









t-ORG – Understanding Organisations – management game

- **Authors:** Teolin Codreanu
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- **Aims:** To provide an overview of the major concepts on Organisational Management: Organisational Structures, Leadership, Organisational Communication Behavior, Team work and groups work, Decision Making, Tasks and Roles in organisations. NOTE: The objectives are highly adaptable through debriefing and rules)
- **Group:** 15-30 (one –two facilitators); 30-60 (2 facilitators) or 60-80 (4 facilitators)
- **Material needed:** paper (paper used on one side is also suitable), pens (one/participant), 3 decks of cards (identical) for groups up to 30 participants, or 6 decks of cards for groups up to 80 participants. Large room with movable chairs, one chair per participant.
- **Duration:** 2 sessions of 75 minutes with a 15 minutes break = 160 minutes (min 130 - max 215)
- **Learning objectives:** by the end of this game the participants will:
 - Have an overview of an overview of the major concepts on Organisational Management: Organisational Structures, Leadership, Organisational Communication Behavior, Team work and groups work, Decision Making, Tasks and Roles in organisations. NOTE: The objectives are highly adaptable through debriefing and rules)
 - Acknowledge the importance of leadership, team work and proper communication within an organization
 - Understand the types of structures one organization can have and the advantages and disadvantages of each
 - Experiment communication, leadership, team and groupwork, decision making in all the organizational structures
- **Description:**
 - This is a complex management game with four components, originally based on the Terrence/Deal model of organizational structures adapted to fit various organizations' needs. The game has 4 components/phases which can happen in a succession (for a group of 15-30 participants) or in parallel (for groups of 60-80 participants), or both in parallel and succession (2+2) for groups sized 30-60.
 - The debriefings and the learning objectives can be adapted to your own needs. Also the rules of the game.
 - STEPS:
 1. **Preparation:** Prepare the room as specified in Game 1 ("the inner circle") and the cards: one pair per participant. One pair means all four colors of a number     : You will have to merge 2 decks of cards minimum, as you will have

more than 13 participants. For example, if you have 18 participants, use numbers 1-9 from 2 decks. This means you will have each card twice.

2. **Introduction:** learning objective, setting the expectations regarding duration.
 3. **Setting the game:** Set it up as an individual game, a competition where the best man wins. Set up a flipchart/board/scorecard where you will mark who wins each game. There are 4 games; therefore you can win a maximum of 4 points.
 4. **Setting the ground rules:**
 - Each player receives 4 cards. If more than 3 are similar from the very beginning, they have to announce and change them.
 - To win, one must gather all four cards of the same number, all 4 colors    .
 - You get different cards by exchanging with other people
 5. **Introducing each Game:** rules, play, debriefing, conclusions – see below.
 6. **15 minutes break after the 2nd round**
 7. **Conclude the scoreboard:** there are no winners or losers, instead the game shows behaviors in an organization. There are participants who are task-oriented, and will earn more games. There are participants who are people oriented, and will earn less points, as they will value more team work and relations.
 8. **Conclusions and evaluation:** Conclude and compare the advantages/disadvantages of the 4 types of organisations. Conclude on differences in organizational communication, group and team behavior, leadership, the 7 types of decision making, negotiation, conflict, cooperation in a team.
- **Credits:** This game was constructed based on general theories of organizational management, especially Henry Mintzberg's classification of organizations (1979, *The Structuring of Organizations: A Synthesis of the Research*; 1983, *Structure in fives: Designing Effective Organizations*), simplified for the purpose of this game, and typical card based management games.

The Social network – RESOURCE SHARING STRUCTURE / NETWORK

ROOM SETTING: Empty room, no chairs or tables, one flipchart. On the flipchart, draw a network either by putting all the names of the participants and connecting them at random (2-4 connections each).

A fancier way of making the network is with a separate deck of cards. Stick consecutive cards on the flipchart, as shown in the picture, and distribute one extra card as identity card (ID card), WHICH CANNOT BE USED in the game. Use a different deck of cards (different color or size) so that the ID cards will not be mixed with the playing cards. For example, If a player's ID card is 3, s/he can negotiate with 2, 10, 6 & 4, as you can see in the picture (zoom in)

SPECIFIC RULES: Communication is verbal. You can negotiate and exchange cards. You cannot show your cards. You can **only** negotiate with the people you are connected. The game will last exactly 3 minutes.

At the end of the game, mark the winners on the score board.

