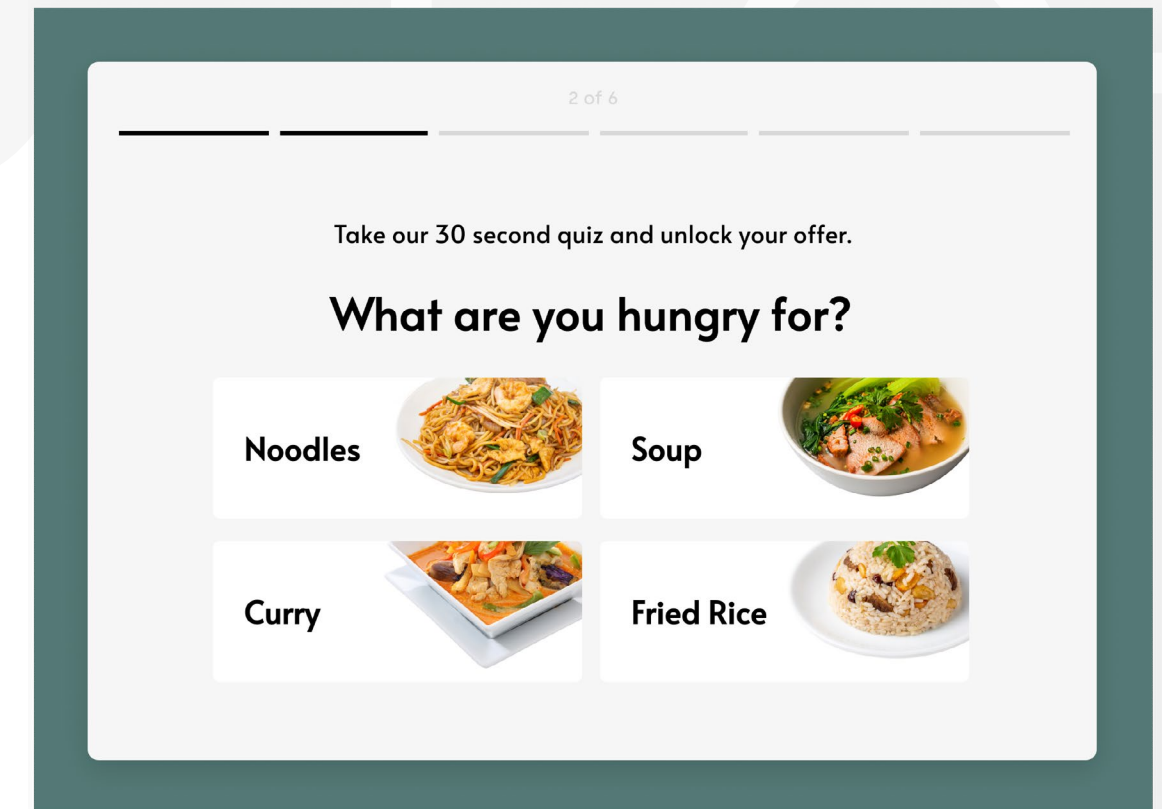# Gamification Guide
for QSRs

**Key gamification tactics for
quick service restaurants**

✿ MARIGOLD™

Imagine if every time you ordered your favorite sandwich or latte, *it felt like playing a game.*

Imagine if every purchase – or perhaps even every interaction – presented an opportunity to earn points, unlock levels or win a prize. That's the power of **gamification**. It's like taking the best parts of a video game – points, rewards, challenges – and sprinkling them into the customer experience to make it more fun and engaging.

Gamification

: the integration of game-like elements into non-game activities to encourage participation or boost engagement

noun

*Marketers can leverage **gamification** in their email campaigns or loyalty programs to create fun, interactive experiences for their customers.*

2 of 6

Take our 30 second quiz and unlock your offer.

What are you hungry for?

Noodles

Soup

Curry

Fried Rice

Why Gamification Matters for QSR Brands

Many QSR brands have entered the loyalty program space – a step in the right direction towards making the dining experience more engaging and rewarding. But this trend can also be fatiguing for customers. *So many programs, so many apps!* QSR brands need a way to spice up their programs (and their marketing communications, too) to gain a competitive edge.

Gamification provides a solution. It's a way to turn monotonous everyday interactions into fun experiences that subtly encourage customers to **increase spend and purchase frequency**.

