

Group Exercise

Adapted from an exercise created by Fred Freundlich and Naiara Arnáez, Faculty of Business Science, Mondragon University.

Topic

The Meaning of Ownership

Aim

To explore the roles capital and labour play in the ownership of enterprises and also the affect each has on the distribution of rewards.

Description

This is a group-based problem solving exercise that places the learners in control of the situation and allows them to construct their own meaning of ownership. The exercise encourages the students to debate the problem and then critically reflect on their learning through a facilitated discussion.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the similarities and differences between ownership rights and control rights.
- Critically analyse the role of capital and labour in ownership and governance issues.
- Analyse and debate an issue and be able to articulate their opinion coherently and logically.

Time & Materials

Time:

Approximately 35-45 minutes depending on how in depth the facilitator wishes the discussion to be.

Materials:

- Two Powerpoint presentations.

Scenario

The participants are given a story in which there are two problems to be overcome. The problems relate to the sale of a car. The purpose of this exercise is to ascertain what the participants' attitudes and beliefs are relating to the roles capital and labour play in the governance and ownership of items.



Rules

- One vote per participant.
- Participants must debate as a group but vote as an individual.
- Two decisions must be made:
 1. Who decides if the car is to be sold?
 2. Assuming the car is to be sold, who should receive the money?

Conducting the Exercise

1. Divide the students into a number of groups depending on class size. It is not important how many members there are in each group but try to keep them evenly spread.
2. Run through the PowerPoint presentation until you get to the 'The Decisions' slide. At this point, ask the students to debate the decision to be made for a number of minutes (at the discretion of the facilitator but we recommend a minimum of five minutes).
3. When the students have finished debating, ask them to vote for one of the five options and record the results on the separate PowerPoint presentation.
4. Move onto the next decision and repeat the process for the other decision: debate, vote and record.
5. When the groups have finished making their decisions and the votes have been recorded, show the participants the results and conduct the discussion segment of the exercise.

Notes on the Discussion

The results should form the basis of the discussion. Encourage the students to reflect on the options they chose. What does this say about their attitude to ownership? Does it show that they are more inclined to compete or co-operate? Were there differences in the options chosen between the groups? Challenge them by asking them to explain the rationale behind their votes.

Additional ideas

- Play around with the variables – change the age/status of the main characters e.g. would participants make different decisions if Morag was paid for her work? What if the two characters were children and the item in question was a bicycle?
- Ask participants to also vote as group, ensuring they reach a consensus. This will challenge participants to consider opinions and viewpoints different than their own.

