



GAMIFICATION

THE ANTIDOTE TO MODERN ADVERTISING

Created by Reflectdigital



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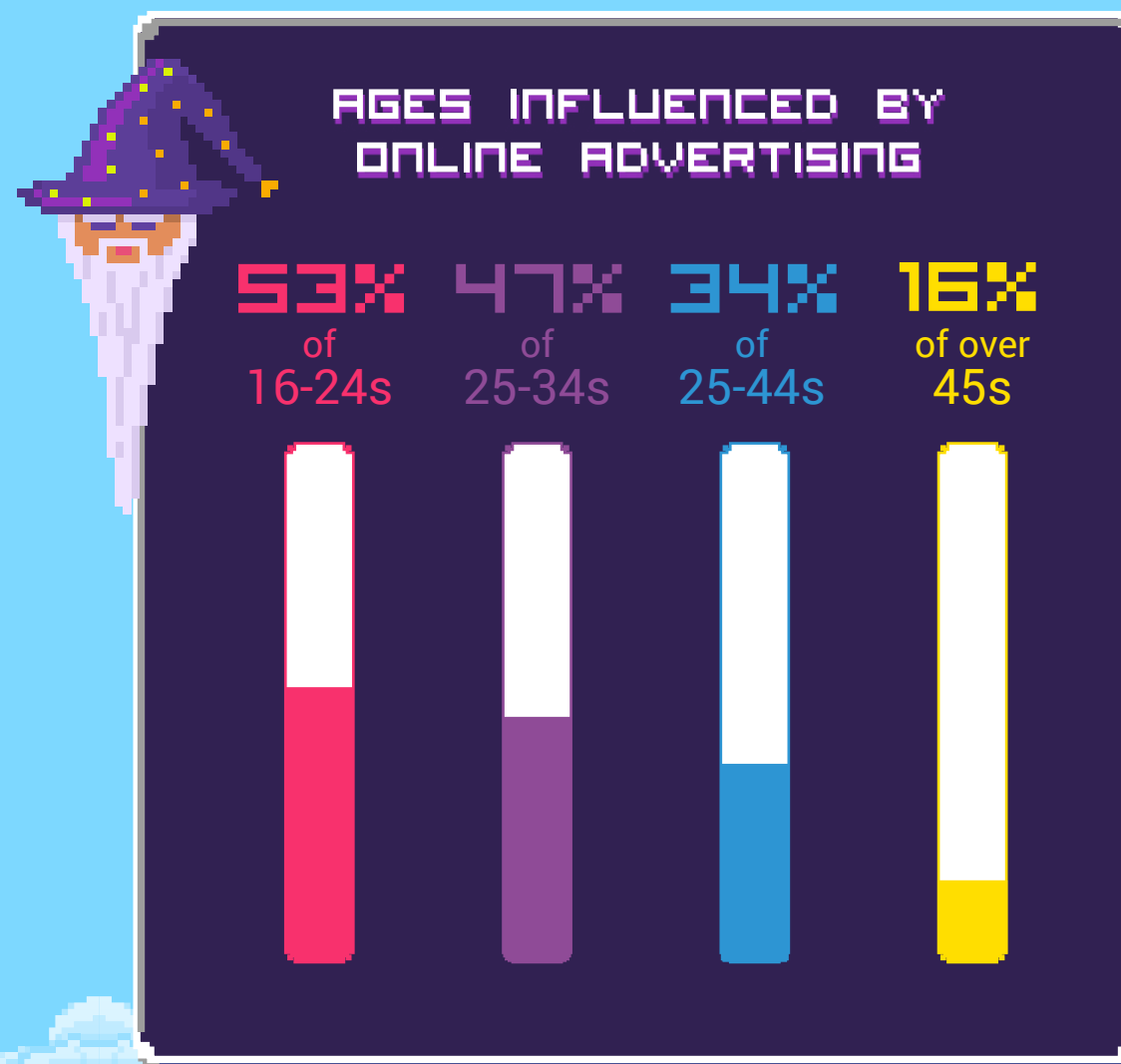
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PROLOGUE: THE IMPERVIOUS CONSUMER?

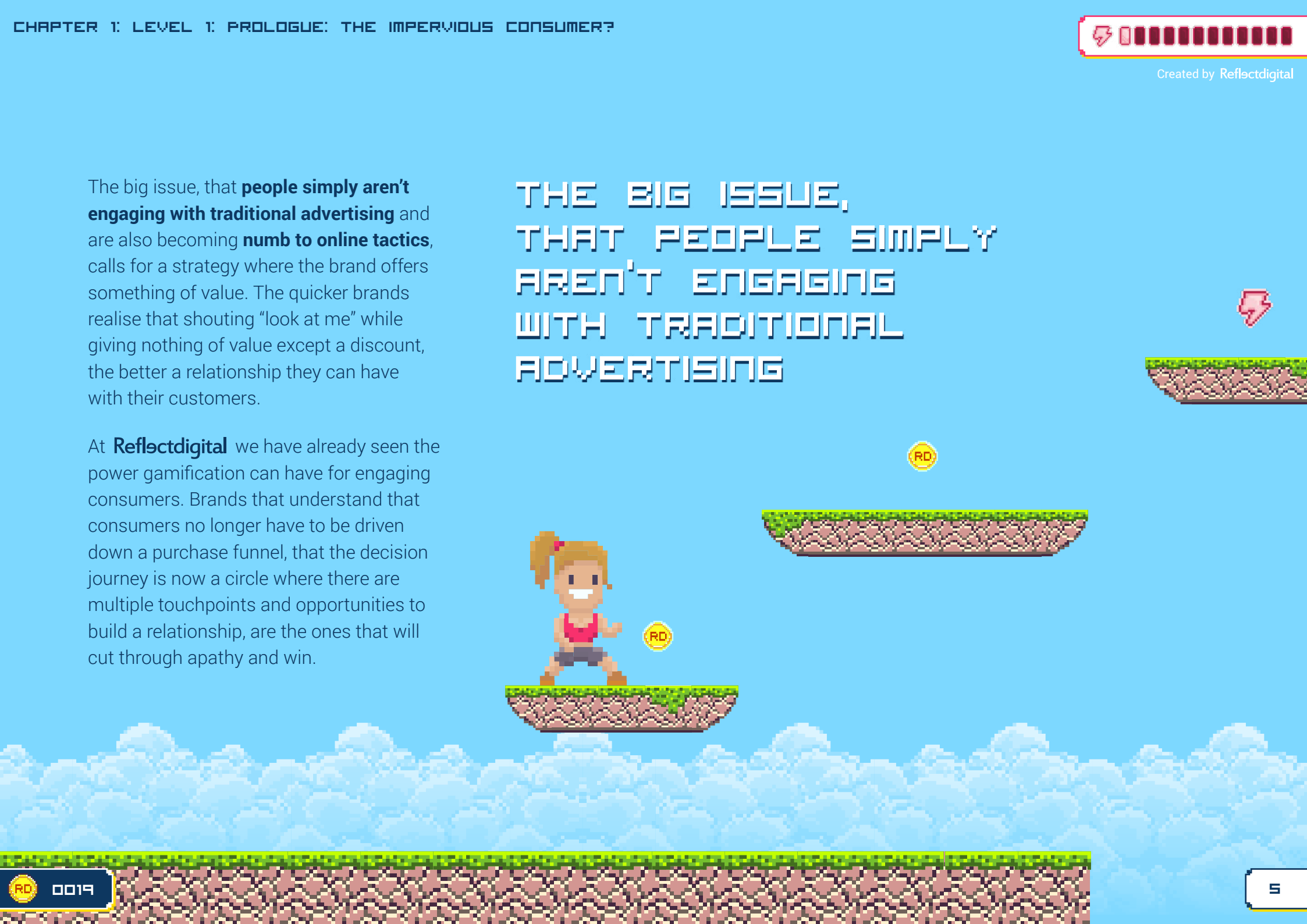
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The big issue, that **people simply aren't engaging with traditional advertising** and are also becoming **numb to online tactics**, calls for a strategy where the brand offers something of value. The quicker brands realise that shouting "look at me" while giving nothing of value except a discount, the better a relationship they can have with their customers.