3 Key Benefits of Gamification

- **Improved messaging engagement:** When recipients see messages via email or SMS that suggest something fun, interactive or rewarding, your open rates and click-through rates are poised to see improvement.

- **Exciting loyalty programs:** Gamification adds a level of excitement that can help differentiate your loyalty program from competitors. *And there are so, so many ways to gamify.*

- **More chances for data capture:** Personalization is critical for engendering lasting loyalty. But it requires customer data. Gamification presents ripe opportunities to incentivize data sharing.

5 Ways to Use Gamification in Your QSR Campaigns

Whether you're looking to keep things simple, or want to venture into the realm of advanced loyalty, there are plenty of opportunities to gamify.

Let's dive in →

1. Loyalty Tiers & Progress Bars

You've probably heard of loyalty tiers before – levels of increasing exclusivity that customers can reach in time. Oftentimes, naming conventions include bronze, silver, gold, platinum, etc.

There's science to back up why these tiers – and progress bars to show proximity to the next tier – are so effective. It's explained well by the **Goal-Gradient Hypothesis**, which posits that people become *more* motivated as they get closer to completing a task or reaching an objective. Consider a loyalty program that reveals to customers their tier progression. As they approach a new loyalty tier, which includes some sort of new benefit or reward, their inclination to make additional purchases increases, in pursuit of that new benefit.

ORZO
ITALIAN CUCINA

57 points away

Ally, you're close to PLATINUM status!

Once you reach PLATINUM status, you'll earn additional perks, including:

**10%-OFF TUESDAYS
EXCLUSIVE TASTING EVENTS
& *MORE* POINTS FOR EVERY PURCHASE**

START MY ORDER

ORZO
ITALIAN CUCINA

2. Punch Cards

A simpler alternative to progress bars or loyalty tiers, punch cards can still satisfy a similar goal: acknowledge a customer's existing business, and illustrate how close they are to their next reward or milestone.

As their name implies, punch cards began as physical cards given to customers that would be marked (typically stamped or *punched*) each time the customer made a purchase. These days, many businesses have opted into creating digital punch cards that a customer can access via an online account and/or mobile app.

Relative to other more complex gamification options, punch cards are fairly straightforward from a technical perspective, and can be implemented quickly with a marketing solution provider like **Marigold**.

Real-world example:

Researchers at the University of Chicago put the Goal-Gradient Hypothesis to the test in a real café reward program. They found that participants purchased coffee more frequently the closer they got to earning a free coffee. Further, they concluded that the Goal Gradient "may lead to a sales lift that exceeds the cost of the reward" and that customer acceleration toward rewards "also predicts loyalty and future engagement with similar goals."

Full study here ⊙→

COCO CAFÉ

MADISON, YOU'RE ONE COFFEE AWAY!

Buy 9 Coffees, and
Get One Free

05/05	05/12	05/18
05/25	05/30	06/04
06/08	06/13	

Order a cup today to unlock your reward

PLACE ORDER →

3. Task-Based Rewards

Consumers don't necessarily need to be making purchases to participate in gamification. Consider deviating from the "points only for purchases" approach and reward other consumer behaviors, too.

Examples include rewards in exchange for SMS marketing opt-ins or mobile app downloads. While these sorts of behaviors won't immediately generate revenue, they do present more opportunities for sales in the long term.

