

OMEGA SYSTEMS: A CHANGE MANAGEMENT EXERCISE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to provide an experiential learning activity that would fit well within the curriculum of a management course. Omega is a Video Game company that is a leader of innovation in that industry, but they consistently fail to get their new products out to market on time. Participants play executive roles or consultant roles. Consultants are divided into teams. Each consulting team has the opportunity to collect data from the executives by way of interviews. Then consultants develop a presentation with recommendations for organizational change. Participants must consider a wide variety of Organizational Development issues.

Key Words: Experiential Learning, Change Management, Organizational Development

INTRODUCTION

Educators have long advocated the use of more innovative forms of learning such as experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) and the use of microworlds (Senge, 1990). More recently, Macy and Neal (2002) describe an approach called the dialogic case method. They advocate taking a case and having participants act out the roles of the case. The Omega Systems activity is designed to allow participants the opportunity to play the roles of a case. Essentially, some participants are executives and others are consultants.

There are several advantages to having students act roles as opposed to simply reading a case and discussing it. First, the role-play of a case makes it less abstract and more concrete. Participants not only get an understanding of the issues of the case, they also get a better feel for how the issues play out. Second, interaction takes place in real time. It is one thing to read about organizational challenges and then make recommendations for change at your own pace; it quite another to create questions to acquire the data through interviews, create recommendations, present the recommendations and be prepared to answer questions. Finally, the role-play of a case provides a sense of realism. Cases are written with the vantage point of having a broad view of the organization. With a role-play of a case, each role has some unique and limited information, different priorities, different personality and interaction styles.

Although there is no actual Omega corporation, the issues present in the exercise are similar to struggles of existing video gaming companies. In addition, we designed the case to highlight challenges of most technical industries. The video gaming industry is simply an industry where the technology is easily understood by the role-play participants. The Omega Systems exercise can provide an interactive alternative to a case on organizational change. The goals are as follows: To provide an experience sensing organizational problems; to practice skills in organizational diagnosis and action planning; and to develop interview skills in a consultant-client setting.

FACILITATING THE EXERCISE

Successful facilitation of the exercise occurs in three phases: setup, process, and debrief. Each will be discussed along with the participant materials which are included in the appendix. To setup the exercise properly, the facilitator needs to consider the participants, the place, and preparation of materials. The exercise requires a minimum of 18 participants (9 executives and 3 teams of consultants with 3 members per team) and a maximum of 36 participants (9 executives and 3 teams of consultants with 9 members per team). If the group exceeds 36 participants, an option is to run 2 or more sessions of the exercise simultaneously.

In this exercise, there is a group of executives and three groups of consultants. Each group requires a separate room or at least a separate space. The three consulting teams would require a table and flip chart paper and/or access to a computer to create power point slides. The executives require a large room with 9 interview stations—one interview station for each executive. An interview station consists of a chair for one executive and up to 3 chairs for consultants.

Participants will need to receive several handouts. Creating folders for each participant is the easiest way of dealing with the handouts. However, different roles would necessitate different sets of handouts to be included in the folder. The Consultant folder should include the following handouts: Activity Summary (see Appendix 1), Consultants (see Appendix 2), Consulting Guidelines (see Appendix 3), Interview Schedule (see Appendix 4), and the Organizational Chart (see Appendix 5). The Executive's folder would include the following handouts: Activity Summary (see Appendix 1), Company Background (see Appendix 6), Interview Schedule (see Appendix 4), the

Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 31, 2004

Organizational Chart (see Appendix 5), and the specific Executive Role sheet (see Appendices 7-15).

The facilitator will manage the process of the activity through four phases: Orientation, Interviews, Analysis, and Presentations. Preferably, the facilitator should meet with participants in advance of the event or at the start of the event to give an overview of the experiential learning approach and of the Omega exercise. Participants can then be assigned roles, given the appropriate handouts (see above) and directed to their assigned space.

Visit the Executives: Answer any questions and explain the following: (1) try to play the role as realistically as possible--they may have to adlib, but do so in a realistic fashion; (2) try to be consistent with their answers in the interview--if teams ask similar questions, give similar answers; (3) don't worry if different executives give different answers to the same questions--executives perceive things in different ways.

