gamelearn

CASE STUDY MSD:
A Game-Based Learning Method

Improve results, achieve engagement and reduce costs

gamelearn | soft skills training through video games

Introduction

Merck Sharp & Dohme Corp. (MSD) is a multinational leader in global health dedicated to improving people's health and well-being. For years, MSD researchers have helped to find new ways to treat and prevent illness—from the discovery of Vitamin B1 to the first measles vaccine, to cold remedies and antacids, or the first statin for treating high cholesterol.

In 2009, MSD became one of the first companies in the world to opt for a game-based training solution, which at that time was a model in the very early stages of validation and assessment. This training program integrates with the global talent development plan thanks to the combination of quality content, simulation and gamification techniques in a unique format: **Serious Games.**

The Gamelearn training solution responds to MSD's belief in people, their development, and their personal and professional growth as the best tools to address the new requirements and challenges imposed by the market.

Today, nearly six years later and with over 760 employees trained, the results have proven the effectiveness of learning through video games, leading MSD to continue with the training program developed by Gamelearn.

As a result, development of non-technical personal and professional skills through Serious Games now represents 40% of all training implemented by the Learning and Development Department in the Spanish subsidiary of the pharmaceutical company.

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CEO at Gamelearn

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Dir. Learning & Development at MSD

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"The two-day classroom course training model had its rationale and impact, but it clearly does not work anymore"

Tanit Ruiz

MSD's goals have always included maintaining its leadership in the sector. From there, the first step was to define the principal needs to be addressed by the healthcare company. The biggest challenge was to find effective new solutions for an increasingly demanding, volatile and uncertain market.

The evolution of the market itself shaped the development of the company's strategic plan, calling for more agile, rapid and flexible business solutions that required the implementation of a new training program.

Company	**Merck Sharp & Dohme Corp. (MSD)** **A Global Pharmaceutical Company** **1250 employees**
Training	**Employee Development Plan Through Video Games**
Skills Developed	**Negotiation, Communication, Conflict Resolution, Time Management, Change Management, Organizational Effectiveness, Personal Productivity, Initiative, Creativity, Decision-Making and Customer Service Skills**
Program	**· 2010 - Present** **· 760 well-trained employees** **· Soft skills training represents a 40% of global training inside MSD**
Serious Games	**Merchants, Negotiation & Conflict Resolution Serious Game** **Triskelion, Time Management & Personal Productivity Serious Game**

Phase I: Needs

The Learning and Development Department started to work on developing a new training program to address needs before considered with other approaches in the company:

· *To guarantee effective development of these non-technical personal and professional skills in the areas of communication, negotiation, leadership, productivity, time management...*

· *To overcome the problem of lack of engagement with other training solutions used in the past.*

· *To develop quality content with guaranteed applicability to the tasks employees perform every day.*

· *To achieve unified training, with a homogeneous and consistent message, but within a workforce with great geographic dispersion.*

· *To implement a new training program that would not work to the detriment of the values, vision and mission defined by MSD...*

· *... and which would reduce the average per-employee training cost.*

Phase II: The Solution

"What we do with training is help to better understand new challenges of the market and provide teams with the tools to face them as successfully as possible"
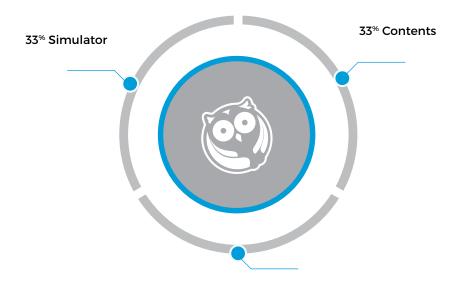
Tanit Ruiz

Having defined the needs, the Learning and Development Department decided that the solution was to find an innovative format that would guarantee progress with respect to the e-learning methodology in use in the company since 2002. From there, the challenge was to overcome the problems of online training:

· *Improvement of completion rates.*

· *Programs more focused on quantity than on the quality of the content being provided.*

· *Content with little applicability to the person's position.*

· *Lack of engagement and motivation by the employee during training.*

The solution chosen by MSD was risky, as it was one of the first companies to adopt a newly created and unproven methodology with no track record: game-based learning for corporate training.