DURATION: 20 (min 18 - max 28)

Game: 3 minutes

Setting the rules: 5 minutes,

Debriefing: 15 minutes

Conclusions: 5 minutes

DEBRIEFING DIRECTIONS:

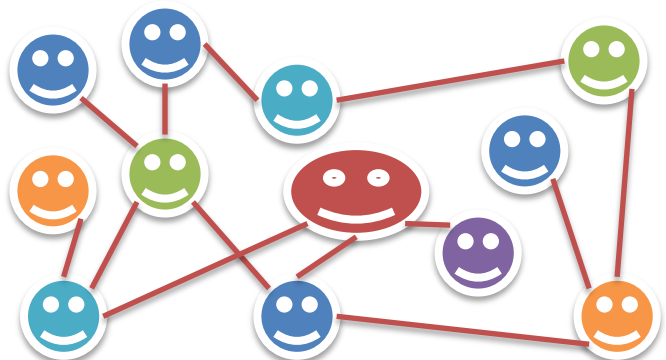
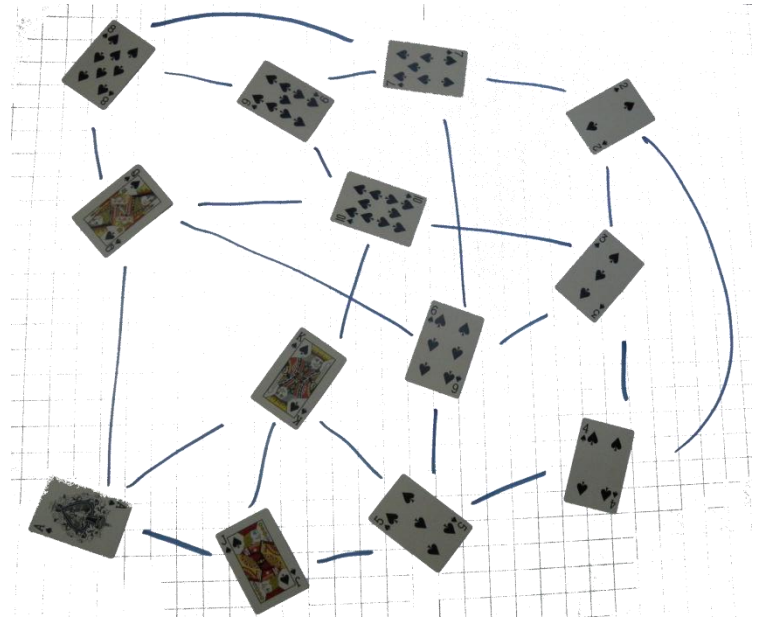
– **conflict, competition, equality, negotiations, networking.** Key questions: what did you do after you won? Did you realize you are interrupting a network? Did you care about other people chance to win? Did you ask anyone to ask further for the cards you needed?

CONCLUSIONS:


give examples of Network organizations - e.g. trainers, consultants, lawyers, accountants etc who decide to share a common office and resources. All are equal, each knows some members directly, none all; one person will chair the network (elected or rotated)

Advantages: equality, resources sharing, information sharing, skill pooling

Disadvantages: Hard to steer, chaotic, divided, might break up into smaller networks if there are more than 12-21 members



The Inner Circles - HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE / PYRAMID

ROOM SETTING: The room must be set in advance to look like the image below. This is an example of a game with 18 participants. Each is a chair  18 participants will sit. The lines are imaginary, just for the trainer to know. To the participants it must appear like one chair in the middle and two concentric circles around it. In the introduction refer to the setting of chairs as of “the 3 circles”.

SPECIFIC RULES: The participants cannot speak. They can only communicate through written notes (make sure participants receive pen and paper which they can tear into smaller pieces of paper. No body language, no signs, no speaking, only written messages, transferred by hand on the communication lines. Each participant can only send/receive notes and cards from the participants s/he is connected with in the picture above. Make sure you explain to each participant which are his/her connections, and make sure not to suggest that it looks like a hierarchy, or that there might be a leader in the middle or anything like that. At the end of the game, mark the winners on the score board.



DURATION: 55 min (min 35 – max 70)

Game: The game stops after approximately 15 minutes. By this time 3-5 people should have won the game. If less than 3 players won, let the game flow for 5 extra minutes.

Setting the rules: 5 minutes

Debriefing: 15-30 minutes

Conclusions: 10-15 minutes

DEBRIEFING DIRECTIONS:

1 – **communication** – how did the notes flow?, what were the problems?, why did you win/lose?, why do you have so many/few notes? How did you feel when you were overwhelmed by the sheer number of messages/you were ignored or did not receive an answer? what did you do after you won?