Visit each of the Consulting Teams. Designate a color for each team (blue team, green team, yellow team). Explain the interview process to them. Explain that they will need to divide themselves into 3 sub teams and explain how the process works from round to round. Also explain that the presentations will be no longer than 5 minutes and that "the consultants are not expected to solve all of Omega's problems, but that they should show a good grasp of the issues and the types of changes that might be appropriate."

During the interview portion of the activity, the facilitator should direct the flow of traffic. Each round of interviews should last about 8 minutes. The facilitator should announce a two minute warning before the end of each round so that consultants can end the interview smoothly. After all three rounds of interviews are completed, instruct the consultants to prepare a 5 minute presentation. Make available flip chart paper and/or a computer to generate power point slides as visual aids. While consultants are preparing their presentations, get some feedback from the executives. Either create a power point slide with this information or write the information on the white board and cover it up until the debrief. Include the following information: (1) record results of a straw poll--if they had to choose right now, which consulting team would they choose? (2) Regardless of which team they chose, what positive things did the consultants do? What negative things did the consultants do? (3) What criteria will the executives use to make their final decision? Executives may need some direction in selecting appropriate criteria. The facilitator can suggest that the executives consider the following issues when developing criteria: how well the consultants understand the problems, how well the solutions relate to the problems, implementation issues, timing issues, cost issues, and whether the consultants can make a convincing case for the benefits to the organization.

Once the consultants are ready, allow each consulting team to make their presentation to the executives. Allow some time for Q&A at the end of each presentation. After the completion of all three presentations, have the executives move to a separate location to discuss the presentations and decide on which consulting team to award the contract. When the executives are ready, have them report their decision to the group and explain their decision.

The debrief begins when the executives are away making their decision. The facilitator should present feedback from the executives to the consultants. The facilitator can discuss the straw poll, the positive and negative feedback about the consultant's interviewing skills and the criteria that the executives chose to use. Finally, the facilitator should run a general debrief with all participants to discuss their experience (see Appendix 16 for some sample questions).

The timing of the exercise is somewhat flexible. Typically, the exercise requires about 2 hours to run. The timeline might run as follows: Participants read materials (20 minutes), Consultants interview executives (30 minutes), Consultants prepare presentations (30 minutes), Consultants give presentations (20 minutes), Executives deliver their decision and give feedback to consultants (5 minutes), general debrief (15 minutes). If more time is available, participants can use more time to prepare for the presentations. In addition, the general debrief can easily be lengthened. To reduce time, provide participant materials prior to the event and simply begin the activity with the interviews.

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OMEGA SYSTEMS ACTIVITY SUMMARY & AGENDA

Omega Systems is a business simulation that involves the consulting process of organizational change. Omega Systems is a company that designs and manufactures Video Gaming Systems and Software. Omega Systems has experienced some setbacks and they have called in 3 consulting teams to conduct interviews, diagnose organizational problems, develop organizational change recommendations, and give a short presentation of those recommendations. Omega Systems Executives will hear a presentation from each consulting team and then award the consulting contract to only one team. Therefore, this simulation is also a competition between the consulting teams. Although Omega Systems is a fictitious company, the issues and challenges are consistent with the issues and challenges faced by companies in high-tech industries.

Some students will play the roles of Omega Systems executives. They will be provided background and historical information about the company as well as information about their own department. They will be interviewed by consultants and they will listen to the presentations made by the consulting teams. Executives will be exposed to different consulting approaches and they will need to consider how they will choose among consultants.

Other students will play the roles of consultants. There will be 3 teams of consultants (Blue team, Green team, and the Yellow team). Consultants will get limited information at the start. They will gather data primarily through the interview process. They will engage in a full range of consulting activities: planning for interviews, conducting interviews, diagnosing organizational problems, developing recommendations, and making a presentation.

There will be 3 rounds of interviews. During each round, each consulting team will have access to 3 executives. Therefore, each consulting team will have need to split up into 3 sub teams. For example, during the first round, the Blue consulting team will be interviewing the CEO, Manager of Quality Control, and the VP of Production. If the Blue team consists of 6 persons, 2 would interview the CEO, 2 would interview the Manager of Quality Control, and 2 would interview the VP of Production. The full interview schedule is given on a separate page. Each round of interviews will last 8 minutes.

Each consulting team will make a short presentation (less than 5 minutes in length) to the executives. You may use flip charts or Power Point, but it is not required. Executives will be allowed to ask a few questions after the completion of a presentation.

