

“We’re all in the same boat, after all...”

Mini game about interdepartmental coordination

FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS

This optional exercise focuses on the complexity and risks arising from insufficient interdepartmental coordination in change processes.

The exercise fits in once gears and leadership actions have been chosen and buses and pieces have been moved in phase 2. This exercise has to be played with points.

TRAINING TARGETS:

The exercise can be used for supporting the following training targets:

- Participants have a better view of the organization as a whole.
- Discussing the consequences of having isolated units and personal performance targets when it would be better if the organization coordinated the change.
- Discussing the necessity and complexity of interdepartmental coordination in change processes. The exercise can also be used as an opportunity to discuss the leadership culture in relation to managerial teamwork.

The exercise also provides an opportunity to observe and give feedback on natural leadership roles: who takes charge and tries to establish overall coordination when responsibility is not delegated? Why is it that some people are listened to, while others are not?

THE EXERCISE IN A NUTSHELL:

The exercise takes place after both gear and action cards have been played in round two, but before points are counted. The aim of this exercise is that the teams must be able to get themselves in the same gear to the best of their ability. Being in the same gear symbolizes that the change process is taking place at a coordinated pace.

In the exercise, each team sacrifices accumulated points to move their bus backward or forward. This is done by playing coordination cards that either move their own buses or other teams' buses. Points are awarded if this moves the team's bus level with other buses. The aim is to win more points by being aligned than are lost by moving. The teams have two rounds in which to play their cards – if they are not sufficiently successful in coordinating their efforts the first time, they can choose to use more resources trying again.

Notes for facilitating the exercise:

As a facilitator you should be aware that the first negotiation process (leading up to the first time the participants play their cards) lasts the longest and is very demanding for the participants. In this process it is important for you, as the consultant, to be patient and not intervene prematurely. The exercise can become chaotic and cause frustration, but it will only work when the participants take personal responsibility for establishing a general perspective on the situation and establishing interdepartmental coordination.

In the second round of negotiations, the participants can coordinate the aspects they failed to accomplish the first time.



MATERIALS AND PREPARATION:

Print and cut out a complete set of cards for the coordination exercise. It may be a good idea to use thick paper or laminate the cards before cutting them out, if you want to reuse them. Each team has one set of cards. The cards are marked with colors and the colors should match the teams' colors. Read the cards.

The file you need to print out is called:
allinthesameboat_ENG.pdf

In addition to this, you need to get a stack of tokens or similar (purchased in toy stores and some bookstores). Award points to each team corresponding to the number of points each team has won in the game so far (not including the current phase).

They can use these point counters for trading. Prepare some questions for the final recap.

HOW TO RUN THE EXERCISE:

Explain to the participants the purpose of the exercise and what they can gain from it:

"The executive management suddenly issues a statement: it has come to their attention that the implementation process is not occurring at a coordinated pace. At the same time, the company has landed a new key customer. In order to run this new customer in satisfactorily, it is important that the company's departments are at the same point in the change process."

Before you put the participants to work assessing their situation, explain the rules:

"Move your buses by playing the cards that will be handed out shortly. Once the task is over, you will be awarded five extra points for each of the other departments' buses that are in the same gear as yours. However, since it also costs points to brake or accelerate, it costs points to play the cards. Some of the cards affect the other teams, so you may be forced to work together and communicate across the teams."

Next, follow the steps listed below:

1. Overview: Ask the teams to assess their department's position on the road and agree on a goal for where they want their department to be by the end of the exercise.

Give the participants a few minutes to consider and discuss their situation.

2. Instructions: Explain the following to the teams:
"This task consists of playing cards in two rounds. If you fail to achieve your goal the first time round, you will get another chance. The price of playing a card is specified on the card and it will be deducted from the points you won in round one. It is possible to play more than one card at the same time.

Obviously you are welcome to negotiate with the other teams, but there is no rule requiring you to keep the agreements you make. The effect of each card is described on that card."

Hand out the cards to the teams. Give each team a stack of tokens equivalent to the number of points the team had won by the end of Phase 1.

Explain: *"You can either use the tokens to pay for your actions or transfer them to the other teams as part of the negotiations."*

3. First round of negotiations: Once the participants have familiarized themselves with the cards, you can encourage them to start negotiating. Tell them, *"You don't have to keep to the agreements you make with the other teams, either in terms of the actions you want to play or in terms of the points transferred between the teams. But remember: there are two rounds of negotiations, and trust could be important for success."*

Give the participants a time frame for their negotiations,

15 to 20 minutes for example.

NB: the exercise works best if participants jointly agree on a clear goal for the team, designate a negotiator, and give him/her a mandate. This conclusion can be gently encouraged by the facilitator, if they do not reach it themselves.

4. Instructions for the countdown procedure.

When time is up, or when the teams have decided on their actions, explain the following: *"Shortly I will start counting down from ten. When I reach zero, one person from each team has to hold up the negotiating cards your team is playing. If no cards are held up in the air by the time we reach zero, no cards will be played by that team. If you want to transfer points to a different team, write down the amount and recipient on a piece of paper and hold it up in the*

air. If no piece of paper is held up in the air, no points will be transferred, even if your team might have promised something else. Of course it is possible both to transfer points and play cards on table."

Once the participants have written amounts on pieces of paper and taken out their cards, start the countdown. After this, there is no turning back.

5. Payment: Ask the participants to turn in the points they have used in playing the cards and the cards they have played to you. Ask them to turn in the tokens to the others, as they have written on their pieces of paper. Collect the cards.

6. Move buses: Next, move the buses according to the instructions on the cards. Remember that the "Coordinated joint effort" card will only work if at least 3 out of 4 teams have played the card.

NB: if a bus backs over one or more of its own employee pieces standing on the roadway, these will be picked up by the bus.

7. Second round of negotiations. Give the participants the following instructions: *"You now have a maximum of ten minutes to study the results of your coordinated actions and negotiate the next round. Obviously, you don't have to play any cards if you are satisfied with your position."*

Keep an eye on the time and warn them a few minutes before you want their decision.

8. Countdown: Repeat the countdown. Ask the participants to hold up their pieces of paper and the cards they have chosen. Collect the cards and pieces of paper once again and move the buses. Ask the participants to pay for their actions and to hand over the points to the other teams, as written down on their pieces of paper.

9. Count up the points: Finally, count up each team's total points based on the following parameters:

- Points for the final position of the bus, as if it was a normal round.
- Penalty points for employees who are in resistance positions, as in a normal round.

- Each group which is in the same gear as other groups is awarded 5 points for each "cohort" with the team in question.
- Ask the teams to count how many counters they have left of the point counters they were issued.

10. Recap discussion: After the exercise, a number of different types of recap are possible. One method involves gathering the participants around the game board and using the position on the board as a starting point.

Some questions for inspiration:

- What similarities can you see between your actions in the exercise and the way we carry out interdepartmental coordination processes in major changes?
- What differences can you see?
- On the basis of which success criteria are you measured as managers in these processes?
- Do you have any examples of coordination processes that worked well?
- How do you explain this?
- Do you have any examples of coordination processes that worked out not so well?
- How do you explain this?