SWEET WHISK
Bake Shop

Did someone say **free** loyalty points?
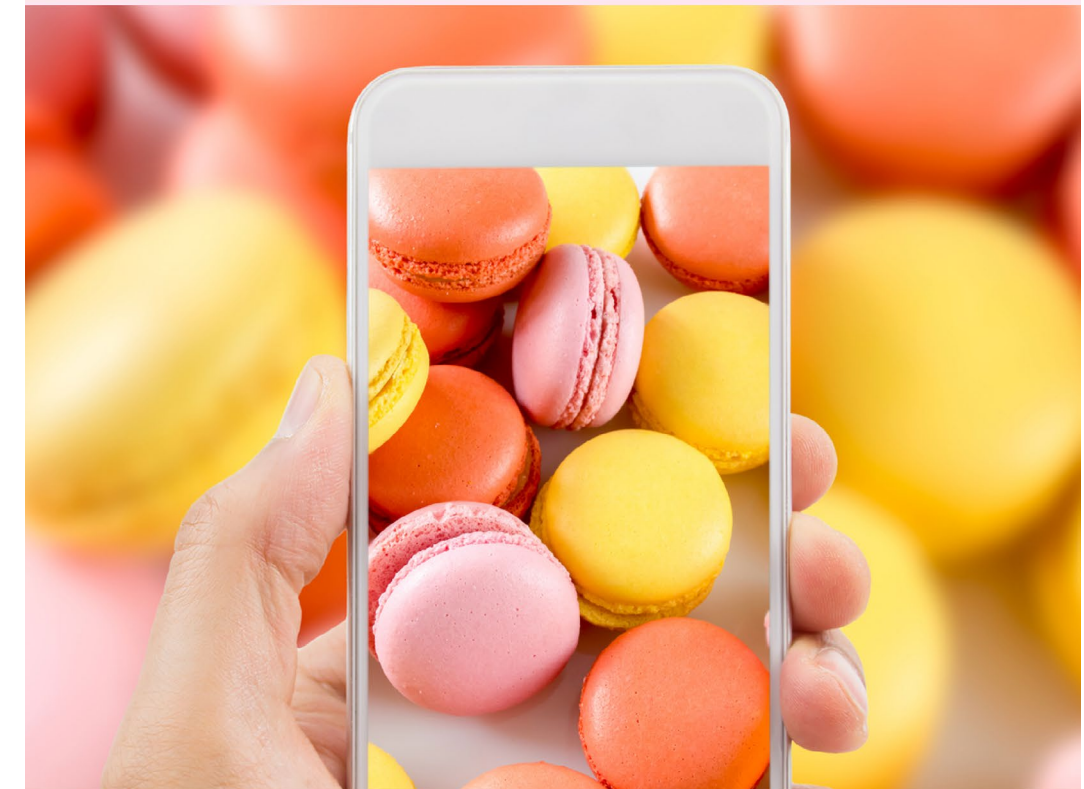
Download our app today to receive **50** loyalty points – no purchase required!

Points can be redeemed for discounts on any bakery, food or drink purchase.

DOWNLOAD THE APP

4. Data Collection Experiences: Surveys, Polls, Quizzes

According to **Marigold's 2024 Consumer Trends Index**, a whopping 78% of consumers cite that they're likely to engage with personalized offers tailored to their interests. But to deliver effective personalization, you need customer data. A great way to get it? Customer surveys.

Coming directly from the customer, the zero-party data that surveys yield is free from much of the uncertainty that is part and parcel of third-party data. The biggest challenge lies in inspiring participation. Fortunately, our **Consumer Trends Index** also asked consumers which benefits they found most valuable in exchange for personal data. Here are their top five responses:

Discounts or coupons (91%)

Loyalty points/rewards (89%)

Early and/or exclusive access to offers (83%)

A chance to win something (81%)

Unlocking content (60%)