At **Reflectdigital** we have already seen the power gamification can have for engaging consumers. Brands that understand that consumers no longer have to be driven down a purchase funnel, that the decision journey is now a circle where there are multiple touchpoints and opportunities to build a relationship, are the ones that will cut through apathy and win.

THE BIG ISSUE, THAT PEOPLE SIMPLY AREN'T ENGAGING WITH TRADITIONAL ADVERTISING



LEVEL 2:

GAMIFICATION: MARKETING'S SALVATION

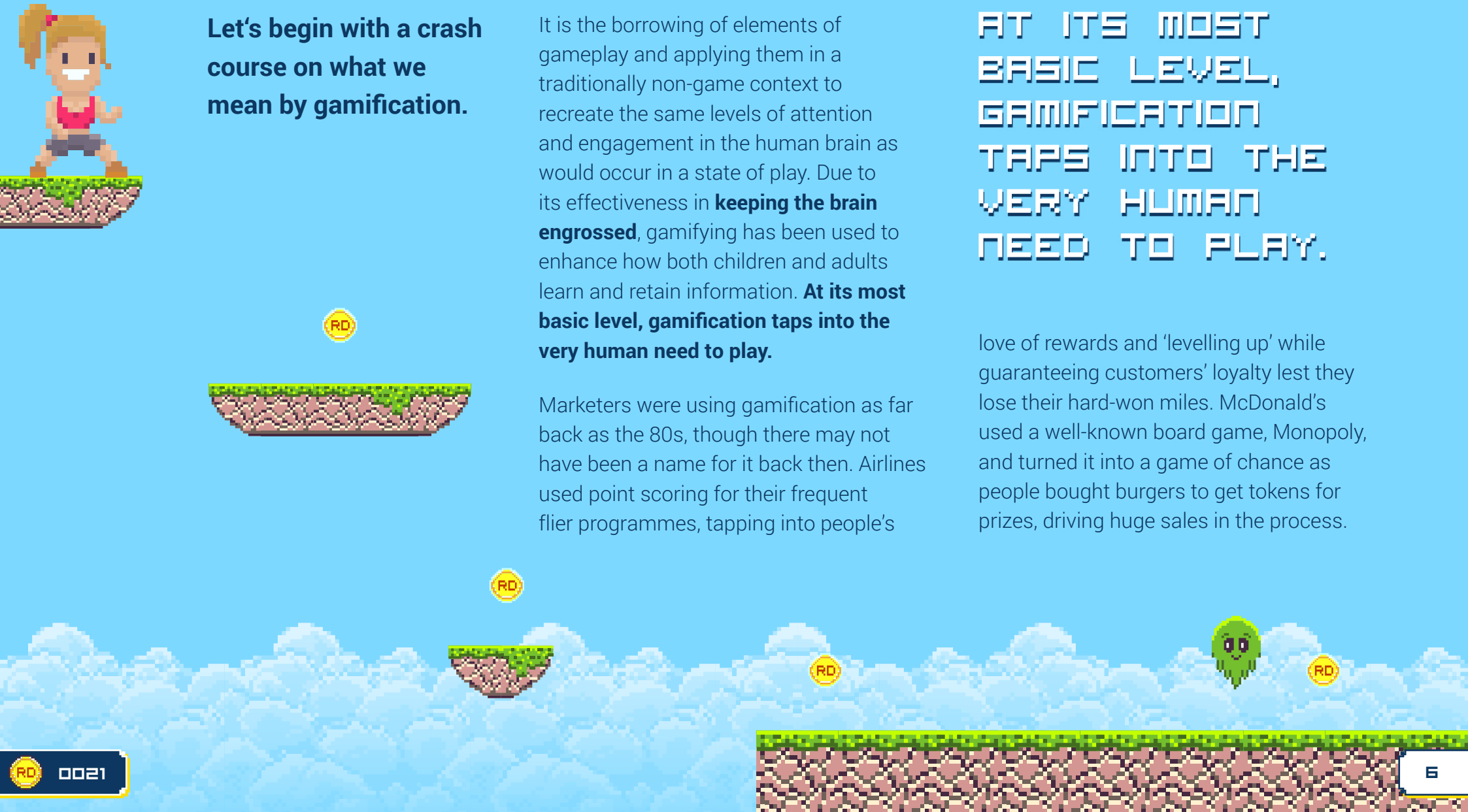
Let's begin with a crash course on what we mean by gamification.

It is the borrowing of elements of gameplay and applying them in a traditionally non-game context to recreate the same levels of attention and engagement in the human brain as would occur in a state of play. Due to its effectiveness in **keeping the brain engrossed**, gamifying has been used to enhance how both children and adults learn and retain information. **At its most basic level, gamification taps into the very human need to play.**

Marketers were using gamification as far back as the 80s, though there may not have been a name for it back then. Airlines used point scoring for their frequent flier programmes, tapping into people's

AT ITS MOST BASIC LEVEL, GAMIFICATION TAPS INTO THE VERY HUMAN NEED TO PLAY.

love of rewards and 'levelling up' while guaranteeing customers' loyalty lest they lose their hard-won miles. McDonald's used a well-known board game, Monopoly, and turned it into a game of chance as people bought burgers to get tokens for prizes, driving huge sales in the process.



