LEARNING THROUGH GAMING

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Captain Pradeep Chawla shares why and how Gaming can be used as a valuable tool for learning and improving safety on board.

What inspired us to use gaming as a learning tool:

We operate a college where we train 440 students every year; these students are mainly in the age group of 18-25 years. We observed that they love playing internet games in their free time; taking this into consideration we launched our virtual reality training about two years ago, which proved to be a great success. Emboldened by that development and based on feedback from our millennials, we embarked on this first-of-its-kind gaming app designed for learning through play.

The technology is fairly simple. It is a multiplayer game where the seafarers compete with their peers for the highest scores. There is also a leader board displayed for all the players involved that constantly shows the best performer. It is not the technology but the psychology behind the game that is important.

Learning is now just 'having fun' with peers and fellow crew members; the competitiveness of the game makes learning a sport rather than a burden. For now, we just want them to enjoy the game; through this tool. We are confident that the learning will happen innately, and safety will thus improve. This is why we see it as an effective learning tool. We work with a small but innovative software technology company based in India that developed the gaming tool. Some of our younger captains and the young students were involved in the design stage and provided their input, as they are the target audience and will be using this tool the most. Along with our young learners and young captains, we involved some of our teachers to lay out the desired learning outcomes and provided valuable input to ensure the quality of the technical content.

This game focuses on finding faults on board the ship that affect safety. The gamer races against time to find all the faults and competes with other players for the first prize. The faults are embedded in the scenes presented, and the game has 10 levels. It is a very practical and interactive tool; we are teaching young seafarers to become 'eagle-eyed' inspectors on board. The game is conditioning them to look for

anything on board that could be a safety hazard or become a future problem. In this way, the game teaches the crew about accident prevention, helps them to identify risks, and prepares them for inspections. The gaming tool was designed specifically to be all about promoting safety and trying to limit losses at sea. So far we have completed the beta testing and are launching it now for all our 28,000 seafarers across 650 ships. The journey has been great fun and I am confident the results of our measurement will prove it to be a success.

The students who have already used the game described the tool as "awesome", "cool", and "super". We are confident that the gaming tool will receive similar praise as it is diffused across our worldwide fleet. Our goal right now is just to let the seafarers have fun and enjoy the competition. We want them to re-live their childhood, where they never realised the amount of learning that was happening while they were playing.

We are also developing an app to go with the learning tool. We believe this is the first tiny step in adopting gaming for learning. We also believe that by developing an accompanying App, it will make it easier and will also be instrumental in helping crew to gain access to this handy learning tool across the entire fleet. Safety is a core principle, so if we can turn the learning and teaching of it into a fun activity, and subsequently increase morale and teamwork between crew members, then we have done our jobs. I believe in adopting modern technologies for learning. We were the first company to buy ship-handling simulators outside of the universities and colleges in 1995. We have launched various other initiatives that were the first in the industry. We are always happy to collaborate, to develop new technologies and to share our knowledge for the benefit of all seafarers. By developing an accompanying app, we are using it to make learning more accessible.