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Project report

Business game application for the training of customer orientated employees at Lufthansa Technik AG

Frank Wippermann, flow consulting gmbh

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Aerial-view experiencing of reality

Business games are in general computer based, are focused on economic topics, are based on standard simulations and are often applied as a separate training method. The following article shows an alternative use of a business game as in the case of the Lufthansa Technik AG (LHT) – developed as a customer specific board game on the topic of "internal organizational knowledge – understanding processes and coherences" within the framework of a three day training measure, aimed at the enhancement of international customer orientation. The main features of this article being the important decision and success factors on route to a successful PD-Project.

The customer service agent experiences a delay in the receipt of maintenance stats form production…. the customer becomes impatient. An airline asks what data was captured during the servicing of a turbine four years ago. The information is requested preferably yesterday ... hectic starts.

These are examples which on the one hand stress the internal processes and on the other hand signal the customer how his issue might be perceived. If these cases are addressed smoothly and rapidly side by side with the day-to-day routine, or do not even become issues, high customer satisfaction and enhanced productivity are the welcome effects.

From the cause to the business game as an instrument

As global leader for servicing, overhauling and repair of aircraft parts LHT receives impeccable feedback via the customers. To win over the customer even more is a day-to-day challenge for the employees. "Win your customer" (WYC) is also the name given to the personnel development plan of the LHT in which approximately 600 employees who are in

Lufthansa Technik
More mobility for the world

Lufthansa Technik AG (short "LHT") is the market leader in maintenance and overhauling of aircraft with locations in several countries the world over. In total the Lufthansa Technik Group currently owns 28 companies with more than 25.000 employees. She is a 100-percent-subsidiary of the German Lufthansa AG corporate. Based in Hamburg, further important locations in Germany are the hubs in Frankfurt am Main and Munich. Lufthansa Technik in Hamburg is the global leader in overhauling of normal airliners to luxurious private jets. Based on the smallest Airbus, the *A318 Elite* is fitted with VIP-interior at the Lufthansa Technik wharf.

constant customer contact (i.e. sales, customer service) as well as the central multipliers from the background process chains are qualified.

The departments for personnel development and organizational culture have seized the task given by the board to conceptualize a training measure to enhance the international customer orientation in concordance with the specialist areas and to implement it afterwards.

From this the Win Your Customer Qualification Program was devised which foresees the following basic steps: (a) A personal position fixing where the participant receives a 270° feedback on the three topics of the basic modules; (b) the basic module within the structure of a three-day training and (c) indi-vidual in-depth modules. The three topics of the basic modules are aligned with the results of the customer satisfaction survey (conducted by LHT every three years) and extensive employee questioning: (1) reflection of the own customer orientation approach, (2) expansion of the action competencies on "Intercultural Awareness" and (3) understanding and routing the coherences of internal processes.

On the topics 1 and 3 flow consulting developed the detailed concept, parti-cipant documentation as well as the documentation for the trainer in close alignment with LHT. On the topic of "internal processes" this includes the construction of a business game.

**Design and Construction – The hours of decisions**

The business game is to convey what influence internal processes have on customer satisfaction. It quickly becomes obvious, that submitting the business game to a reproduction of sample processes cannot be the goal. The processes in a first retrofit of an aircraft to a VIP-carrier are completely different to the routine inspection of an airliner. On the other hand, describing a sample process is also not desirable as the business game is not to be about reproducing the LHT processes in all of their detailed structure. The business game has to make those processes "re-livable" that are directly customer-relevant. With this focus the business game to develop must differ significant to the efficiency focused business games, without disregarding the aspect of economic efficiency.