Fast forward to today and look at the marketing industry. **There are far more channels, plenty more strategies, but people are far more savvy; they know when they are being sold to and are fed up.**

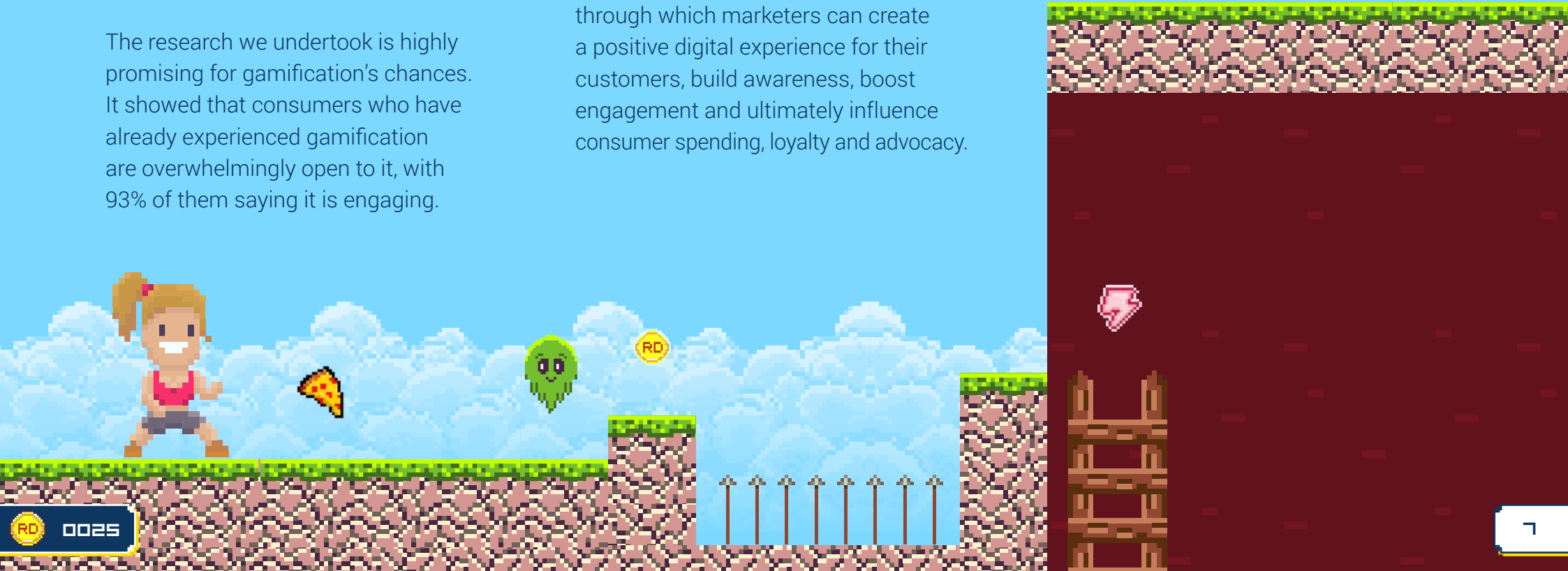
The use of ad-blockers is still on the rise, especially with young people, and studies frequently report millennials, that catch-all term for late twentysomethings and early thirtysomethings, to be unfazed by traditional above-the-line advertising.

The research we undertook is highly promising for gamification's chances. It showed that consumers who have already experienced gamification are overwhelmingly open to it, with 93% of them saying it is engaging.

Respondents also admitted that this form of marketing influences their behaviour. **60% of consumers said they would be more likely to buy from a brand if they enjoyed playing a game with it, rising to 86% for those who had experienced gamification before.**

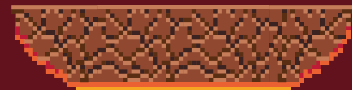
These kinds of responses have encouraged us to explore exactly why gamification is the antidote for UK consumer apathy. We want to demonstrate that this is the means through which marketers can create a positive digital experience for their customers, build awareness, boost engagement and ultimately influence consumer spending, loyalty and advocacy.

...EXACTLY WHY GAMIFICATION IS THE ANTIDOTE FOR UK CONSUMER APATHY



THE RATIONAL CONSUMER MYTH

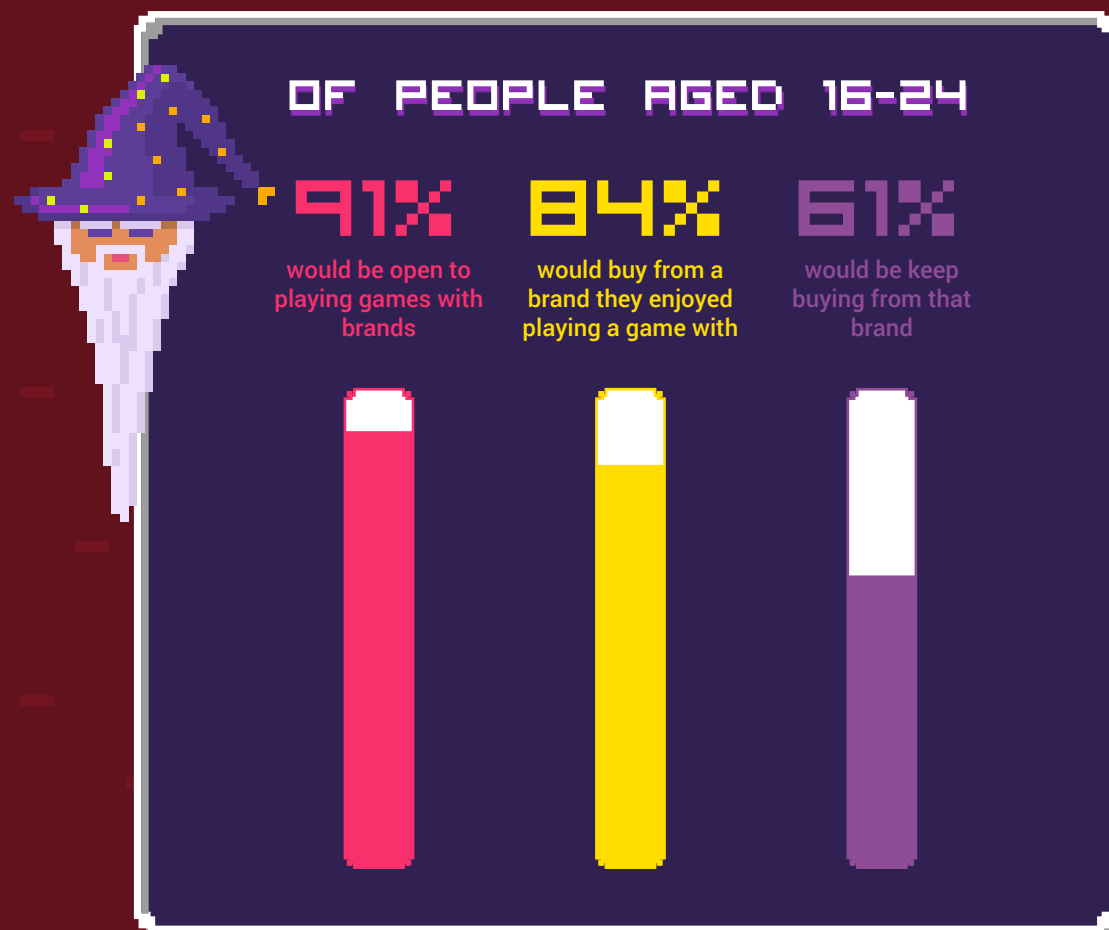
A screenshot from a Super Mario Bros. level. The scene is set on a brown, textured ground. In the center, there is a brick block with a lightning bolt symbol on it. To the left of the brick block, there is a Piranha Plant. To the right of the brick block, there is a Goomba enemy. The background is a solid light blue color.



