

Topic: Gamified Talent Development for Gen Z in Tourism

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1. Introduction

Because of technological progress and changes in the workforce, the tourism industry is changing faster than ever. Employees who are part of Gen Z—between 1995 and 2010—are playing an important role in this field. Since Gen Z members are digital natives, want work that has meaning and like things that keep them engaged, they require new types of learning strategies, not traditional ones (Nikolaos Stylos & Vassiliadis, 2023). For these employees to be interested, involved and remain, organizations should innovate further by including gamification, personalized training and inclusivity as main principles in their designs.

The “TravelQuest Academy” program has been designed to address the special needs of Gen Z within the tourism industry. It uses exciting features such as missions to learn from, level-based advancement, leaderboards and virtual rewards, to animate the learning process. Integration of DEI means that employees at GE are encouraged to feel their value and authority (Putra & Mohd Zulhilmi Suhaimi, 2024). Thanks to AI, lessons and modes of communication are customized for everyone which leads to better engagement and better skill development. TravelQuest Academy enables those who participate to learn by having fun, using new technology and caring about their fellow students and the environment, to become the next leaders in global tourism.

2. Main body

2.1 Talent development program

Gen Z employees born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s perform best in live, speedy and technological settings. In order to encourage and keep them in the industry, learning should become more interactive and meaningful (Putra & Mohd Zulhilmi Suhaimi, 2024). A talent development program that uses games has the ability to solve this problem by combining instruction with progress, competitions and digital rewards. Such an approach allows students to have fun and keep improving their skills.

Program Overview: Travel Quest Academy

TravelQuest Academy is a web-based training program built just for Gen Z members working in the tourism sector. It uses a structure where students achieve missions, move up levels, talk to other students and get instant feedback. Learners explore topics based on where they are professionally, winning experience points (XP), badges and joining competitions (Putra & Mohd Zulhilmi Suhaimi, 2024).

Learning Stages and Skill Progression

There are five different stages to the program. At the Explorer stage, employees are introduced to the company's mission, core values and outreach overseas. By exploring brand websites and playing games set in real world situations, participants earn their start-up badge: "Brand Explorer." Next, Navigator helps learners develop essential skills for guest relations, communication and offering service (Nikolaos Stylos & Vassiliadis, 2023). In the game, learners accept and solve simulated guest requests, earning rewards for positive outcomes. This stage introduces members to sustainable ideas, corporate duty and DEI guidelines. As part of a quest, players could find and address actions that harm the environment at virtual hotels or take part in teamwork to protect the environment.

The purpose of the Culture Connector stage is to help people become better connection between people from different cultures. Learners work with different simulations and must be understanding and able to respond flexibly. Responding quickly to inquiries and taking cultural quizzes help them know more about the world. In this stage, Innovation Leader, participants learn how to lead and think strategically (Pasca et al., 2021). At this stage, people run an online tour business, control their budgets, deal with employee problems and share their ideas with virtual business leaders which prepares them for leadership positions.

Leaderboards and Peer Motivation

To motivate competitors, the platform keeps everyone interested by providing leaderboards that list top players and teams by their XP, the badges they have and the feedback they receive from other learners. Every quarter, the leaderboards are reset to encourage people to keep learning and competing (Pasca et al., 2021). In monthly newsletters and town halls, special attention is given to top employees in the company, so everyone is encouraged by their success.

Virtual Rewards and Recognition

They help users stay motivated all the time. The virtual currency Travel Coins allows participants to obtain actual company goods, more vacation time or extra learning opportunities. To recognize achievement, people receive "Top Problem Solver" and "Sustainability Champion" digital trophies. Accolades are placed on staff profiles and the internal network to create a culture of reaching for goals and creative work (Pasca et al., 2021).

2.2 Mobile app screens, feedback tools, and internal communication guides

Mobile App Screens: The Interface of Engagement

The program is given a digital priority, so TravelQuest Academy is presented to Gen Z mainly via an easy-to-use mobile app. The app imitates leading social and gaming apps to keep users fully engaged.

Home Dashboard: The app opens with a screen that highlights your own dashboard. The queue screen has a welcome message, an avatar, your level, your XP progress and quick links to daily tasks. Completing the “Quest of the Day” invites users to solve a quick module such as learning how to manage a customer complaint or discovering sustainable actions for the hotel(Klouvidaki et al., 2025).

Learning Pathway Map: This page seems like a virtual journey map or board game path. Every stage, called Explorer, Navigator, Sustainability Steward, Culture Connector and Innovation Leader, is shown as a success on a digital trail (Klouvidaki et al., 2025). Learners just need to click on a milestone for access to video lessons, simulations, quizzes or reflective activities.

Leaderboard & Achievements: The leaderboard lets users check their placement both with colleagues and with gamers around the world. You can find all your badges, trophies and virtual icons in the “My Achievements” tab which can be shared both on the company’s social walls and on LinkedIn (Klouvidaki et al., 2025).

Mentor Connect Chat: Learners can directly message both mentors and other participants within the platform. You can use the game to make video calls, have live talks during team quests and join forum conversations (Antal-Berbecaru et al., 2023). Users will be notified through notifications whenever they receive new feedback, see a message from the team or hit a project milestone.

Feedback Tools: Real-Time Insights and Motivation

Good feedback helps us become better every day. Two kinds of feedback, both from the app and from human assistance, help students learn and notice when they achieve something.

Instant Feedback on Activities: As soon as a task is completed, users can see the feedback they get. It also covers the answers, advice for growing better and listings of related resources. adults being able to revisit intelligent examples multiple times until the concept is fully learned (Antal-Berbecaru et al., 2023).