Graph 1: Decision between adapted and customer-specific business game (example)
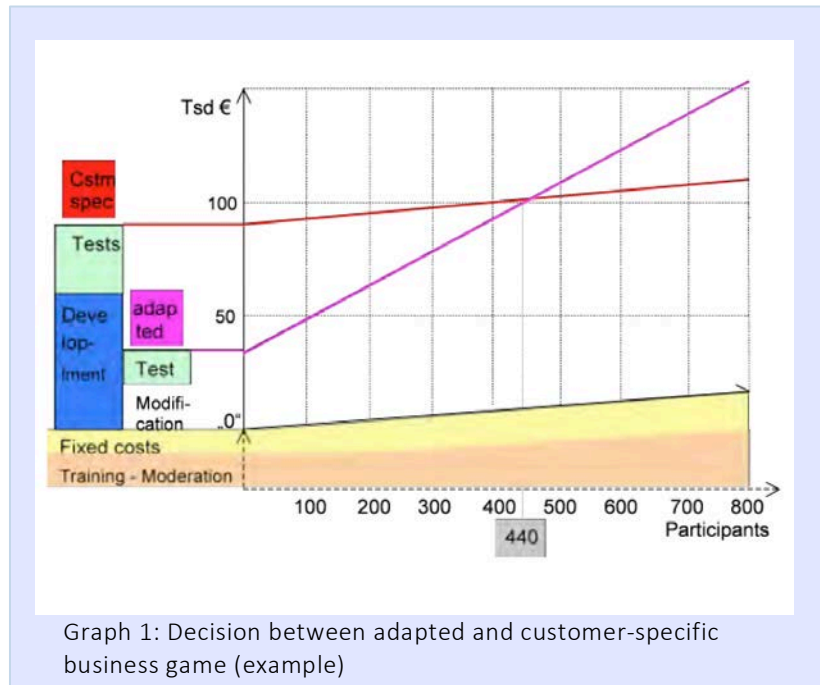
The most important reason for a customer specific business game lies in the specialized requirements, especially regarding the "customer-orientation". Generally the costs for a business game also play a role – the higher development costs for a customer specific business game and the licensing costs need to be weighed against a standard business game adapted to the requirements. Graph 1 shows an example of such an adaptation.

Next to the pure financial aspects there are two additional reasons for an organization specific business game which play a role. Firstly there is the image-factor in an individual (customer specific) business game towards the employees as well as the customer. (For LHT the latter is not relevant.)