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The data from our research shows that there is a huge opportunity for brands to use gamification. Why? Because it's still not that widespread. Only 31% of respondents said that they had experienced gamification before and just 16% more than once.

Those people who had knowingly experienced gamification before are far more likely to be receptive to it. 86% of people who had encountered it said that they'd buy a brand that made a game they enjoyed. With that many people convinced, it is only a matter of introducing gamification to the rest of the population.



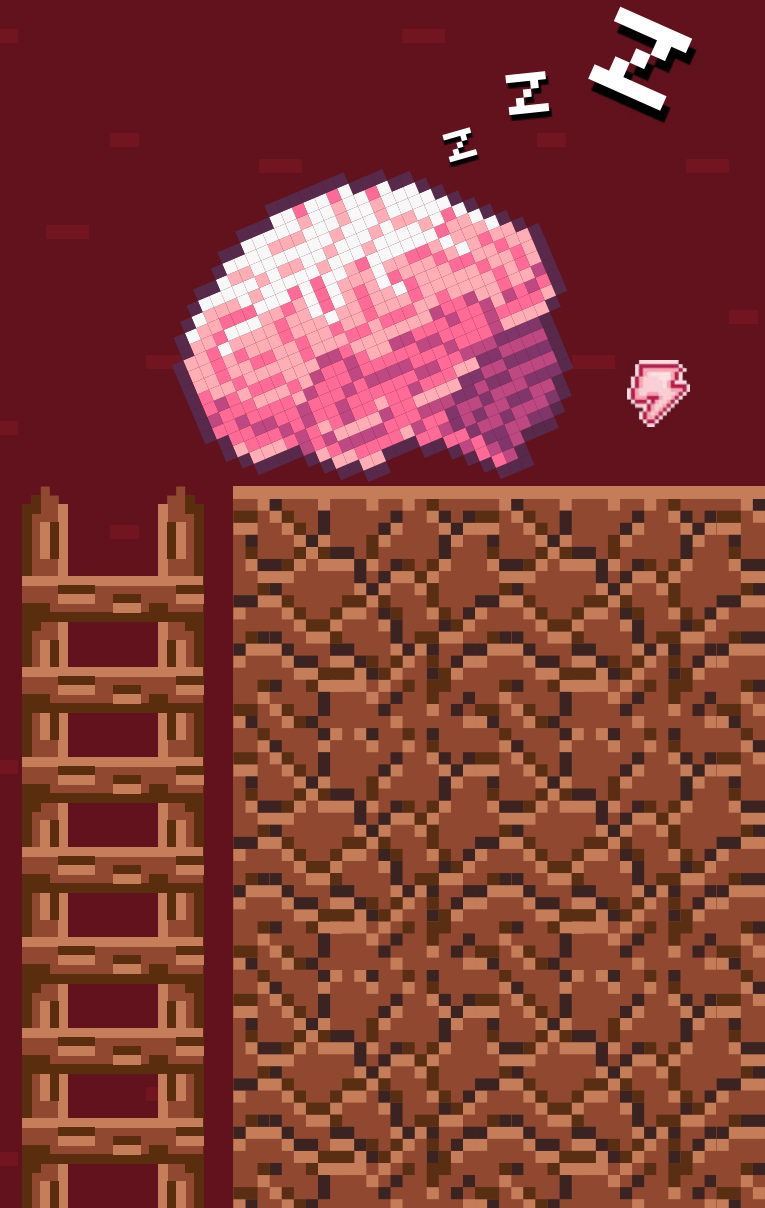
For brands that look ahead, gamification is good news. Today's young people are enthusiastic about it and willing to engage with it. In fact, **91% of people aged 16-24 said they would be open to playing games with brands, 84% said they would buy from a brand they enjoyed playing a game with and 61% said they would keep buying from that brand.**

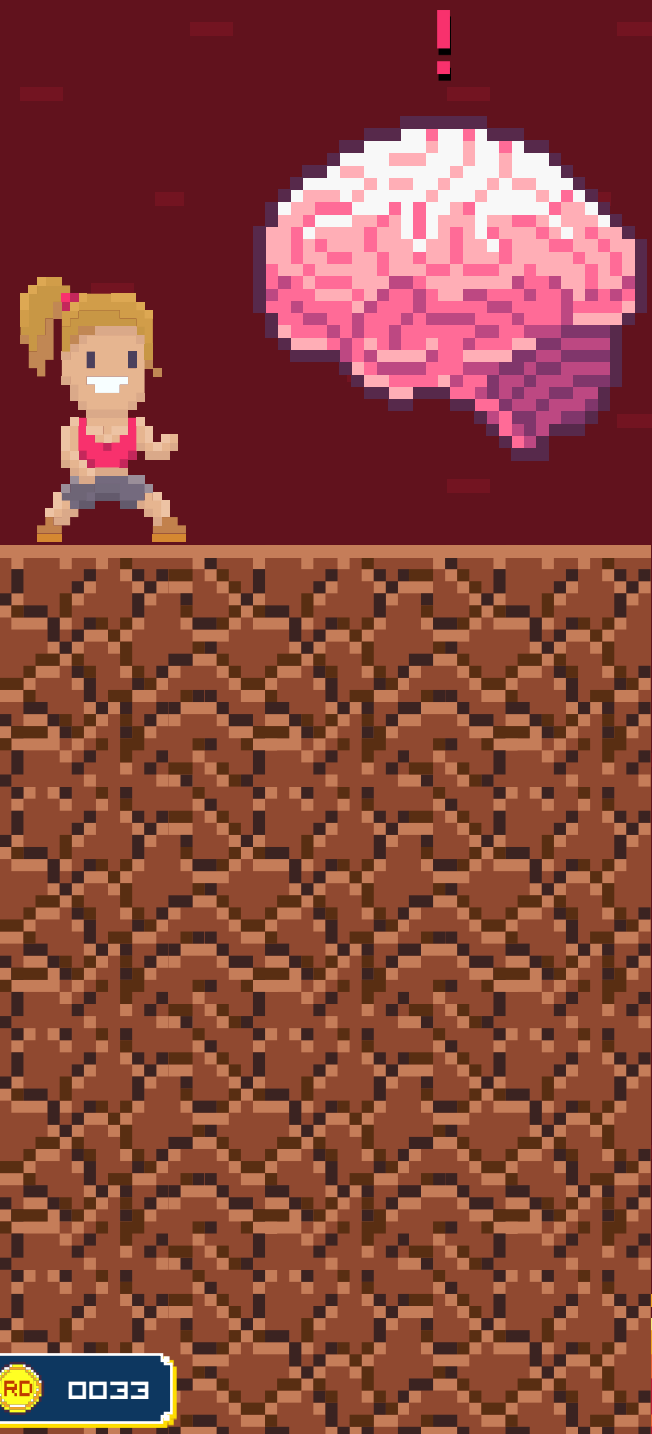
Let's be clear. The brain's motivation system is complex and is nowhere near to being fully understood. So, when the marketing media talks about neurotransmitters and their effect on decision making, it has tended to be reductive, oversimplifying so we believe that anything that releases dopamine is addictive and dangerous, like technology or games.