1. To find an instructional design that allowed employees to put the skills being taught into practice while learning from their mistakes and receiving personalized feedback for improvement.

2. To have high-quality content equivalent to a two-day classroom training course, but maintaining the costs of training through e-learning.

3. To guarantee effective learning that placed employees in situations similar to those encountered in their day-to-day work.

4. To use gamification techniques to improve the engagement and motivation of the employee during the training program.

33% Simulator

33% Contents

33% Gamification Techniques

To meet this challenge, MSD made use of a revolutionary format that combined game-based learning techniques, quality content and gamification: the Serious Games from Gamelearn.

These Serious Games meet the requirements established by MSD with:

1. A powerful simulator that enabled MSD employees to put the learned skills into practice and receive personalized feedback.

2. Content with an eminently practical focus while maintaining the quality and applicability of the content of a classroom course.

3. Gamification techniques through the use of dynamics like storytelling, badges, rankings, challenges...

Phase III: Skills and Serious Games

"There is a great deal of talk about gamification and how to incorporate it to business environments, and I believe that this is the very essence of gamification: Creating content and learning which are relevant for the function of each employee"

— **Tanit Ruiz** —

Employee development plan - MSD

| Negotiation and Conflict Resolution | Organizational Effectiveness: Time Management and Personal Productivity | Leadership and Team Management | Communication | Sales Techniques |

To properly develop a training solution for MSD, we defined a talent development plan divided into five modules or stages in which the desired skills would be built comprehensively:

1. Negotiation and Conflict Resolution

In order to effectively teach these skills, we chose the Serious Game "Merchants" from Gamelearn. In this game, the employee gets to know and learn techniques, skills and negotiation strategies through the figure of a mentor. All these skills are put into practice in the 6 "real" negotiation cases the user must face. In these cases:
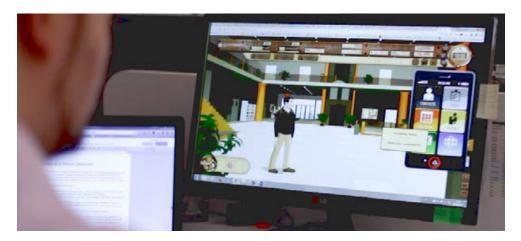
· *Employees improve their negotiation skills, as well as their creativity and responsiveness since their decisions affect the final result of every negotiation.*

· *They develop the keys to effectively communicate a proposal in order to lead every negotiation as conveniently to the achievement of their goals as possible.*

· *They win in confidence by practicing techniques, strategies and bargaining secrets that end up generating beneficial agreements.*

· *Their confidence in win-win negotiations is increased and a mentality oriented towards long term collaboration is encouraged, thanks to the implemented strategy game.*

2. Time Management and Personal Productivity

To improve the productivity of employees and teams we used the Serious Game "Triskelion."

In this game, employees discover an advanced system for managing and optimizing productivity. For this purpose, the simulator allows the implementation of the techniques, tools, strategies and tips learned over 21 virtual days simulating a working day just like in real life. Throughout these 21 days:

· *Employees learn techniques to create their own system for efficiently managing their time and schedule.*

· *They learn how to optimize the use of IT tools to manage their work such as Gmail, Outlook or Lotus Notes.*

· *They develop new skills and strategies to improve their general performance and personal productivity, which will allow them to move forward in the game and achieve their objectives within it.*

· *They learn how to plan their work day and prioritize according to previously set goals, since the system simulates the daily life of a professional.*

· *They improve their skills to make the most important decisions and effectively manage their daily tasks: emails, meetings, phone calls, unexpected interruptions...*

· *They get to know the secrets to having a balance between family, work and personal life, therefore reducing their stress level.*

3. Leadership and Team Management

In coming months, MSD will enter the next (third) stage of its comprehensive skills training plan. This will work on the skills of leadership and team management through the Serious Game "Pacific®".

"Pacific®" is a step-by-step manual on how to become an effective leader. In six modular stages, the employee tests his or her leadership skills, learns how to manage teams and people, and discovers the best-kept secrets of the CEOs of large companies which were obtained in interviews held over six months and added to the course content.