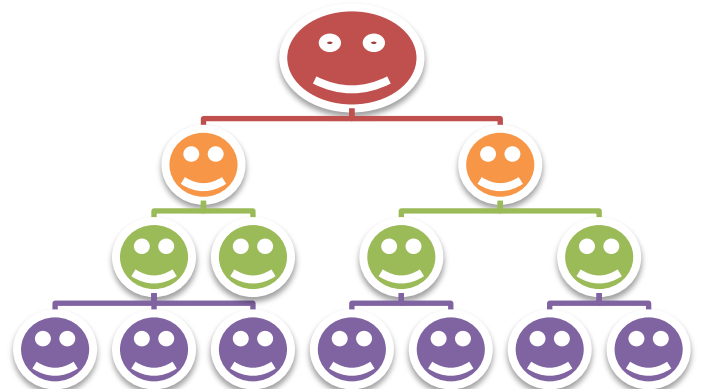
2 – **leadership** – who was responsible for you winning or losing? Did you depend on anyone? Were any people more important than the others? – (NOTE: words like team, leader should pop up by now), Was there any strategy?, who should have done what?

NOTES: the game can be debriefed on team work, motivation, competition versus cooperation etc when used separately or in other context. In the 4 structures game, do not debrief on anything else, as it will become too long, boring, irrelevant.

CONCLUSIONS: Introduce the organizational structure: hierarchy / pyramid; raise awareness of the complexity of organizational communication and leadership.

Advantages: allows large organisations, has clear rules and roles.

Disadvantages: slow communication, slow reactions, bureaucracy



The Project - BIDIMENSIONAL STRUCTURE / MATRIX

ROOM SETTING:

Place the chairs in a matrix formation. Example, for 18 participants place 4 rows of 5 chairs. This means that two random chairs will remain empty. The empty chairs should not be adjacent.

SPECIFIC RULES:

You cannot show your cards or tell what cards you have. You can ONLY ask for cards and offer whatever you do not need in exchange. You can speak directly with all the people in the group. There will be two phases, each of 2 minutes:

Phase one, each row will form a group and get together either outside of the room or outside the chairs zone. People will exchange cards inside the row groups. After 3 minutes, at the facilitator's signal, people return to their original seats.

Phase two, each line will form a group and get together either outside of the room or outside the chairs zone. People will exchange cards inside the line groups. After 3 minutes, at the facilitator's signal, people return to their original seats.

Mark the winners on the score board.

DURATION: 25 minutes (min 20- max30)

Game: 6+1 minutes

Setting the rules: 5 minutes,

Debriefing: 5-10 minutes

Conclusions: 5-10 minutes

DEBRIEFING DIRECTIONS:

1 – team - why did you win/lose? who was responsible for you winning or losing? Did you depend on anyone? Were any people more important than the others? what were the communication problems?

2 – structure – does this resemble an organization? Examples? What were the advantages/disadvantages?

CONCLUSIONS:

Introduce the matrix / project based organization. Typical organisations are classic ones, with departments (HR, PR, IT etc) that started doing projects which need interdepartmental teams.

Advantages: allows large organisations, has clear but complex rules and roles, can deal with change easier, can manage projects.

Disadvantages: average communication, average, reactions, double subordination



The Sun - SOLAR STRUCTURE / RADIAL

ROOM SETTING:

A circle of chairs.

SPECIFIC RULES:

There are 2 phases of the game. Explain all the rules in the beginning.

Phase one: all players can talk to all everyone, show their cards, NOT EXCHANGE, cannot stand up, only seated. They will have to choose a strategy for the second phase so that as many players as possible can win. They will have to choose a leader.

Phase two. The leader moves his/her chair in the middle of the circle. Players can no longer speak to each other, ONLY to the leader, and NOT in the same time. The players can give or ask cards from the leader. They can only exchange one card at a time.

Mark the winners on the score board.

DURATION: 45 min (min 40 – max 70)

Game: Phase one lasts 10 minutes. (NOTE for the facilitator: The facilitator should give bonus 5 minutes in the case the group has not reached a strategy in 10 minutes). Phase two: 3 minutes

Setting the rules: 5 minutes

Debriefing: 15-30 minutes

Conclusions: 10-20 minutes

DEBRIEFING DIRECTIONS:

- 1- **Decision making** – how did you reach a decision as a group? (use this to conclude on the seven types of decision making)
- 2- **Team work & Leadership** – how did you choose the leader? How did you work as a group? Were you a team?

CONCLUSIONS:

Introduce the solar organization. Typical examples include small organisations centered on one expert/authority/celebrity/leader. Everyone is in direct connection to him/her.

Advantages: the fastest reacting organization – it has the same speed of reaction as its leader, the most united organization, has a clear vision, direction, leadership

Disadvantages: This organization is as good as its leader, motivation is very unilateral, it cannot grow beyond 12-21 people