In reality, dopamine has many functions that go beyond rewards. However, the aspect that is most interesting for the marketing world and its effect on **consumer decision-making**,

is as a feedback signal for predicting rewards. Studies on its role in pathological gambling have shown that dopamine has overlapping circuitry with both near misses and monetary wins.³ They have found that **it is released during the anticipation of pleasure, whether you achieve it or not.** (Actual pleasure is caused by other opioid neurotransmitters being released in the brain). If you have played a game before, dopamine reminds you of that feeling of achievement, and keeps the brain engaged.

Our brains' configuration during game play is not addictive in itself. It simply helps the brain remember how it managed to reach that high in the first place.





LEVEL 6:

PLAY ENGAGES THE BRAIN

So, how exactly does gamification create that positive brand experience?

Educators and neuroscientists already know that play aids children’s mental development. It helps them focus the mind on learning and develop social skills. However, playing games is often dismissed as childish, as trivial, even though we now know that young people have become steadily more depressed

and anxious since the 1950s as a result of decreased time for free play.⁴ In response, take a look at the **modern business owners encouraging play in the workplace to enhance creativity and focus.**⁵ See the play-based Montessori and Steiner education systems growing faster than any in the world.⁶

⁴ <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2011/10/all-work-and-no-play-why-your-kids-are-more-anxious-depressed/246422/>
⁵ <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/04/10/self-made-millionaire-will-only-take-meetings-while-playing-games.html>
⁶ <https://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/choosing-a-school/alternative-schools/steiner-waldorf>

The benefits of play don't end when we become adults. Our brains still get engaged by games. An MRI-enabled study by Stanford University showed a video gamer's brain light up in the areas associated with rewards, motivation and learning while playing a game, all signs of increased focus and fast decision-making.⁷

Is this not the state of mind we most want for our customers when engaging with our brands?



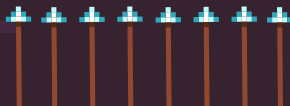
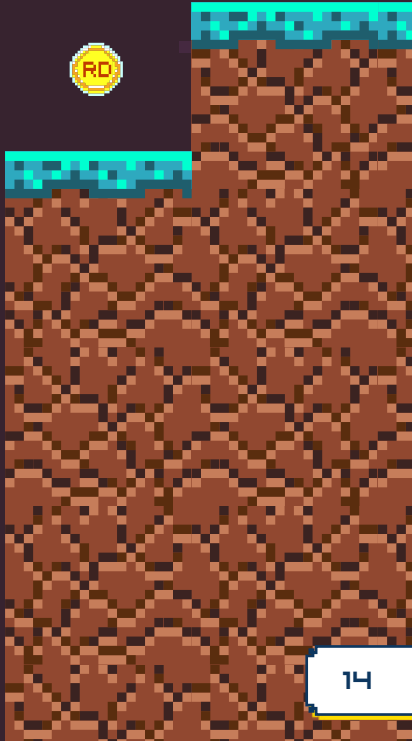
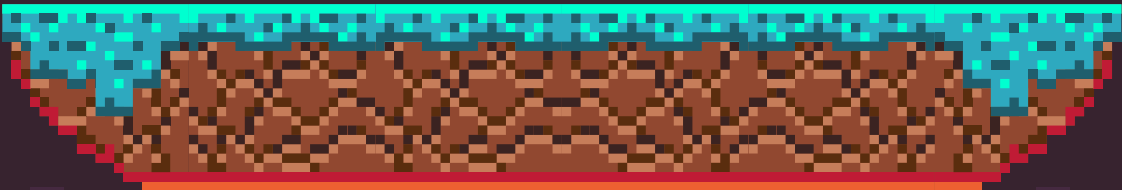
THE BENEFITS OF PLAY DON'T END WHEN WE BECOME ADULTS. OUR BRAINS STILL GET ENGAGED BY GAMES

⁷ <http://reinvent.net/events/event/gaming-our-way-to-a-better-future/>

GETTING GAMIFICATION RIGHT



Gamification should be an opportunity for consumers to immerse themselves with the brand in something it has created. The gameplay may not even seem to heavily feature the brand, but the consumer will know that they got there because of that brand, and in the end they will remember it provided that experience.



Our experience of making games for brands has showed us that the most engaging and effective games test the mind. For instance, at **Reflectdigital**, we made our own online game called Find50. It tested players' knowledge of football teams throughout the UK with cryptic, say-what-you-see clues.⁸ After 5 weeks, a game from an unknown brand with no consumer database went from a standing start to receive **86,000 visits** to the game page, and nearly 12 months later we are still getting a high average of monthly visits to the game.

From a web traffic perspective, the game was one of our most **powerful pieces of marketing**. We gained coverage from relevant publishers such as **SportBible, LadBible and Planetfootball**.

From an engagement perspective, players would frequently spend **40- 50 minutes on the game in a single session** and return to it for more. The social engagement revealed a community built around the game, with more than **10,000 Find50-related posts on Facebook**. This game was not easy, prompting players to create forums and WhatsApp groups to try to beat the game as a team.

FINDO

**** ** AFTER 5 WEEKS ** ****

86,000 VISITS

PLAYERS SPENT

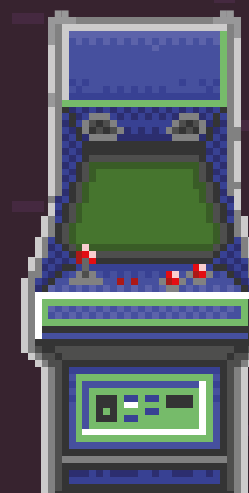
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FIND50