Phase IV: Integration and Implementation

"Nowadays there are no solutions offering value in content, format and innovation, market level, like Gamelearn"

Tanit Ruiz

Pilot Test

Communication and Internal Marketing Plan

The Launch of Training Program

Measuring and Improving

The integration of the training solution was rapid, simple and agile through the Gamelearn online platform. Thanks to this platform, no integration with the healthcare company's LMS was necessary.

To facilitate development of the program, the platform provides cloud-based services in which the employee, to access the selected course, needs nothing more than a computer and an Internet connection.

Once the integration is defined, implementation of the training program is divided into four stages.

Stage 1.

MSD carries out a pilot test to validate the quality criteria and the adaptation of the solutions selected for their needs.

Stage 2.

Once the content and format are assessed and validated, the internal marketing plan is created. This consists of definition of the internal e-mail communication campaign, production of communication materials, creation of the content...
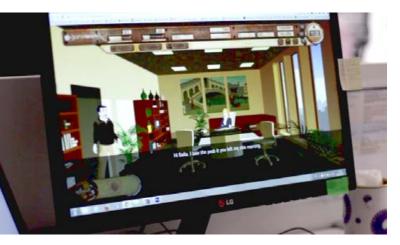
Stage 3.

The next step is the launch of the internal communication campaign and implementation of the training program, which includes the preparation and delivery of detailed reports on classes and students, as well as an online help and tutoring service.

Stage 4.

The results are analyzed and the real impact of the training action is measured.

Phase V: Measuring The Training Effort

To measure the success of the training implemented in 2009, the Kirkpatrick's Level model for evaluating training programs, invented in 1959 by University of Wisconsin Professor Donald Kirkpatrick, was used.

According to this model, the success of all training is divided into four interconnected levels. Training is considered complete if all four levels have been covered.

"We might think that a program of this type has an additional cost as it is actually providing additional value and benefits, and yet we had a reduction in costs of around 58%"

Tanit Ruiz

Level 1: Reaction

4,8 Satisfaction Surveys over 5

98%

completion rate

In this level the goal is to measure the reaction of participants to the implemented training program:

1. The impact on people was surprising. A lot of positive comments were generated, an informal communication emerged and there were personal congratulations to the training department for the suitability of the action.

2. The average grade of the evaluation of the training is 9,4 over 10, based on the surveys performed by Gamelearn.

3. The average evaluation extracted by the satisfaction surveys performed by MSD is 4,8 over 5. This average grade improves in 0,5 points (4,3) the one obtained with previous training solutions.

4. The global completion ratio, which guarantees that the employee has completed the training plan. According to this, MSD's training program has had a completion rate of a 98%, representing an improvement of a 12.7% over the average: 87%.

Level 2: Learning

99%

applicability rate

25%

improvement of the skills

To measure the extent of knowledge acquired by employees following the training program undergone, we have taken 3 indicators as guidelines, detailed below:

1. The applicability ratio. Based on the evaluation survey of the quality of training carried out by Gamelearn, it

states that 99% of users claim to apply what they learned during training in the performance of their duties

2. The MSD surveys that evaluate the learned concepts during the training program show an improvement of the skills and competencies of more than a 25%.

Level 3: Behavior

6% *improvement of work environment*

6% *improvement of employee engagement*

99%

employees recommend it

To assess the performance offered by the training solution in terms of correspondence to the needs of the workforce and organization, at MSD we have considered the following indicators:

1. Improvement of work environment. According to the results, there has been an improvement of a 6% over the previous assessment.

2. Improvement of employee motivation. A fundamental indicator to measure the training results internally. Same as with the previous indicator, there has been an improvement of a 6%.

3. Recommendation ratio, based on the assessment survey done by employees upon their completion of the program. The completion rate stands at 99%, well above the 25% of previous programs.

Level 4: Results

40%

**of the global
training inside MSD**

58%

**saving in training
costs per employee**
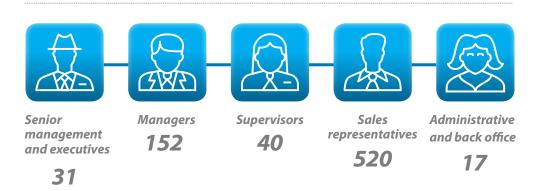
8% *improvement of
productivity*

This level seeks to learn the degree to which the training program impacted the company's business results:

- Improvement of business results due to the increase in sales experienced in the last measured period.