CONSULTANTS

Omega Enterprises has been in the gaming entertainment business for 40 years. The CEO and founder of the company began as a gaming enthusiast and skillful technologist. At the companies founding, they produced pinball machines and jukeboxes. Omega Enterprises has evolved into a high tech, multinational corporation. Currently, they are involved in Video Arcade Gaming, Home Video Gaming Systems, and PC Software games. They dominate the Video Arcade business; the PC software business is emerging; but the Home Video Gaming Systems business, once very popular, is losing market share to Sony's Playstation II and Nintendo's GameCube.

Omega has been trying to introduce a new Home Video Platform about every 3 years. However, its most recent introduction, the Dreamweaver system, was introduced more than 3 years ago, a few months after Sony's Playstation I and Nintendo 64. They had hoped to launch the Dreamweaver earlier than Sony's Playstation and Nintendo 64, but production delays caused them to miss their intended launch date. Now that Sony has introduced Playstation II and Nintendo has introduced GameCube, additional sales of the Dreamweaver system have lagged behind substantially.

The R & D department is responsible for research and creation of new Hardware and Software. The Engineering department is responsible for designing the blueprints for the Home Video Platform console as well as the game cartridges (software) that are sold separately. They also develop the blueprints for standing Arcade games. The Production department takes the blueprints from Engineering and builds the Home-Video Platform Systems, the game cartridges, and the standing Arcade Games.

Omega Enterprises is in the early stages of development of a new Home Video Game system, but they are already failing to reach expected milestones on time. The CEO has called in 3 consulting teams to do some preliminary investigation and to make some initial recommendations. Omega Enterprises will award a consulting contract to only one team.

APPENDIX 3

CONSULTING GUIDELINES

Your first task is to obtain data to use in diagnosing organizational problems and in developing an action plan for responding to these problems.

Suggested Questions:

- What are some of the things the organization does well?
- What are some of the problems the organization is experiencing?
- How can the organization be improved?

Interviewing Goals:

- Build rapport with the company executives; help them feel comfortable.
- Build credibility with your interviewing and conversational skills.
- Obtain information that will be helpful in your diagnosis and development of recommendations.

Your next task is to diagnose organizational problems in the light of information gathered in the interviews and to formulate an action plan to deal with the problems identified.

Diagnosis

- What are the specific organizational problems you have identified?
- What systems or subsystems are affected?
- How ready is the organization for change?
- What are the driving and restraining forces for change?
- How do you expect the present managers to cope with change?

Action Plan

- What specific actions might be initiated or undertaken by members of the organization?
- Over what time spans?
- What would be the expected outcomes?
- How should change be introduced in the company?