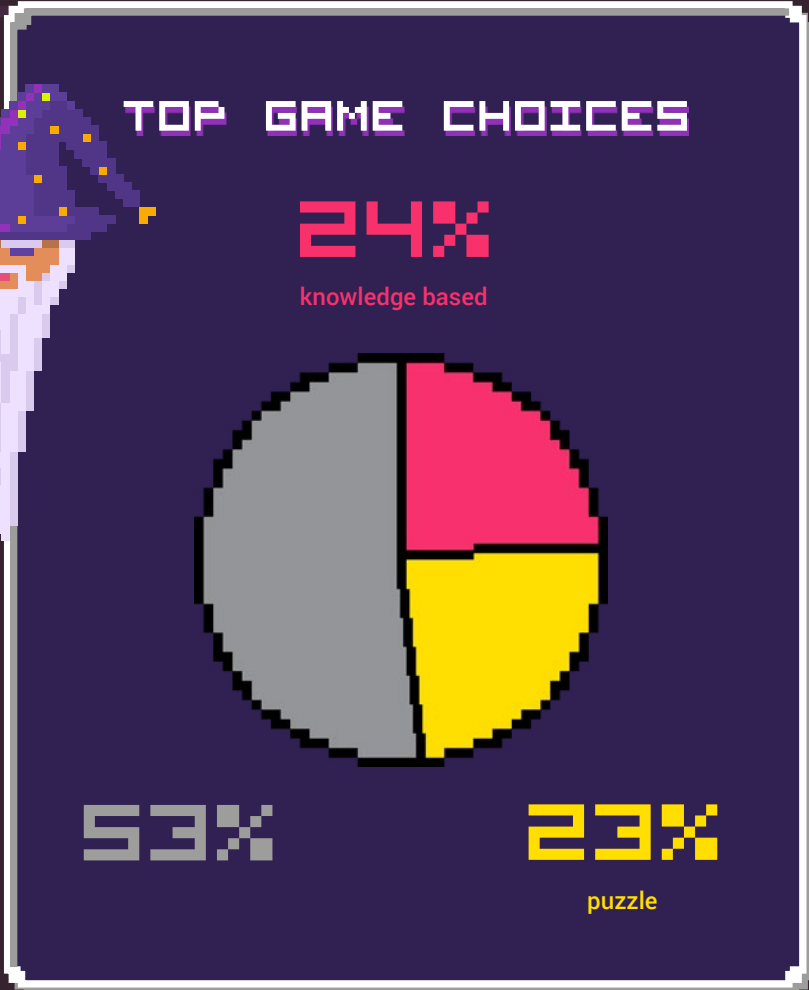
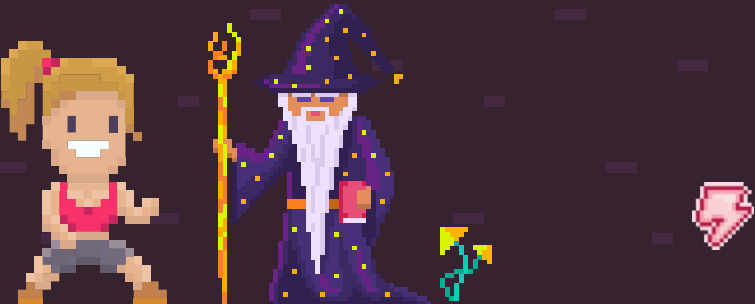
RELATED POSTS
ON FACEBOOK



⁸ <https://www.reflectdigital.co.uk/case-studies/find50>

Games need to challenge the brain. We asked consumers what kind of online gamification they found most engaging out of puzzle games, knowledge-based games, story-based games, chance-based games and hand-eye co-ordination games. Those who had experienced gamification before voted knowledge games as their top choice (24% of the vote) with puzzle games coming close behind (23%).

