

Letters To The Editor

From Charlie Clark . . .

A NEW PLANNING AND ORGANIZING
BUSINESS GAME (PO)

Source of idea:

1. James Allen, Management Education Specialist
AT & T
195 Broadway
New York, New York

Jim and I were roommates at Silver Bay one summer. He has developed many exciting new methods. This is one of them. He told me he got this from the Educational Testing Service, 20 Nassau Street, Princeton, New Jersey.

2. They may still be able to send you a copy of their report on the Russell Sage Social Relations Test. This was reprinted in 1959 in the Journal of Experimental Education. The inventor of this technique is:

Dr. Dora E. Damrin
Assistant Professor in Research
College of Education
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois

3. Dr. Damrin worked out the method using Lok-A-Bloks. These are available in sets of 72 pieces at \$4.32 plus postage from:

Mr. Douglas Hill, President
Hillcraft Industries, Inc.
Traverse City, Michigan

Mr. Hill wrote me that the blocks have been used by "IBM, Chrysler, Arabian-American Oil Company, numerous schools and colleges" but I have no reports on their current use.

4. I had taken a course in Work Simplification in which we used the ordinary 30 hole pegboard. This gave me the idea to try Dr. Damrin's procedures with the pegboards instead of the blocks. It takes less time and seemed to result in similar learnings. Our source of pegboards and pegs for \$5.25 including postage is:

Slencil Company
Orange
Massachusetts

I suggest you experiment—try it with the pegboards and the blocks to find out which one gives you the best results. I have used the pegs first at the start of a program using the blocks later to see if anything has been learned. You will think of other uses. This description covers only the use of pegs as the other is rather complicated to describe and you can read about it in the ETS manual.

Apparatus used

1 standard 30 hole pegboard
30 standard pegs
1 stop-watch
1 8½" x 11" sheet of paper for each player
1 table

Rules for Management Laboratory Exercise PO (Planning and Organizing)

1. Any number of players up to 30. 12 to 20 seems best.

2. Divide up the pegs among the players. Some will have more than others if it divides up that way.

3. Object of game: Take as long as you want to plan the fastest way to in-

sert all the pegs upright in the holes. Time for planning doesn't count. The stop-watch will be started when someone in the group gives the signal that the planning period is over.

You may have to limit planning period to one hour to fit your time schedule and leave time for discussion. There is much frustration if you let a large group with many passive non-participants mill around for 90 minutes.

4. BASIC RULE: No one can release his pegs until the planning period is over and timing has started. Reason: little planning is needed if this rule is not followed. No trial periods.

5. You don't need to mention this unless asked but anyone can move anywhere in the room.

What happens?

I've done this more than 30 times. The most amazing things happen. Every group is different. Some people jump to their feet in efforts to assume leadership—some succeed, some fail. Some groups elect a leader. Some groups never officially select a leader but one emerges. A group dynamics class used to working together, finished planning in 25 minutes. One group was still arguing at the end of 2 hours!

Assembly time varies from 12 seconds down to 4 seconds. The latter is achieved when people huddle almost on top of one another and at the signal each releases his peg. Some turmoil as there are 30 holes.

What is learned?

1. I ask people to make a numbered list of what they learn. Typical comments:

- a. Complete *all* planning before start of project.
- b. Plan step by step to get right sequence.
- c. Too many leaders confuse matters.
- d. Do not speed up—take your time.
- e. Spread the delegation carefully.

2. This dramatic experience is a good discussion opener for insights into

- a. Authority
- b. Responsibility
- c. Decision making
- d. Controls
- e. Policies and procedures, etc.

3. Good discussion opener is to ask each to write down his list of the management tools missing in performing this task.

4. You can ask each to draw an organization chart for the group. Brings out other interesting points.

5. You can demonstrate planning efficiency by breaking up the large group and having smaller teams plan and then execute using the whole group. Or by having smaller groups plan and then execute themselves bringing in the element of pride and competition.

6. We have used the experience as a test question in pre-management classes. After the experience people check off their choice: This has applications to the work of—

- few managers
- many managers
- all managers

Then they write—"Why do you feel this way?" "Why do you disagree with the other two statements?" "Please de-

fend your position by referring to management principles and methods.”

Perhaps you have run across new methods in management development which you would like to share. At Boeing we are working on projects vital to our country, and whatever you exchange will be put to good use. We will share it with proper credit.

CHARLIE CLARK

Management Development Coordinator
Boeing Airplane Company
Organization 2-1000
Mail Stop 13-96
Seattle 24, Wash.

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Likes Raw Role Playing

I thought you might be interested in knowing that we here in Brown Shoe Company tried Robert Bott's "Role Playing in the Raw" meeting (December 1959 and January 1960 *Journals*) on experiencing and analyzing a poor conference. We had 16 of our assistant superintendents in for a week of conference leader training, and used this for our very first get together. It was

extremely effective, and I don't feel that there is any doubt but what it helped a great deal to get across the point that the little things that can so easily be taken for granted in a conference are very important.

I had a "stoolie" in the meeting, and some of the remarks he reported were as follows:

"I have a can of worms in the trunk of my car, and if this doesn't get any better in the next hour, I'm going fishing."

"It looks to me like the training department needs some training themselves."

"This is the damndest, messed-up mess I've ever seen."

"The least they could do was to turn on the lights to cut down the glare from outside."

I would like to state that personally the experience was very stimulating. It worked fine as an ice-breaker, and the next 4½ days of the conference were well received.

JOE R. LEDBETTER

Director of Supervisory Training
Brown Shoe Company
St. Louis, Missouri

Editor's Note: Joe adds that he knew all conferees personally.

ASTD News

Prybylski At TWA

Lawrence Prybylski, Jr., has been named Director-Personnel Development for Trans-World Airlines. Formerly a corporate training advisor for Socony Mobil Oil Company, Prybylski will make his headquarters in New York. At TWA Mr. Prybylski will develop and administer programs for the development of the airline's management level personnel. Recipient of bachelor

and master degrees from Northwestern University, he has been a lecturer at De Paul and New York Universities. He is a member of New York Metropolitan Chapter ASTD, American Psychological Association and the American Association of Industrial Editors. Larry has served as a member of the Garden City, N. Y. recreation commission and as a board member of the Nassau Council of Boy Scouts of America.