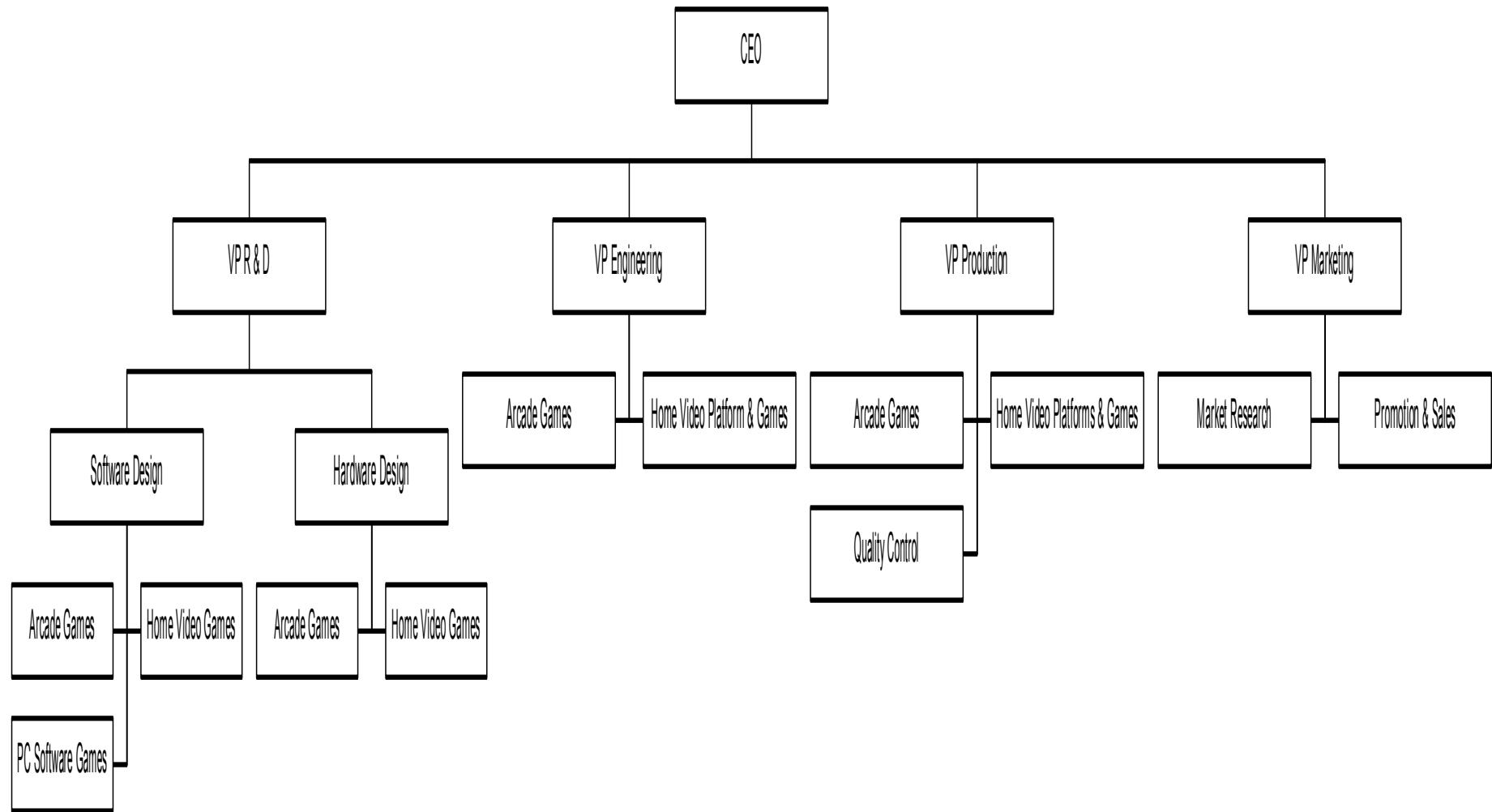
Presentation

- How can we best communicate the need for change?
- How can we create acceptance of our proposal?
- How can we develop momentum for change?

APPENDIX 4
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

TEAM	Sub-Team	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
Blue	1	CEO	Manager, Marketing Research	Manager, Software Design
	2	Manager, Quality Control	Manager, Sales & Promotion	Manager, Hardware Design
	3	VP, Production	VP, Engineering	VP, R & D
Green	1	Manager, Software Design	CEO	Manager, Marketing Research
	2	Manager, Hardware Design	Manager, Quality Control	Manager, Sales & Promotion
	3	VP, R&D	VP, Production	VP, Engineering
Yellow	1	Manager, Marketing Research	Manager, Software Design	CEO
	2	Manager, Sales & Promotion	Manager, Hardware Design	Manager, Quality Control
	3	VP, Engineering	VP, R&D	VP, Production

APPENDIX 5



Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 31, 2004

APPENDIX 6

COMPANY EXECUTIVES

Omega Enterprises has been in the gaming entertainment business for 40 years. The CEO and founder of the company began as a gaming enthusiast and skillful technologist. At the companies founding, they produced pinball machines and jukeboxes, primarily as a way to "make a living and do cool fun stuff." Omega Enterprises has evolved into a high tech, multinational corporation. Currently, you are involved in Video Arcade Gaming, Home Video Game Platforms and Software, and PC Software games. Omega Enterprises has always prided itself in its technical ingenuity. The CEO and the Manager of Platform Development have been the "Technical Geniuses" that have driven the technical direction of the company. They have the reputation of "Explorers on the new frontier of technical exploration."

Omega Enterprises has been able to leverage its system design and graphics technology from the Arcade games to the other products such as the Home Video Game and PC software graphical appearance. Currently, Omega dominates the Video Arcade business; the PC software business is emerging; but the Home Video Platform Products, once very popular, are losing market share to Sony's Playstation II and Nintendo's GameCube.

