

# Got Game?

The entertainment and engagement potential of gaming platforms make them powerful educational and training tools for healthcare marketers as **James Chase** discovers



**RepRace, a training game created by Concentric**

If you're a doctor and you're going to answer a question, why not have the correct answer shoot your golf ball 300 yards, as opposed to just saying: "Congratulations?" asks Fabio Gratton, chief innovation officer at Ignite Health, and self-professed "heavy" gamer. "At least you can relate to it and you feel like you're accomplishing something. It's creating a context for something that's a little more engaging."

It is this very emotional connection that makes gaming such a potent tool for healthcare marketers. "If you're not entertaining, you're not engaging and if you're not engaging, nobody learns anything," Gratton adds.

The biggest opportunities lie within the under-18 demographic, because the parents play a critical role in how a child's time is allotted—including which games they play. "We learned early on that was critical," says Gratton, whose agency has developed a number of platforms, including Pump Expeditions, an educational adventure game for kids with type 1 diabetes, for client

Medtronic, maker of the Minimed insulin pump.

"If you want to educate about anything that has to do with a chronic illness," says Gratton, "people want to know 'How does a therapy fit into my life?' and not the other way around. So if you lead with the fun and you make the educational part secondary, you have a much higher chance of achieving your objectives."

Gratton points out, however, that not all gamers are young. "It's a little bit limiting to think that only kids want to be entertained," he says. In fact, women are the biggest online gaming audience, and Gratton feels there is a big opportunity to "re-skin" the types of games they play (like Tetris) to convey key healthcare messages.

Games can also offer powerful training platforms. Last year, New York-based Concentric launched RepRace, a simulation game originally developed for Bayer HealthCare's multiple sclerosis sales reps. Users choose to be a particular character and enter simulated physician office environments where they score points based on how well they navigate detailing scenarios.

"We wanted to make it fun but at the same time communicate the marketing challenges and goals of the team," explains Ken Begasse, Jr., partner and director of client services for Concentric.

Begasse says that this type of platform also offers the opportunity to measure its effect—in other words, ROI. "You have feedback mechanisms already built into the game and you can start to add quantitative measurements," he says. "We can link the rep's performance on the gaming platform with their performance in the field. We know we've done better in message recall and message retention since this program has been out there."

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*Fabio Gratton  
Ignite Health*