



# Using gamification techniques in digital sports marketing

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## Abstract

**Objective of the study** is to develop algorithms for the effective use of digital gamification tools in the marketing strategies of sports organizations.

**Methods and structure of the study.** The following scientific methods were used in the course of the work: the method of system analysis, the method of comparative characteristics, generalization, systematization, structural and functional method.

**Results and conclusions.** A reasonable conclusion is made that the effectiveness and efficiency of competitive marketing strategies in sports is determined by the degree of integration of elements of innovative, creative interaction of organizations with the target audience. The involvement of fans and consumers of sporting goods and services in marketing communications through gamification tools provides conditions for long-term cooperation and, consequently, strengthening the company's image and brand in the external environment of sports marketing. Gamification as a set of effective ways and methods of interactive digital marketing finds successful application in various segments of the sports industry, optimizing the solution of operational tasks related primarily to employee motivation and training, multi-channel customer engagement, as well as improving marketing results in the context of long-term strategic decisions. By means of such innovative solutions, not only the competitive advantages of individual business entities are formed, but also the investment attractiveness of the sports industry as a whole is increased.

**Keywords:** *sports industry, gamification, digitalization, marketing strategies, innovations in sports, competition, digital transformation, collaboration, creative approaches.*

**Introduction.** Currently, the drivers and trends of the digital transformation of the sports industry have actualized new methods of communication between key participants in the sports market, which has largely predetermined the change in existing marketing strategies [8]. In this regard, gamification in sports can be characterized as a strategy that, using the principles and mechanics of games, ensures the involvement of individual segments of the target audience and increases the motivation of participants in the sports business (sports industry) for continuous cooperation and interaction.

Research in this area of scientific knowledge [2, 4, 7] show that for commercial and other purposes, game mechanics contribute to deeper communication of a company, a sports brand with its potential and

/ or permanent target audience. At the same time, the effectiveness of this element of a marketing campaign in the sports industry largely depends on the sequence of strategic decisions, as well as the competencies of sports marketers. In this regard, further scientific research on the potential of gamification in sports is of great practical importance.

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**Methods and structure of the study.** The following scientific methods were used in the course of the work: the method of systems analysis, the method of comparative characteristics, generalization, systematization, and the structural-functional method.



Results and conclusions. In the context of the rapid development of innovative technologies in sports and the structure and methods of marketing communications with consumers that have changed as a result of this process, gamification is becoming a relevant and effective tool that helps entities from various segments of the sports industry stand out from the competition [3].

For example, in collaboration with professional sports, gamification contributes to the creation of independent interactive fantasy leagues based on existing sports competitions, events and teams (clubs) in real sports. "The National Basketball Association, as part of its marketing strategies and the actualization of gamification, offered fans digital tools and formats that allow fans to create virtual teams based on the real performances of players. This solution not only increased the number of spectators, but also deepened the fans' understanding of sports, as they became more interested in player statistics and team strategies" [6].

In amateur and mass sports, multifunctional and easy-to-use mobile applications and digital devices make it possible to track the health indicators and current fitness of people leading an active lifestyle. Feedback generated and available in real time thanks to the Internet of Things (IoT) motivates sports fans to achieve new goals, solve current problems, which is identical to increasing the complexity and moving to new levels in a video game [9].

The use of gamification in such segments of the sports industry as student and youth sports also has a number of features. Here, gamification acts as an effective and efficient tool for increasing the motivation of young athletes and students to play sports, improve their own (individual) sports results, and develop team spirit in game disciplines. Leaderboards, badges and awards as elements of digital gamification stimulate representatives of this target group to regularly train in sports sections, participate in student and school competitions, and meet sports standards [1].

Effective implementation and application of gamification as an element of marketing strategy in various segments of the sports industry involves the consistent implementation of the following actions:

- deep analysis of the target audience to determine and identify its priority interests, current requests and preferences, formed incentives and motivation (it is obvious that in student sports and high-performance

sports the portrait of the consumer will be significantly different);

- definition of the strategic goal that the sports organization plans to achieve using gamification tools (increase in ticket and souvenir sales, attract new spectators and participants, increase customer loyalty, etc.);

- development of technological tools, that is, such game mechanics that will meet the expectations of the target audience and contribute to the achievement of the goals of the marketing campaign (use of a rating system, bonus and rewards programs, holding thematic competitions, solving tasks and cases) [3];

- practical implementation of a marketing strategy with gamification elements and monitoring the effectiveness of its application.

It should be noted that the practical use of gaming strategies in marketing communications processes not only optimizes interactions between participants in the sports market [5], but also opens up additional opportunities for content monetization and, in general, expansion of income sources (see figure).

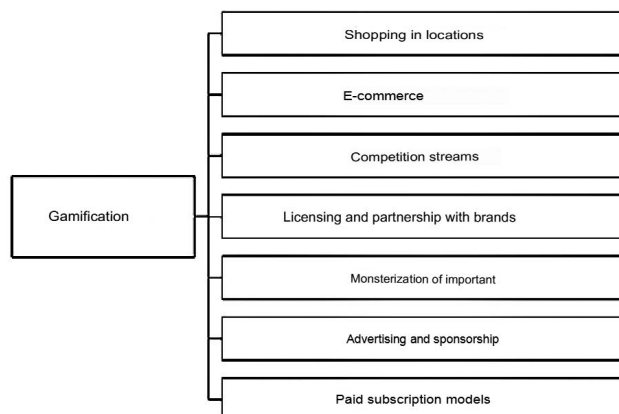


Fig. 1. Commercial potential of gamification in the sports industry

When creating and promoting game content in the sports industry, it is necessary to take into account the fact that maintaining the game process (engagement) and stimulating various categories of communication participants to further activity should be of a strategic nature. The interest of the target audience in the offers of a sports brand, generated by gamification tools and technologies, should have positive economic consequences for the organizers and initiators of promoting goods and services in this kind of creative format [10].



**Conclusions.** The comprehensive formation of consistent actions at the stage of developing and implementing the principles and technologies of gamification in the digital environment of sports marketing actualizes a multi-level approach, within the framework of which it is necessary to take into account both the specific features of the functioning of individual segments and entities of the sports industry, and the strategic goals of specific sports organizations. In this regard, the practical industry implementation of a marketing strategy with integrated elements of gaming techniques in the offline and online environment allows not only to attract the attention of certain categories of the target audience to an event, sports event, product or service, but also to create, using a creative approach, a long-term basis for promoting and positioning the positive reputation of a sports organization.

Thus, marketing communications, implemented including by means and methods of gamification, significantly strengthen the loyalty of the sports audience to the company, ensuring the creation of conditions under which consumers quickly move from the category of potential user to the status of "brand advocate".

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