

Group Exercise

Topic

Co-operate to Succeed

Aim

This exercise intends to reveal and challenge participants' ability to be co-operative or competitive in response to their environment and situation. The participants are placed in a quasi-realistic business situation with the aim of eliciting certain behaviours and attitudes from particular groups.

Pedagogy

This is a linear, group-based problem solving exercise that requires a range of multi-disciplinary skills to complete. Participants must employ analytical, debating and consensus building skills within their own group and conduct ongoing quantitative and qualitative assessments of the situation as the exercise progresses.

Learning Outcomes

- Critically analyse an organisational situation and be able to make an executive decision that affects the performance of a firm.
- Demonstrate an ability to co-operate effectively in groups.

Time & Materials

Time:

Approximately 45 - 60 minutes depending on how the length of time the facilitator allows for groups to make their decision each round.

Materials:

- Explanation of the rules document
- Worksheet used to record decisions

Scenario

The participants assume the role of departments in a fictitious company. The company is 12 weeks from the end of the financial year and is currently breaking even. The objective of the company is to make a profit by the end of the year. Each department needs to contribute to the achievement of this profit. There is a bonus structure in the company that rewards the department that earns the most profit with a bonus pot of £10,000. Every week the departments will choose one of the



two options available. Depending on their choices, the company will make profit across the board, break even or lose money each week.

Rules

Department Decisions	The Individual Departments Performance
4 Blacks	Each department wins £1,000
3 Blacks 1 Red	Each ' Black ' department loses £1,000 Each ' Red ' department gains £3,000
2 Blacks 2 Reds	Each ' Black ' department loses £2,000 Each ' Red ' department gains £2,000
1 Black 3 Reds	Each ' Black ' department loses £3,000 Each ' Red ' department gains £1,000
All Reds	Each department loses £1,000

Conducting the Exercise

1. Divide the students into four groups (or more depending on the number of participants). Each group represents a department in the company.
2. Allow the groups to discuss their decision for the first week for a short while (2 or 3 minutes). Go around to each group and ask them their decision. Record the decision and repeat for the other groups.
3. Once each group has made a decision, announce the results of the week to all of the groups (e.g. 2 Black, 2 Red), record the results for each group and the company as a whole (Facilitator Powerpoint), and begin the next week.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until you reach the end of the fourth week. Ask each group to appoint a representative and allow each representative to discuss the state of the company. Allow 2 – 3 minutes before sending them back to their groups.
5. The week after representative meetings is a bonus round where all of the scores are multiplied (see worksheet).
6. Repeat steps 2 – 4 until the end of week 12.
7. Announce the results of the exercise, with the decisions made by each group and the amount of profit or loss of the company.
8. Conclude the exercise by conducting a short discussion on the importance of co-operation and shared goals/objectives for organisational success.



Additional ideas

- The length of the game could be made shorter or longer.
- Start the game with the company in debt or else with a surplus.
- Introduce the possibility of bankruptcy, resulting in the loss of everyone's job.
- Enable profitable departments to invest some of their capital in other departments in order to increase the profit for the company.