360-Degree Peer Review System:



Figure: 360-Degree Peer Review System

Source: (Antal-Berbecaru et al., 2023)

Team challenges and group quests give students a chance to give and receive feedback from others. Each worker scores their teammates for communication, contribution and problem-solving using colorful sliders or simple commentary. As a result, students feel responsible and supported while learning (Antal-Berbecaru et al., 2023).

Monthly Progress Reports: Users are delivered a monthly report outlining what they’ve accomplished, their XP, their place on the leaderboard and which skills they’ve mastered. Suggested learning paths are provided in this report, along with areas in which you can still grow (Yun, 2023). Managers can use these reports to start reviewing progress or making development plans.

Pulse Surveys and Check-Ins: Every week, the team for less than a minute to learn about their feelings and motivation at work. Asking, “How confident are you about managing customer feedback today?” and “How much support do you feel you have while learning?” reveals trends and can lead to HR action (Yun, 2023).

Internal Communication Guides: Promoting a Gamified Learning Culture

A successful gamified development program relies heavily on good communication. These guides give HR teams and managers advice, templates and ideas for engaging with employees.

Launch Campaign Templates: Templates are ready for email, WhatsApp and notifications about upcoming programs. Some sample subject lines are, “Get Ready for Your First Adventure With TravelQuest” and “Earn Your First Badge This Week.” Advertising on posters and digital screens in staff rooms is a great way to add to your digital messaging (Kumar et al., 2021).

Manager Communication Tips: The guides explain that managers can boost the importance of the program during team meetings by recognizing the top workers, updating team members about the leaderboard and organizing small competitions (Kumar et al., 2021). Talk to your students in a way that is inclusive, comfortable and features rewards that they especially like.

Storytelling and Recognition Features: The newsletters and intranet feature “Employee Spotlights” highlighting the achievements of learners, their successes and stories of sustainability sent via the app. Employing storytelling like this encourages everyone and builds a habit of constant learning and rewarding staff achievements (Xu et al., 2021).

Feedback Loops to HR: The “Voice of the Employee” dashboard combines information from employee surveys, ideas and the use of the app. HR teams get automated notifications whenever participation trend falls, so they can easily re-motivate teams (Xu et al., 2021).

2.3 AI-Driven Customization: Personalizing the Learning Journey

AI makes it easy to develop learning experiences that match each Gen Z employee’s skills and needs, something these employees are expecting these days. On the TravelQuest Academy platform, AI is able to regularly monitor what each learner does, how far they come, their talents and their obstacles to help create a unique development pathway (Kumar et al., 2024).

Let’s say that a user has trouble with cultural topics during the Culture Connector stage. Then, the AI will suggest helpful extra resources or simulations as a way to improve. Likewise, if an employee is successful in sustainability, the AI can offer advanced leadership material from the Innovation Leader category to boost their development (Kumar et al., 2024). Because the content is flexible, children aren’t bored by stuff they already know or overloaded with things that are above their level which helps grow their positive mindset. It adapts the way it provides notifications and feedback according to the user’s likes and habits. While some people like learning with cheerful, smiling pictures, others are more comfortable with clear technical notes. The personalized way we communicate improves involvement and encourages more work (Kumar et al., 2024).

Inclusivity Through AI: Supporting Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility

Incorporating inclusivity into the talent development program is critical for creating a workplace where each employee feels like they are part of the team. The use of AI-based tools supports Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) by reducing the chance of unintended bias and making things accessible (Seyfi et al., 2024). Using language processing, the academy makes certain that the lessons do not include bias or exclusive language, alerting users with

alternatives that are more inclusive and respectful. Scenarios in the Sustainability Steward and Culture Connector stages have characters from different ethnicities, genders and abilities which makes the experience accessible to a wide group of players. AI features like real-time transcription, speech to text and language translation within the mobile app make the app usable for everyone (Seyfi et al., 2024). AI may modify its communication and vocabulary to match either learning or thinking abilities, helping offer fair learning chances to students.

AI-Powered Mentorship Matching

AI is now being used to connect people who want mentorship with the right mentors. By studying profiles, skills, what they want to learn and their personality, the AI suggests mentees to mentors who meet their development and cultural needs. The connection brings different cultures together and helps inspire diverse groups of workers (Pradhan et al., 2023). An individual who wants to learn more about sustainability leadership might get partnered with a mentor who has studied eco-tourism and worked with groups that are usually underrepresented. Consequently, the team enjoys a climate in which many points of view can be celebrated.

Data Privacy and Ethical AI Use

TravelQuest Academy values ethical AI and privacy to create a reliable and secure learning experience for everyone. Workforce insights are gathered from anonymous sources and users can determine how their information is used and their education. When companies discuss their AI processes and how they personalize services, users can trust them (Pradhan et al., 2023). With this method, AI is used to personalize and include users without compromising privacy. Ensuring both new solutions and reliability, UPenn makes the talent experience safe and positive for all involved.

3. Conclusion

TravelQuest Academy is designed to help young employees in the world of tourism get ahead through advanced training. Thanks to learning stages, leaderboards and virtual rewards, learners are motivated and enjoy taking part in the program. Customization made possible by AI makes sure students have individual learning paths that are inclusive and accessible for all. Psychological safety is encouraged when there is an emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion in the program. This modern mix of technology, involvement and responsibility helps keep employees at the company and improves their performance, while also training them to adapt, connect with different cultures and fulfill tourism's rapid changes worldwide. The unique

approach at TravelQuest Academy builds a sustainable future workforce for the aviation industry.

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Appendix

