Driving Community Participation and Engagement With Gamification
Shared by Karen Quinlan-Byrne. Area Manager Community

SNAPSHOT

The Challenge

A global software company needed a place for their users to gather as a community help each other, that also rewarded their participation and drove down support costs.

The Goal

Create a gamification-based support hub to help members and increase participation.

The Outcome

A gamification-based support hub and a two-tiered super-user program that increased traffic, converted lurkers and deflected contacts from Live Support channels.

THE CHALLENGE

Electronic Arts Inc., a leading global interactive entertainment software company, delivers games, content and online services for Internet-connected consoles, personal computers, mobile phones and tablets to hundreds of millions of players worldwide.

With an online gaming network that is home to dedicated global players, EA sought to drive down support costs while also providing enhanced interactive rewards.

THE GOAL

EA wanted to create a centralized location for their users to connect with each other to discuss and problem-solve challenges and help each other with their favorite games. They decided to build an online support community in order to get their users the help they needed while reducing support costs.

They designed an interactive approach that rewards players that help their fellow players and incentivizes members of the community to contribute and participate in order in order to reach their goal.

THE OUTCOME

EA's solution included:

- an online support community driven by gamification approaches
- a two-tiered super-user program

Answers HQ, EA's online support community, allows players to be recognized for their efforts by turning participation into a game. Each action a user takes in the community is validated by virtual tokens, badges and collectables, as well as by rising in rank on leaderboards .

At the top of EA's gamification program stands their super-user program: **Champions & Heroes**. This program recognizes standout individuals that represent the pillars of the community, in turn allowing them to become super-users. The EA team hosts bi-weekly syncs to monitor and advance outstanding individuals.

Figure 1 Community solutions in FY 17

Over 43 thousand solutions

Almost 9000 more solutions than last year

+20% Solutions provided total

Number of Accepted Solutions increased by 20% FY16-17

Answers HQ

Be the Hero

The program consists of two tiers:

- **Champion** – Champions are awarded a unique rank, forum badge and the option to create an individual signature, along with free game perks and access to a private Slack channel where they can chat with the Community team directly.

- **Hero** – Heroes obtain all Champion benefits, along with access to an exclusive forum and chat, and additional game perks. Heroes also have the opportunity to forge relationships with game studios and are offered invitations to exclusive gaming events.

Since its launch in 2012, **AnswersHQ has grown to over 12 million registered users, with over 6.9 million (58%) categorized as active.** In FY16-FY17, the percentage of active users increased by 15%, the number of accepted solutions increased by 20%, views of accepted solutions increased by 29%, and replies per topic increased by 23%. EA's innovative solutions actually created a more active and effective support community.

Overall, the gamified-support community and super-user program were huge successes, increasing traffic by giving users a reason to return, converting lurkers to active users, and improving accepted solutions which in turn deflected contacts from Live Support channels.

THE TAKEAWAYS

1. **Know Your Audience** – EA's audience inherently loves gaming. By using gamification to drive participation, EA capitalized on what they already knew and loved about their players.

2. **Focus on Your Goals –** By focusing on a desired outcome, EA was able to harness the power of their audience to contribute to their bottom line. This win-win made players happy and increased deflections in their support channels.

3. **Rewarding Your Audience Rewards You** – The SOCM 2017 showed that rewards make a difference. Empowering super users can scale existing community resources, while strengthening important ties to your core user base. Learn more at the.cr/socm2017
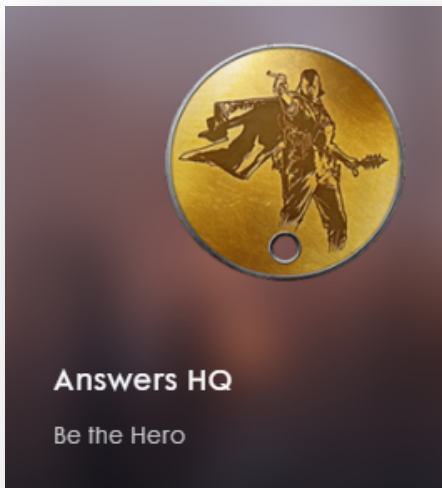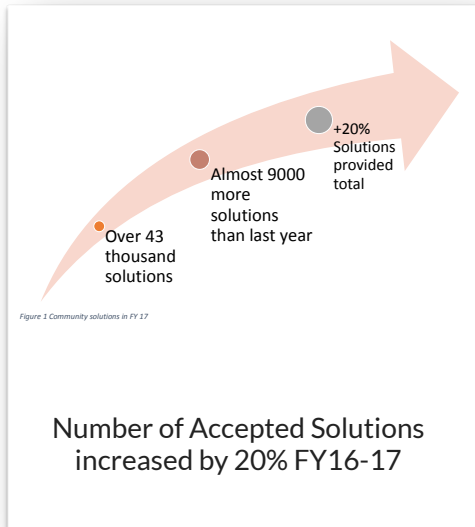
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