Hey Madison,

5 Minutes for 15% Off?

Your opinions about our food mean the world to us — really.
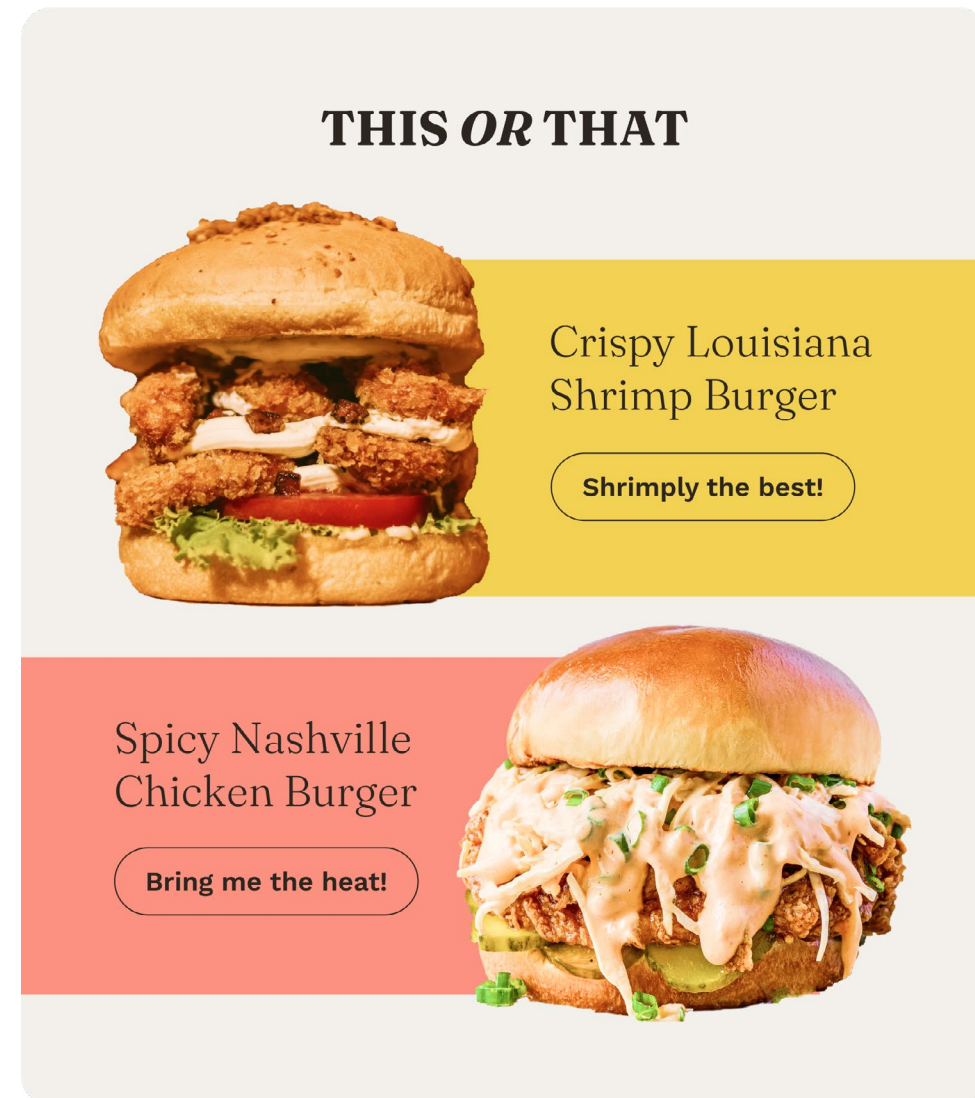
We were hoping you could take a few minutes to complete our customer survey.

In exchange, we'll send over a discount of 15% off your next meal.

Sound like a deal?

Take the survey

MARIGOLD

Looking to bring greater gamification to your surveys? Consider tweaking them to be in the form of quizzes or polls.

THIS *OR* THAT

Crispy Louisiana
Shrimp Burger

Shrimply the best!

Spicy Nashville
Chicken Burger

Bring me the heat!

**Your Burger
Your Way**

**Spill it: Your choice of
burger flavor?**

TANGY-TWIST

FRESH-EMBRACE

CREAMY-COMFORT

SPICY-ZING

Example "This or that?" Poll:

Prompt customers to choose between options in each question.

Example "What's right for you?" Quiz:

Help customers decide on new menu options.

5. Instant Wins

Gamification done right is fun, exciting and interactive. Among the best examples are what we call "instant wins" – interactive experiences that reveal some sort of benefit to the recipient. With dynamic content, these experiences can be delivered right into your customers' email inboxes. And the possibilities are vast.

Wheelspins, peel-to-reveals and scratch-offs are all compelling options that can give you a massive spike in click-throughs. They enable you to capitalize on human curiosity – if the experience looks interesting enough, it will be tough to ignore. Much tougher than a plain, static offer.

SWEET WHISK
Bake Shop

Making your day even brighter.

A special reward for you. Click to reveal.

15%

SPEND IT NOW

Wrap Up

If you're looking to liven up your customer experience, gamification is an excellent option. And you're in the right place. Whether you're looking to gamify your email marketing, your loyalty program, or both, Marigold has the technology and expertise you need to bring your ideas to life.

Ready to see for yourself?

Let's connect!

Where *relationships* take root.

Marigold's approach to Relationship Marketing stands alone in a world of one-size-fits-all marketing technology companies. Our solutions are designed for your specific size, industry, and maturity, giving you the technology and expertise you need to grow the relationships that grow your business, from customer acquisition to engagement to loyalty. And, with a team of strategists that provide insights into what's working, what's not, and what's changing in your industry, you're able to maximize ROI every step of the way.

Great marketing isn't just about conversion, but true connection. Learn why 40,000 businesses around the world trust Marigold to be the firm foundation they need to help relationships take root.

Find out more at **MeetMarigold.com**

MARIGOLD™