

POWER OF LEADERSHIP

Bring reality and context into your leadership training

Description: *The Power of Leadership* is a business simulation that helps participants understand the challenges they face when they are given power to accomplish a task. Even though power is a taboo topic for many people, it is what sets the leader apart from others in the organization. Studies show that effective leaders understand and have a need to have power. More important they know how to use it to accomplish their goals. But using power effectively is not an easy task. There are many challenges that, if not met, will create disastrous results for individuals and the organization.

This simulation teaches leaders how to use power to resolve conflicts, communicate effectively, solve problems, and manage positive change in the corporate culture. It helps participants understand why the decisions, behavior, and attitudes of leaders are often misperceived by their followers.

It helps participants who are power averse understand what they must do to improve their effectiveness and helps those who are power prone understand what discipline they must employ to use their power effectively.

Key Challenges: *The Power of Leadership* brings reality and context into the teaching of leadership. It's easy to tell a group that a leader should do this or do that. What's hard is leading under the types of pressure every leader faces. For example, how do you lead people when individuals or groups:

- are jealously competing for scarce resources?
- are resisting changes designed to make the organization more effective?
- are forming unhealthy coalitions based on self-interest and emotion without considering the needs of the organization?
- don't trust the leaders to use their power to make the best decisions for them or the organization?
- are unable to see the organization as a system?

Who is it for?

The simulation is ideal for:

- New managers and supervisors.
- Technical people who have been promoted into leadership positions without managerial training.
- Managers who have lost their motivation to be effective leaders.
- Any person who needs to know how to resolve conflicts, develop higher order thinking skills, develop one's personal leadership style, understand which behavior and attitudes toward power make him or her more or less effective.
- Participants who are *power averse* and need to understand what behavior changes are necessary to use power effectively.
- Participants who are *power prone* and need to understand the pitfalls of using power and, more important, how to use power effectively.
- Participants who need to understand that leadership requires much more than just being nice to people or working hard to achieve personal goals.

How it works:

The simulation is conducted in rounds and is governed by two types of rules; *inherited rules* and *rules of nature*. At the end of each round, participants have a chance to change the inherited rules if they desire. The rules of nature are the permanent rules that govern the simulation and cannot be changed by the group.

To accomplish the tasks in the simulation, participants must:

- Earn individual and group points by trading. Based on the points they earned during trading, they are divided into three groups; Top Performers, Middlers, and Greemers.
- Meet in groups and make plans for the rule-making session.
- Conduct the rule-making session.

To accomplish these tasks successfully they must:

- Use power effectively.
- Develop trust under difficult circumstances.
- Resolve conflicts between individuals and groups.
- Negotiate for resources.
- Communicate.
- Establish roles and goals.
- Use higher order thinking to develop strategies and analyze the organization as a system.
- Use superordinate goals to reorder priorities.
- Establish a vision for the organization.

- Understand how power affects the perception of a leader's message.

What happens as a result of these activities?

- Conflict develops between the Middlers, Greemers, and the Top Performers over scarce resources and the rules governing the simulation.
- Middlers and Greemers discover that the Top Performers have the power to make the rules for the simulation. The Middlers and Greemers must decide how or whether they are going to participate.
- Top Performers realize that they can't progress without the cooperation of the Middlers and the Greemers, so they often try to give the power away, i.e., escape the responsibility of being leaders, or become patronizing and tell the Middlers and Greemers, "We're going to give this to you. Aren't you happy?"
- Eventually all of the participants understand, "We're all in this together." They then identify the things they can't change and try to change the things they can.
- They are then challenged to change the organization in ways that create a healthy productive work culture.
- The experience is debriefed with the goal of making the learning points described below.

Learning Points:

As a result of the simulation, managers and employees learn:

- How to use superordinate goals to overcome conflict among groups.
- How to communicate a vision of the organization that will make it possible for all groups to work effectively together toward a common goal.
- How the power prone can develop a participative style of management.
- How those who are power averse can use power effectively.
- How leaders can use higher order thinking skills to analyze and fix their organization.

It will help the participants understand:

- The impact that a top-down management style has on the morale, effectiveness, and productivity of everyone in the organization.
- The way groups in the organization respond to and view the "same" situation differently.
- The importance of developing the special communication skills required of a leader.
- The importance of knowing how to effectively deal with the complaints and concerns of the people they are leading.

- How the structure and practices of the organization affect the employees both positively and negatively.
- How important it is for a leader to constantly be evaluating the practices of the work culture and seeking ways to improve them.
- The importance of viewing the leaders' behavior through the eyes of the various stakeholders.
- The skills they need to develop to become a more effective leader.

Logistics:

A three winged board is used to simulate an office environment. It's a board that sits on a 6-foot round table. The three wings create three separate areas similar to cubicle walls. The Top Performers sit behind one set of barriers, the Middlers behind another, and the Greemers behind another. They cannot communicate with one another except by written messages passed through a hole in the barrier. The board is meant to represent the barriers to communication that exist in an organization.

The simulation takes 3-4 hours to run, including the debrief. The *Power of Leadership* is designed for groups of 10 to 25 participants.