to-face interview.

In addition, the China division of global consulting agency Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu created a virtual tour of its Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong offices to attract talent and build its company brand. Players can visit working areas, training centers, and conference rooms that resemble those in the individual offices. The game offers potential hires valuable insight into the daily routine of Deloitte employees, and players are even encouraged to “chat” with current Deloitte professionals to get a better sense of the company culture and goals. Since its launch in 2010, more than 48,000 of those who virtually toured the China offices followed up on the company’s career page.



Companies also use video games to appeal to potential job candidates and boost morale among current employees. Some offices are abandoning ordinary break rooms and creating game zones where employees can relax and relieve stress. Host Hotels & Resorts, based in Bethesda, MD, offers employees a game room complete with a big-screen TV and a video game console, as well as pool and foosball tables. Other companies use games to encourage healthy lifestyle choices among their employees. Humana, Inc. developed an Innovation Center that aims to motivate both customers and employees to make healthy decisions through the use of games and other technologies, including social game FamScape, which seeks to increase players’ physical activity.

### TRAINING

Video games offer public and private sector organizations an effective way to train employees that can be less expensive and provide more engaging learning experiences than traditional trainings.

These training techniques deliver valuable results. According to research conducted by Dr. Traci Sitzmann, a professor at the University of Colorado Denver Business School, employees who used video games during their training had a nine percent higher retention rate, an 11 percent higher factual knowledge level and a 14 percent higher skill-based knowledge level. Dr. Sitzmann encourages employers to provide employees with unlimited access to these training games, because playing a game multiple times further enhances their learning.

Government agencies and private organizations are leveraging video games and game technology to educate employees about growing security threats to online data and how to efficiently and effectively protect against cyber-attacks. The U.S. Navy developed CyberCIERGE, a computer game that challenges players to manage the budget, productivity, and security of an entire online network. Players must use resources such as firewalls, link encryptors, and access control mechanisms to defend their networks.

Additionally, Capital BlueCross has adopted a new video game training program for its employees. The game, developed by Axonify, challenges employees to increase efficiencies and avoid making in-house mistakes that happen during insurance application enrollments. With the help of the game, Capital BlueCross was able to reduce enrollment errors by 66 percent.

**14**  
The percent higher skill-based knowledge level exhibited by employees who used video games as part of their training program, according to Dr. Traci Sitzmann.

Even professional athletes and Olympians use video games as a training tool, crediting the quality of sports simulations in games such as FIFA Soccer and Madden NFL with helping them improve their physical and mental skills, or helping them maintain their skills while recovering from injuries. For the past five seasons, Team USA's youth development players have used IntelliGym, a program resembling the 1980's classic video game Asteroids that exercises players' minds and prepares them for the psychological challenges of competition. Originally designed as a cognitive training program for Israeli pilots, IntelliGym requires players to move a triangle through a chaotic hockey rink past fast-moving obstacles and opponents.

**IntelliGym®**

**Think Faster. Play Better.**

The public sector is also embracing this trend. For example, researchers from North Carolina State University, Arizona State University, and Indiana University, have developed a simulation that allows crime scene investigators to look at a crime scene from multiple angles. Thanks to a \$1.4 million grant from the National Science Foundation's Cyber-Enabled Discovery and Innovation program, IC-CRIME delivers a 3D reconstruction of a crime scene by using a laser scanner and a high-definition camera to capture real-world crime scenes. Most importantly, the simulation allows investigators – represented by avatars – from different parts of the country to share data with each other long after the real-world crime scene has been cleaned up.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection (CBP) worked with researchers at Sandia National Laboratories to develop a touch-screen, game-based simulation to train personnel and help agency leaders make key policy decisions. The Borders High-Level Model provides a virtual environment where users can play through different border incident scenarios by controlling CBP agents while managing budgetary and time constraints.

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## MARKETING

As the video game playing population expands and diversifies, marketers are increasingly using in-game advertisements and “advergames” to reach potential customers. The market for such advertising is expected to expand enormously in the years ahead. According to the Advertising and Video Games report by research firm DFC Intelligence, the in-game advertising market will reach \$7.2 billion globally by 2016, nearly 10 times bigger than the market's \$75 million level identified by Nielsen Media Research in 2006.



Anheuser-Busch, Inc. and Adidas Ltd., set the tone for computer and video game advertisements in Bally Midway's *Tapper* and Moby Game's *FIFA's International Soccer* in the 1980s and 1990s. Today, a number of industries and companies are building on this foundation. Ford Motor Company launched a “Start More Than a Car. Get More Than a Test Drive.” program in 2011 that incorporates interactive game-like elements into a test drive of the 2012 Ford Focus. Potential customers navigate a test track outfitted with electronic markers, and receive scores based on the accuracy of their driving. Drivers also hear the sounds of a crowd cheering when they precisely hit a target. Even presidential campaigns rely on video games to reach key demographics and swing state voters. During the 2012 presidential campaign, the Obama campaign had teamed up with Electronic Arts to run ads on numerous EA video games, including *Madden*, *Battleship: The Tactical Combat Game*, and *Tetris*, in hotly-contested states leading up to Election Day.

**1983**

The year Anheuser-Busch, Inc. first included advertising in Bally Midway's game *Tapper*.