Secondly there is the greatest possible exclusion of the imponderable during the development of a customer specific business game by the integration of internal and external specialists. In the LHT-example these are intern the quality-management by means of which the customer relevant processes are defined and brought into a evaluated context with the help of a sensitivity-analysis (see graph 2) as well as a representative Sounding Board as strategic control group and the PE-department with extensive experience in design and realization of training measures.
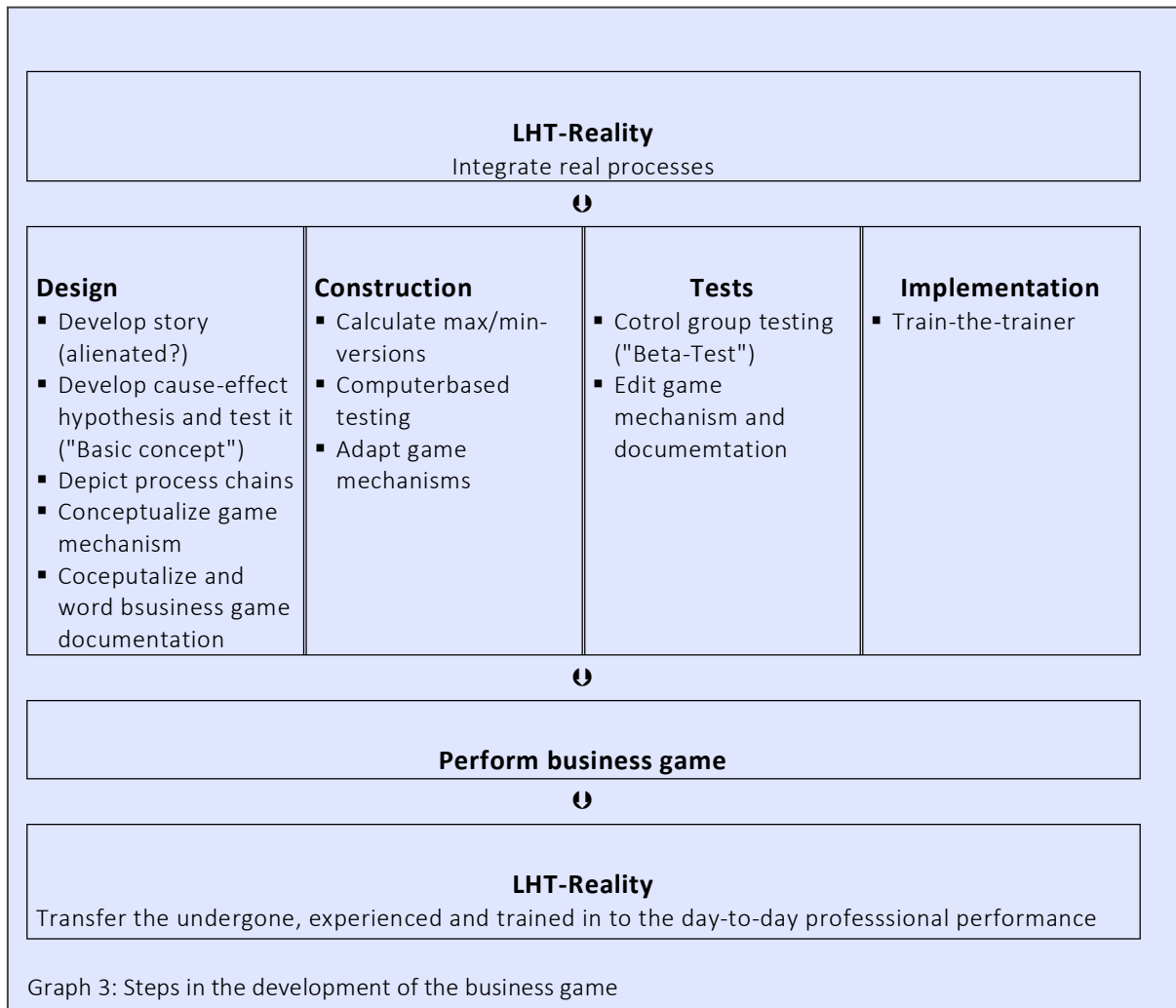
Graph 2: Sensitivity analysis (detail)
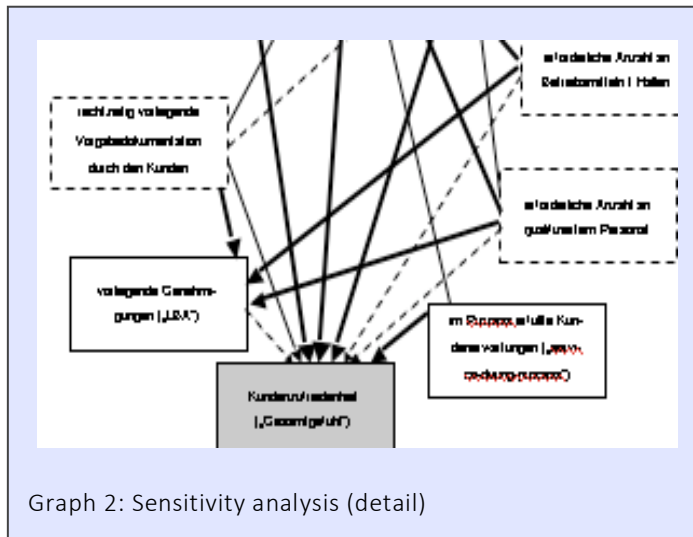
flow consulting moderated all steps as the role of an external partner, from process generation to business game trainer instruction, also conducting several analysis; for instance to identify the basic elements, developing the story or assessing complexity versus feasibility (graph 3). The complexity of the internal processes and their reciprocation with customer satisfaction was reduced to such a degree, that a pure board game emerged – hence the business game could be conducted without the aid of a computer. The participants were to be put into a position where they are able to capture coherences at a glance. In addition this gives them the option to experiment independent of the business game moderator and IT: "Each participant does not only know his way around his own workstation but has the ability to survey all other workstations and therefore have an overview of the full process; understanding is more rapidly developed than it would be the case in a more detailed and individual design of several business games."[1]

The board game is also to provide a more direct experience of the causal relations. It also quickly became apparent, that two results criteria would be decisive in this business game. These are in close relation to each other: a higher level of customer satisfaction offers improved access to lucrative proposals – and so more profit due to closely customized processing. However, profit and customer satisfaction are in no way summed up against each other in the final evaluation. At the end of the business game, the competing companies present their balance, made up of customer satisfaction and the profit key figures. In a fishbowl type moderated final round, the question of which company has won is discussed. By now the interrelation between (short-term) profit and (long-term) customer satisfaction have become apparent.