- Saving in training costs. This was one of the major objectives pursued by MSD, without the quality of the training being affected. At this point, the cost of training per employee has been reduced by 58.3%.

- Improvement of the productivity of departments and teams of more than a 8%.

Phase VI: Getting To Know MSD's Employee

Game-based learning program.
760 well-trained employees

Senior management and executives	Managers	Supervisors	Sales representatives	Administrative and back office
31	**152**	**40**	**520**	**17**

One of the aspects of greatest concern when implementing a game-based learning training model is employee's response to same. The perception of the video game as an effective training tool may be doubted and turn into an obstacle. But MSD demonstrates that training with video games really is valid and effective.

The MSD employee profile is notable for its diversity, as it has employees with 30 years of experience working alongside young professionals just starting their careers.
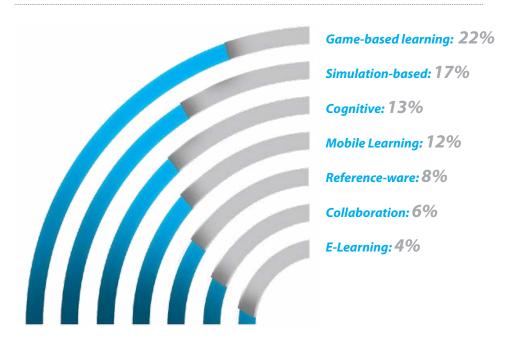
Today, over 50% of MSD's workforce has completed the training in the game-based learning format. In total, 760 employees whose positions can be broken down as follows:

· *Senior management and executives: 31*

· *Managers: 152*

· *Supervisors: 40*

· *Sales representatives: 520*

· *Administrative and back office: 17*

Therefore we are talking about training that fits any employee profile, regardless of the employee's professional training or experience. And, it stands out for its linearity and accessibility, in which the employee sets the pace of learning according to his or her needs: the employee decides which skill to work on first and when to do it.

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The fastest growing method

Game-based learning: **22%**

Simulation-based: **17%**

Cognitive: **13%**

Mobile Learning: **12%**

Reference-ware: **8%**

Collaboration: **6%**

E-Learning: **4%**

Conclusions

MSD is one of the first companies to opt for comprehensive training under the game-based learning methodology. After five years using the training program, it is the first success story for a training model that currently enjoys the trust of over 600 corporate customers all over the world.

Implementation of the program has contributed to MSD's goal of maintaining its leadership position in the sector, improving business results.

This success story confirms that learning through video games is possible and efficient. In terms of training, the experience of MSD has demonstrated that the format, which combines quality content, a simulator and gamification techniques, exponentially improves completion rates to over 90%, increases the employee's engagement (the program

was rated at 4.8 out of 5), and guarantees the applicability of what was learned (99% of users say that they apply the skills in their daily work). All of this while reducing the average training cost per employee by 58%.

Therefore, the training experience (MSD & Gamelearn) demonstrates that the development of non-technical skills is effective and, above all, necessary to address the new challenges of the market with confidence.

At the same time, the results confirm that experiential learning through video games (game-based learning) represents a natural evolution from a type of e-learning today more concerned with filling the LMS with courses than with the quality of their content.

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About Gamelearn

Gamelearn is the world's leading company in skills training through video games and a pioneer in the development of game-based learning products. Its courses-video games (known as Serious Games) have revolutionized corporate and individual training by integrating elements of gamification, advanced simulators, and first-rate theoretical content in a single product.

Thanks to game-based learning, Gamelearn works on and strengthens non-technical skills like leadership, negotiation, communication and organizational effectiveness (time management and personal productivity).

Since 2009, Gamelearn has given a boost to over 600 corporate customers and provided skills training to over 100,000 professionals all over the world.

Awards

2015 Top 20 Training Company
Training Industry

2015 Top Learning Organization
Elearning! Media Group

2014 Top 20 Training Company
Training Industry

2014 Top Learning Organization
Elearning! Media Group

Top 10 European Startup
San Francisco Demo

Top 5 Spain´s Startup
Spain Startup Summit

HHRR Innovation E&E Awards
Diario Expansión

Best Service Award
CIPD'12 Manchester Exhibition

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