

The Power of Business Board Simulations



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What is a business board simulation?

A business board simulation is an interactive learning tool for people development in a corporate environment. The simulation depicts a company in 3-D on a (modular) game board. The entire company value chain with all relevant elements is visualized with symbols, game pieces and coins:



- **Ressources and assets:** personnel, machines, money...
- **Corporate structure:** business units, departments
- **Processes:** elements along the supply chain and their links
- **Stakeholders:** customers, suppliers, shareholders

The simulation is run as an in-person course, led by one or more facilitators. Participants are actively involved. In the simulation game, they take on management tasks such as production manager, logistics manager, marketing manager or finance manager. As a team, they run the business, develop strategies, make decisions, implement them, analyze and measure the impact on the business results.

How does a board simulation look like?



Elements of a business board simulation:

- Game board with business units, like production, operations, finance, administration
- Cards – demand, supplies, orders
- Assets, represented by their value (coins)
- Money in cash and on the bank account
- Personnel units
- Participant manual and work sheets

How does it work?

1. Participants take on roles with responsibility for an area, e.g. production, finance, sales, etc.

3. They then lead the company through several simulation cycles (business years) and prepare annual financial statements.

5. They generate a strategy and ideas on how to improve business results.


7. They implement the measures, observe and analyze the effects and present their results. They get feedback from the facilitator and from peers.



2. In the introductory round, they get to know the business (business model, units, processes), coached by the facilitator.

4. They measure business success with key performance indicators (KPIs)

6. They discuss measures and the expected impact with the facilitator and get to know the conditions for implementation.

 They record key take-aways and note individual action plans for the workplace.

What is the format?

- Facilitator-led in-person (face-to-face) training
- 1 to 3 days
- 12 to 15 participants with 1 facilitator
- Competing teams of 3 to 6 people
- Several simulated business years
- Blend of simulation cycles, analysis, facilitator inputs, coached group work, team presentations
- Learning transfer with recording of key take-aways and individual action plans for the workplace.



What can it be used for?



Business acumen

- Build and refresh business economics and financial knowledge
- Ideal for non-finance people from technical, IT, marketing, engineering, production, trainees...



Strategy

- Communicate strategy
- Enable and motivate for strategy implementation
- Build knowhow to lead by key performance indicators



Transformation

- Make transformation tangible
- Communicate goals
- Support re-organisation and change
- Foster entrepreneurial thinking and acting

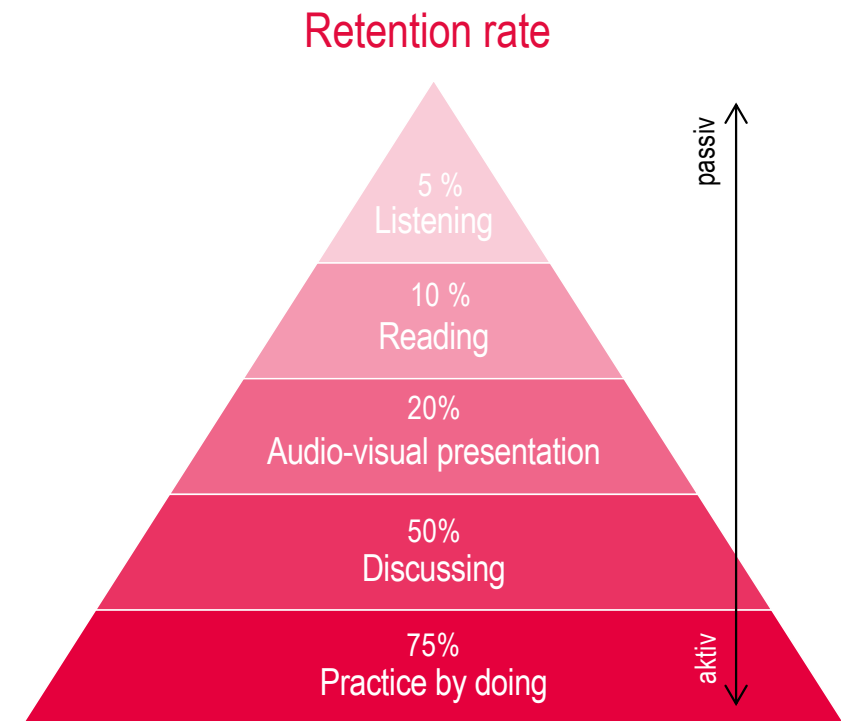


Gamification

- Make personnel and management development programs interactive and fun, and thus attractive

Why is the methodology so powerful?

- Playful experiential learning follows the natural learning process.
- It is multi-sensory learning by touching, hearing, seeing, discovering, understanding and doing.
- Didactically effective structure through the ABC method (Action before Content): first the learning experience, then theoretical input and feedback.
- It follows the scaffolding approach, raising complexity from cycle to cycle.
- Pull learning instead of push learning: knowledge and experience of the participants are included.
- It is teamwork, communication and collaboration.
- Participants work on and overcome realistic challenges of the corporate business life.
- Ideas and initiatives can be tested in a risk-free environment.



Source: NTL Institute of Applied Behavioral Science

What are the advantages of the methodology?



Transparency and long-term impact

- Complex content becomes tangible and easy to understand.
- No black box, all structures and processes are transparent.
- Participants see the big picture of the simulated company at all times.
- Content is anchored and remembered long-term by interactivity and learning by doing.



Fostering teamwork and team cohesion

- Participants interact with people instead of crunching numbers on a PC screen.
- The approach strengthens team spirit and appreciation within the team.
- Participants practice communication and cooperation across units, breaking through silo barriers
- Action and fun combine complex content with a positive team experience.

What is the impact?



Support corporate strategy and enable implementation

- Understand the business: business model, success factors, challenges.
- Understand the strategy and how to implement it in the own area of responsibility.
- Master the levers to reach expected results and performance indicators.
- Make fact-based well founded business decisions, confidently and in line with corporate strategy.



Personal development and organisational development

- Better individual performance, better team performance.
- Better communication and cooperation, also across departments.
- Cultural change: less fear of mistakes, more courage to embrace transformation.
- More confidence, motivation and energy to put learnings into action.

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