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[1] Rico Wojanowski and Michael Schenk. "The tailored business game". CD-ROM-Article in: Ulrich Blotz, Hrsg. Business games in professional education. Bielefeld: Bertelsmann 4th edition 2005

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LHT-Reality Integrate real processes			
Design ▪ Develop story (alienated?) ▪ Develop cause-effect hypothesis and test it ("Basic concept") ▪ Depict process chains ▪ Conceptualize game mechanism ▪ Coceputalize and word bsusiness game documentation	**Construction** ▪ Calculate max/min-versions ▪ Computerbased testing ▪ Adapt game mechanisms	**Tests** ▪ Cotrol group testing ("Beta-Test") ▪ Edit game mechanism and documemtation	**Implementation** ▪ Train-the-trainer

Perform business game

LHT-Reality
Transfer the undergone, experienced and trained in to the day-to-day professsional performance

Graph 3: Steps in the development of the business game

Tests – first encounters with the LHT-world

It is needless to say that before an LHT-control group tests the business game several other tests have been conducted - computer based grid modeling as well as testing with control groups outside of LHT. So the playability of the business game has been proven, the acceptance at LHT is yet to be determined. The LHT-control group consists of:

- Employees of the PD-department (who carry the product-responsibility, who assure the conformity of the business game with other PD-measures;
- Members of the Sounding Board, who's view is directed at the compatibility of the business game with the LHT-strategies and philosophies, and
- Prospective participants, who are concerned with the relevance of the business game for their work area.
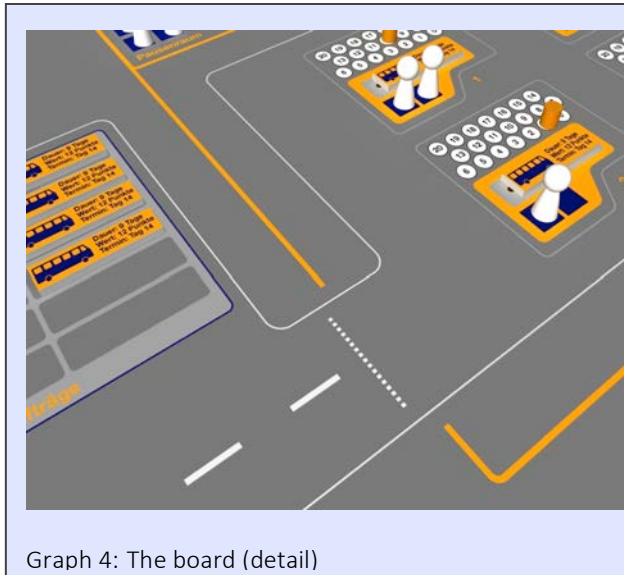
Graph 4: The board (detail)

The business game story is alienated: Instead of air-craft, busses are maintained; maintenance-intervals and -types are designed differently to the real LHT-world (see graph 4). This alienation serves to ease clearer concentration on the game itself. Discussions on how exactly the business game represents the LHT-world would disturb the process. The alienation however mustn't be so strong, that transfer to the world of the participants becomes impossible.

The mix of operational and strategic elements on which the business game is based find approval from everyone: optimization of capacities and workload management have direct impact on lead time and adherence to delivery dates which as an aftermath has consequences for customer satisfaction. More profitable projects can only be acquired after a minimum amount of customer satisfaction has been achieved – this represents the next delay of impact. Hence the business game is required to both enacting of short and also long term cycle simulations. Further the business game is based on successive complexity increase – a simple start is followed by increasing decision autonomy, after that the networking of decisions is increased. Goal conflicts and consequences of customer (dis-) satisfaction become more palpable from round to round (see graph 5).

Over and above this the complexity is increased by introduction of various roles per game group: the players of the business game companies in competition act in separated roles: sales, operational and support. There is also the option to re-enact some of the conflicts arising during the game in role-play at the end of each round.

Implementation – taking the game to the runway

First of all the trainers play through the business game themselves – own experience of the impact of their own decisions on customer satisfaction and the projects acquired in the next round are indispensable for understanding the game mechanisms on the one hand and on the other hand to be credible when conveying the reference to other WYC-program focal points. For example, these references come into play regarding increased customer expectations - at this point it would be possible to pick up the Kano-modell as discussed in

the key topic of "customer satisfaction", as per which yesterdays add-on-options become expected-options tomorrow and requirements the day after.

To moderate, the trainers are provided with a handbook for the business game with the concrete game stages as well as a manual with a step-by-step guidance for introduction-, reflection and transfer-steps (see graph 6).

During the "Train the Trainer" sessions technical questions on game structure, course and evaluation but more importantly, the understanding of ones own role and deployment of the business game are discussed extensively:

- The trainer role is that of a moderator, that means he does not act as a player, decision maker or hold a role i.e. that of a customer, superior or the external. So he can act definitely as a neutral leader, this vantage point gives him the credible position to trigger analysis and transfer rounds.
- The business game is supposed to achieve a culture of experiment. Authority in dealing with customer expectations is not achieved by constant comprehension of processes, but by dealing with unanticipated deviations. Experiencing, re-living and training these are the objectives of the business game.