GAMES NEED TO
CHALLENGE THE BRAIN

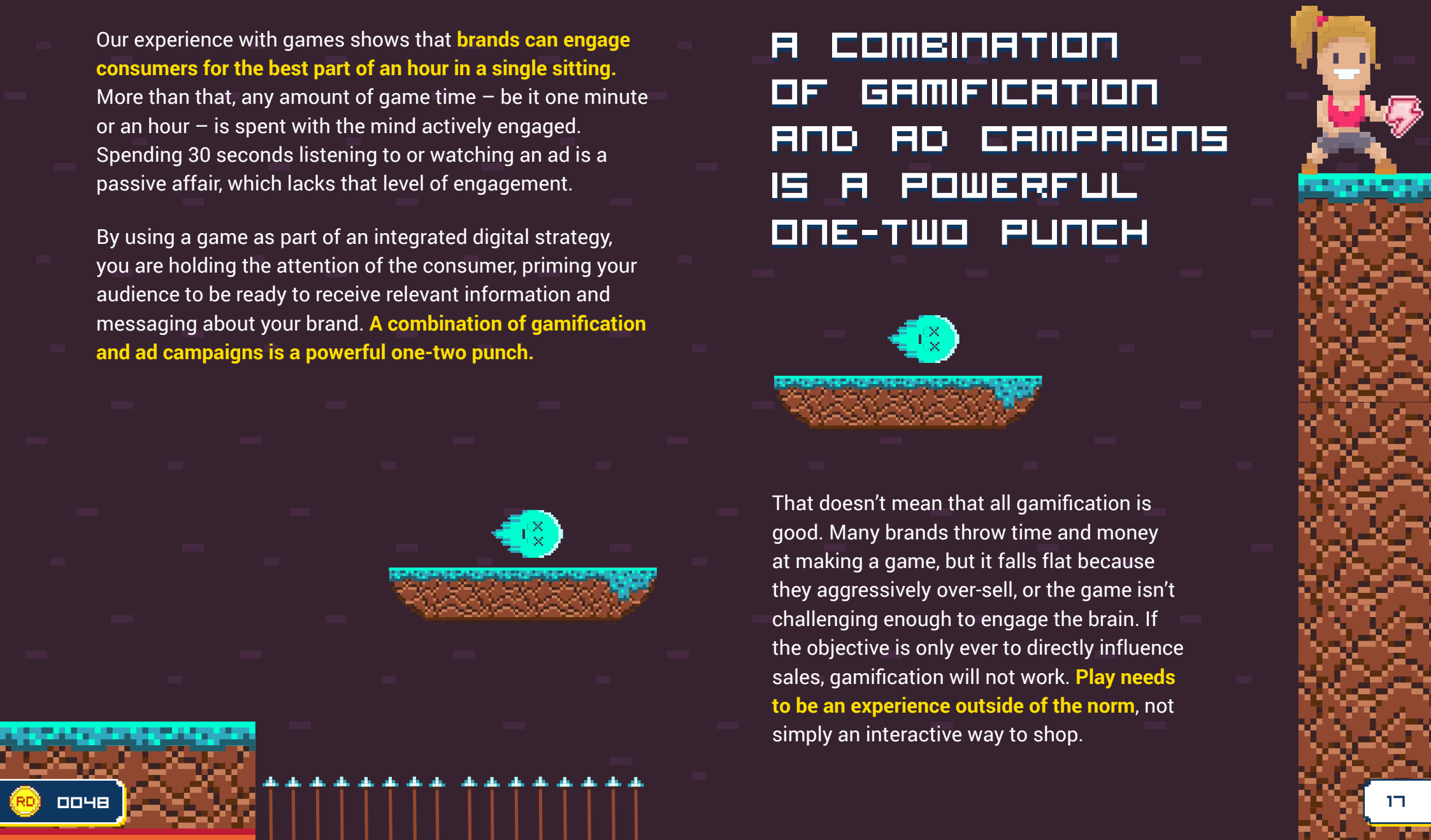


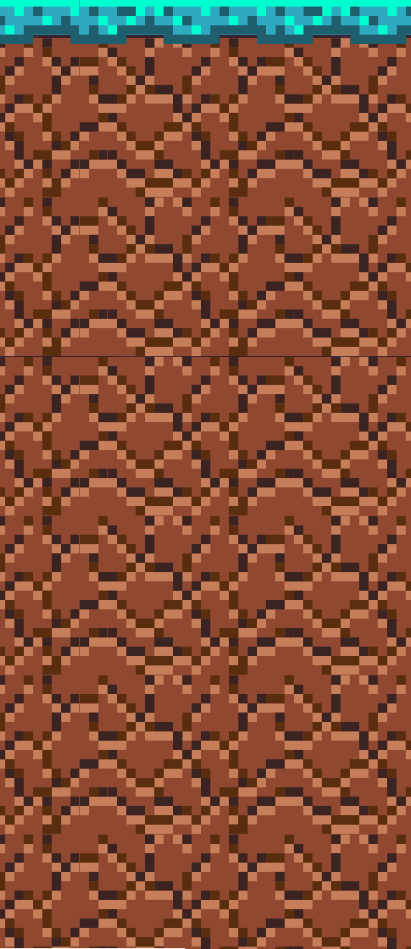
Our experience with games shows that **brands can engage consumers for the best part of an hour in a single sitting**. More than that, any amount of game time – be it one minute or an hour – is spent with the mind actively engaged. Spending 30 seconds listening to or watching an ad is a passive affair, which lacks that level of engagement.

By using a game as part of an integrated digital strategy, you are holding the attention of the consumer, priming your audience to be ready to receive relevant information and messaging about your brand. **A combination of gamification and ad campaigns is a powerful one-two punch.**

A COMBINATION
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ONE-TWO PUNCH

That doesn't mean that all gamification is good. Many brands throw time and money at making a game, but it falls flat because they aggressively over-sell, or the game isn't challenging enough to engage the brain. If the objective is only ever to directly influence sales, gamification will not work. **Play needs to be an experience outside of the norm**, not simply an interactive way to shop.





THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF ONLINE GAMIFICATION

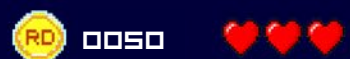
We know what makes a good game. And in our experience, a brand should keep the following in mind when building a game experience:

- ✦ Ensure you have more than one goal, for example, sales might be the ultimate goal, but PR and data collection might be really useful metrics too.
- ✦ Consider your audience and their demographics.
- ✦ Conduct research and tests before launching to ensure the game hits the mark with your target audience.
- ✦ Consider the motivation to participate: is it the prize, the glory or just personal satisfaction?
- ✦ Consider achievements for the user or ways to get help, e.g. 'Like us on Facebook for a personalised tip.'
- ✦ Consider tracking - how much data can you track that will help you with future games and activities?
- ✦ Ensure you have a marketing strategy. It could be the coolest game there is, but you need to have an outreach plan.
- ✦ Consider a sneak preview media pack for key journalists.
- ✦ Keep your target audience in mind and ensure it meets their needs.
- ✦ Consider all devices.
- ✦ Try a series of games. You can take the learnings from each game to improve with each release, and maximise the development work that has gone into the game.

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- ✦ Make it too sales focused, this goes against the likely motivation for a user to participate.
- ✦ Make it too complicated. Users need to be able to 'get it' quickly. That isn't to say it shouldn't take a while to complete, but they need to achieve buy-in in a short amount of time. You can help the process by adding clear achievements.
- ✦ Data capture too early. Where possible let users enjoy your game before asking for their details. Then consider why they are committing, e.g. does this mean they can save their progress or be featured on a leader board?
- ✦ Try to appeal to everyone, it is better to have a highly targeted game than one that misses the mark by trying to suit many audiences.

INVENTORY



CONTINUE

LEVEL 10: WHO'S GAME?



All consumer-facing brands can benefit from adding games to its online marketing strategy. Here are a few example areas that are all set for gamification.

Entertainment. By this we mean theatre, concerts, cinemas, arts and music festivals, theme parks and the like. When asked which kind of brand consumers would be most open to playing games with, 37% voted for entertainment, rising to 41% when asking the 16-24s.

Food. In our research, consumers picked food as the third kind of brand they would be most open to playing a game with online. Drilling down in to the data, we found that this is one area where the interest of the older demographics spiked. People aged over 45 who have experienced gamification once before voted them as top of their list. There are plenty of restaurant loyalty apps that offer rewards through in-app games, but some are more creative. Pizza chain Domino's made an online game, Pizza Legends, allowing customers to design their own pizzas and post them up for ratings. Customers can see their creations climb up a leader board, with the number of 'loves' next to them.⁹ This is a good example of a game tapping into people's desire for creativity, accomplishment and social influence.

Sports. Consumers rated sports the fourth-highest kind of brand they would be open to playing games with. Interestingly, consumers in Northern Ireland ranked it the top industry they would want to play with, with 43% of those open to games saying so.

Alcohol. A good example of how alcohol brands can benefit through gamification comes from Wine of Chile, which created a Facebook game called Terroir Hunting. To be a wine drinker often means you must know something about the wine and the land it comes from. This game was at once educational (and as we know, learning is already enhanced by play) while it built a positive customer experience with their brand, meaning that players remembered the brands' wines when it came time to purchase. By incorporating it into Facebook, the game also tapped into the typical wine drinkers' pride by allowing them to show off their knowledge of wine to friends online.¹⁰ If a customer can say they have an educated palate thanks to Wines of Chile, then Wines of Chile has won that customer.

⁹ <https://www.pizzalegends.co.uk/league-of-legends/top25>

¹⁰ <https://thenextweb.com/socialmedia/2012/03/24/social-networks-are-becoming-the-go-to-platform-for-alcohol-marketing/>

BEYOND ENGAGEMENT

1. Humanising your brand.

Gamification is a way to inject some fun into your brand. For those brands that don't immediately scream "fun", you might think that humanising is a difficult thing to do. **Games give your brand identity some licence to have a playful personality.** As a game is not overtly selling, you do not have to take yourself too seriously. For instance, those who work in financial services, low-interest categories in FMCG, utilities and even B2B brands might not feel that a game is relevant for their brand. The point of gamification is bring play into a traditionally non-game context. All brands can benefit from giving their customers a fun and human experience from time to time.