Rd.	Educational objective	Reflection loop back to the LHT-Reality
1	Understanding in- and output processes of the business game	[none]
2	Concentrate the attention to the customer levers that are relevant to the personal business game role	Concentrate attention on the networking of the workstations
3	Recognizing extensive planning for enhanced customer satisfaction as necessary continuum	Generate willingness to take an interest in other LHT-workstations
4	Acknowledging customer wishes as „welcome interruptions": The customer lives ... and is interes-ted in us!"	Understand the meaning of customer expectations and satisfaction and anticipate the consequences of internal processes

Graph 5: Increasing complexity in business game and reflection

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Nr	Schritt		Methode		Lernziel	
35	3. Runde Planspiel		Planspiel (erste Freiheitsgrade und „Ereigniskar-ten")		Planung als „notwendiges Kontinuum" anerkennen Reflexionsschleife in die LHT-Realität: Bereitschaft wecken, sich mit anderen LHT-Arbeitsstationen (als der eigenen) zu beschäfti-gen	

Teilschritt	Aktion Trainer	Aktion TN	Vorbereitungsmaßnahme	Material	Dauer
35/1 Planspiel 3. Woche (Tag 15 – 21) spielen					
	• Ankündigen: Tag 15 – 21 werden koordiniert (erst wenn alle Gruppen ihre Strategie und „Vertriebspolitik" beschlossen haben, beginnt die 3. Woche) • Ankündigen: Zeit wird pro Tag begrenzt (max. ca. 5 – 7 Minuten) • Ereignisse und Sonderaufträge für die jeweiligen Tage entsprechend des Handbuchs nennen • Vorstellen des Gesamtergebnisses nach Abrechnung durch die Gruppen in Graph und Tabelle • Aufforderung, die Reflexionsfragen in den Gruppen zu beantworten: „Wie kommen wir in eine Balance von Kundenzufriedenheit und Ergebnis? Wo sind unsere Schwachstellen in Bezug auf Strategie, Abstimmung und interne Kommunikation?"				
		• Tage spielen • Arbeitsende mit Fähnchen ‚hoch' anzeigen • Zum Schluss in den Gruppen abrechnen • Jede Gruppe reflektiert vor der letzten ‚entscheidenden' Runde die 3. Runde • Die Reflexionsergebnisse auf Flipchart notieren. Die Ergebnisse werden noch nicht veröffentlicht.			
			Reflexionsfragen auf Flipchart		
				4 Flipcharts für die Gruppen	
					20 Minuten: Planung 40 Minuten: Durchführung 15 Minuten: Reflexion

Graph 6: Trainer-Manual (excerpt)

Experiences one year after deploying the business game

In the first twelve months of the WTC-program ca. 400 employees were submitted to the business game. On the surface busses were repaired, customers satisfied and internal processes optimized. But even during the reflection phases after each business game round and especially in the transfer step after each business game as well as the while experiencing the changed work-modes in practice, more understanding was created for

- the coherence of processes
- the management of interfaces to other work units
- the communication with the customer about their expectations and
- the "ahead of the game" prospecting customer requirements

"The participants playfully gain experiences, which can directly be implemented into internal processes and have immediate effect on customers. That makes for the high rate of transference from the game." (Manager)

"The business game works very well. It is very successful at teasing out the desired effect. The participants enjoy and are easily able to transfer from the business game to day-to-day business." (Project manager WTC-Program)

are necessary and equally important facets of the work units and that operational scope can and should be utilized. The three-step of experiencing in the business game, understanding the consequences of ones own business game actions and the training during the business game, lead to sensitizing the employees towards a more implicit customer orientated be-havior in their day-to-day routine.

Author

Frank Wippermann
Managing Director
flow consulting gmbh

Contact:

flow consulting gmbh
Spörckenstraße 89
D-29221 Celle
www.flow.de
mail@flow.de

Statement Lufthansa Technik AG

«Lufthansa Technik conducted a large-scale training measure titled "Win your Customer" for all employees (ca. 600) who have regular external customer contact. One of the central challenges of the concept development was to make all of the internal interfaces and coordination processes tangible and to illustrate their correlation with customer satisfaction. Therefore we decided on the "business game" method. The business game designed by flow consulting exactly meets our requirements and ensures a quick and lasting way of learning for our employees.» (2008)

Peter Schürholz, Projectmanager "Win your Customer", Personnel development and Company culture department, Lufthansa Technik AG

www.lufthansa-technik.com