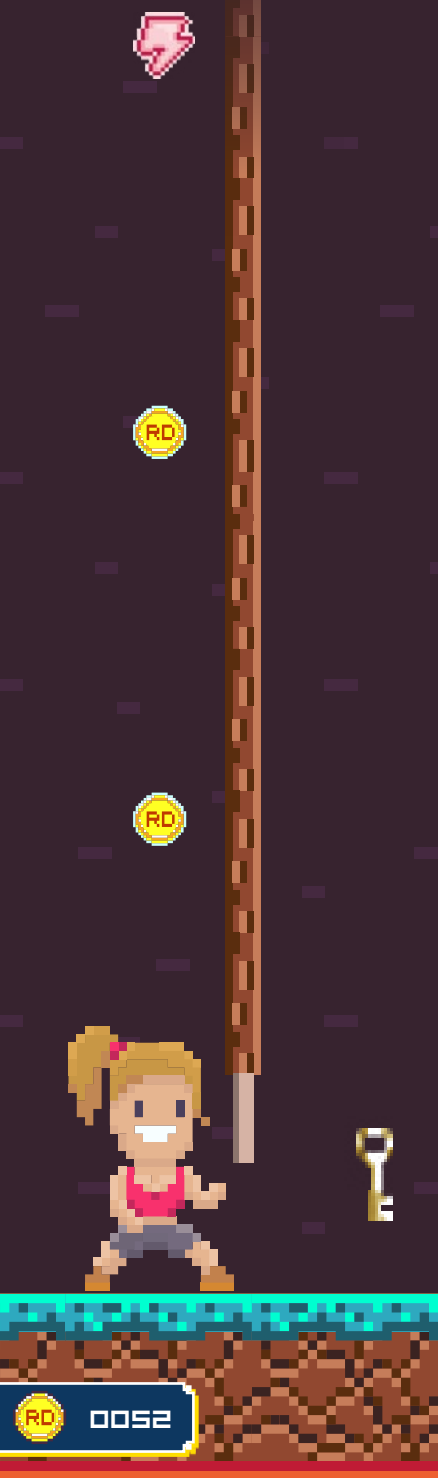
Gamification is a powerful way to learn about your audience. Designing a game that has **data capture built into it** is a great way to gain leads but capturing data on the choices your players take can be an excellent way of getting insights into your customers' mindsets and help to build personas and segmentation. This data can then be used to optimise your other channels, offering value to your marketing in more areas than one.

3. Tracking ROI.

Gamification offers an excellent opportunity to **attribute conversions**. By incorporating exclusive offers, for example voucher codes, into game achievements, brands can easily link how many purchases came about as a result of customers playing their games.

4. **GDPR.** The intentional data capture afforded by online games is a great way of **getting clean, GDPR-compliant data into your CRM via consent.** By asking players to enter their details in order to save a game's progress or unlock other parts of the game, you are offering a fair value exchange and not forcing your way into your customers' lives. Any follow-up marketing has been consciously opted into.

5. Relationship building. When you play a game with someone, be it a board, video or ball game, you are **building a relationship**. Games give people the opportunity to learn about each other, to open up. It is the same with the brand-customer relationship. The game environment opens up multiple opportunities for brands to give customers more reasons to be loyal and build long-term relationships.



LEVEL 12:

CONCLUSION

The verdict is in: gamification is a powerful way to cut through the current disenchantment with passive online advertising.

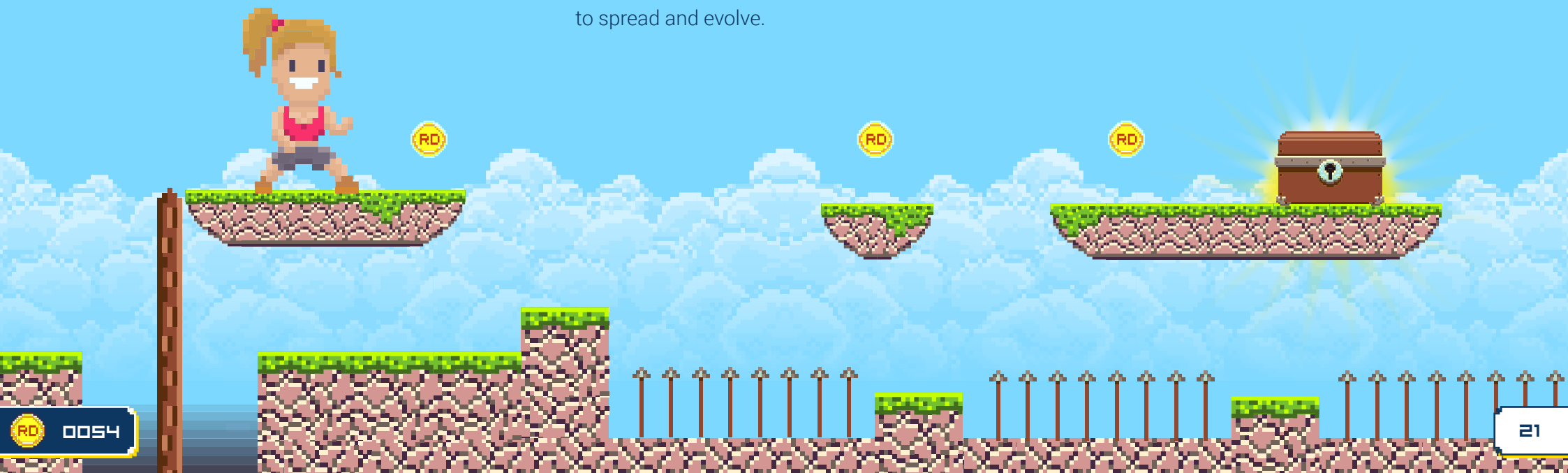
Online games are the **ultimate online activation**. They are highly engaging, they build relationships, and create a positive overall brand experience that has an **impressive effect on consumer behaviour**. The research shows that they have an impressive effect on consideration and loyalty.

It also presents an opportunity for brands that have yet to try it. Our research proves that people who have experienced gamification before are far more open to it; there is high-growth potential, shown by the figures that 70% have yet to try it.

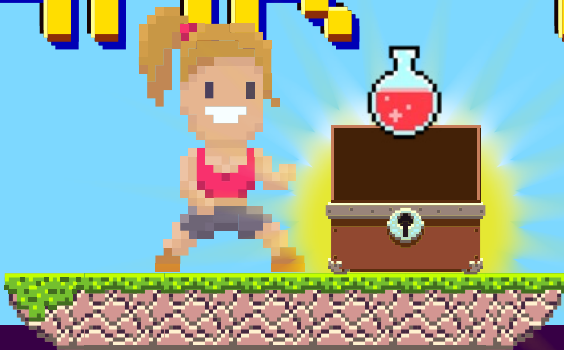
This is especially exciting for forward-looking brands, knowing now from our research that the young, their future customers, are hungry. 91% of people aged 16-24 said they would be open to playing games with brands, **84% said they would buy from a brand they enjoyed playing a game with and 61% said they would keep buying from that brand**. With such potential, gamification’s effectiveness is likely to spread and evolve.

Female-focussed brands need to consider gamification for their digital strategy, seeing that 66% of women would be more likely to buy from a brand they enjoyed playing with. And also seeing that they are even more interested than men.

By tapping into consumer psychology, gamification positively enhances the brand experience. It humanises a brand, offers trackable ROI, clean GDPR-compliant data from data capture, and offers the chance to learn something about customers. This is a form of marketing that does not interrupt, does not demand attention but earns it, and does not pressure the customer to buy.



THANK YOU



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW
ONLINE GAMIFICATION CAN ENHANCE YOUR MARKETING
STRATEGY AND BUILD BETTER EXPERIENCES FOR
YOUR AUDIENCE, GET IN TOUCH.

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