You have been trying to introduce a new Home Video Platform about every 3 years. However, your most recent introduction, the Dreamweaver system, was introduced more than 3 years ago. You had hoped to launch the Dreamweaver earlier than Sony's Playstation I and Nintendo 64, but production delays caused you to miss your intended launch date and Omega was forced to introduce its product months after its competitors. Even though the Dreamweaver system was a technically superior product (e.g., 128-bit system versus Nintendo's 64-bit system and 3-D graphic capabilities surpassing Playstation I), it didn't improve Omega's overall market share in the HomeVideo Game industry.

Then, when Sony introduced Playstation II and Nintendo introduced GameCube, additional sales of the Dreamweaver system dropped dramatically. Omega had hoped to introduce a new platform, "RealForce", that was slightly superior to Playstation II and GameCube, but it was scrapped six months into design because the launch date would have come substantially after the Playstation II and the GameCube.

Falling behind again in the introduction of new products, Omega Enterprises decided (1) to accept, but minimize short-term losses and (2) engage in what they called "generation-skipping" to move on to then next wave of technological advancement.

To minimize costs, rather than leave Dreamweaver systems unsold, Omega has offered very attractive rebate programs. Essentially, a customer can now buy the Dreamweaver at about the same cost for Omega to produce it. This has resulted in the development of a new market of HomeVideo Game users. Consumers lacking resources or willingness to spend much money on home-video game systems can get the Dreamweaver system at about 40% of the cost of the new Playstation II or GameCube. Although the platform sales

aren't profitable, the sales of the games have increased substantially.

To get a jump on the competition, Omega engaged in the process of "generation-skipping." Essentially, a technical project seems to advance in waves. Each wave usually produces a new product from each Home-Video Game company. While Sony was finishing the Playstation II system and Nintendo was finishing the GameCube, Omega was working on the next wave of Home-Video hardware and software. By skipping a generation of technical advancement, Omega hopes to produce superior products and get them to the market earlier than the next wave of Sony and Nintendo Products.

The R & D department is responsible for research and creation of new Hardware and Software. The Engineering department is responsible for designing the blueprints for the Home Video Platform console as well as the game cartridges (software) that are sold separately. They also develop the blueprints for standing Arcade games. The Production department takes the blueprints from Engineering and builds the Home-Video Platform Systems, the game cartridges, and the standing Arcade Games. Department heads meet on an "as needed" basis.

The CEO learned today that product development is once again falling behind schedule. Determined to meet their intended launch date and beat Sony and Nintendo to the market with the next wave of Home-Video Game systems, the CEO has called in three management consulting firms "to inspect Omega's processes and make recommendations for improving the efficiency of its operations."

APPENDIX 7

CEO ROLE SHEET

You founded this company 50 years ago on the motto that "life is a game--enjoy it." You built pinball machines and then arcade games and along the way your company grew into one of the gaming powerhouses by being the most technologically advanced. Although your daily life is mostly administrative, your heart is in the design of new technology and games. You still love to walk around and talk about what is next on the technological horizon and tinker with the new "toys." Innovation has always been the lifeblood of this company.

You seem to have a great staff--everybody seems more than competent, which is why it is so frustrating to have so many launch date problems. You just don't understand why, if everyone does their jobs well, the company is struggling to meet deadlines.

You had to scrap the RealForce project six months into the design process because the product was so far behind schedule. You are not going to let this happen again. You believe there may be some "work flow process issues" or "cultural issues" or "communication issues" or "personality issues" that are causing problems. You really want to focus on technical advancement along with the Manager of Hardware Development, your friend and colleague for the last 40 years. You're tired of mediating the squabbles between department heads. So you're hoping that the consultants can do something to help the departments work better together.

APPENDIX 8

VP RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT ROLE SHEET

You have been with Omega for 3 months. Your predecessor left after the failure of project "Realforce." There are different stories about whether he left on his own or whether he was asked to resign. The main aspect of your job is project management. You have the best innovators working for you in hardware and software development. It's exciting to be working with such a creative group. The CEO loves to hang around your department. At first you thought he was checking up on you, but now you can see that he feels your department is key. It's nice to know the CEO can be counted on for support.

Your department missed some milestones for submitting our designs to Engineering, but that really couldn't be helped. Your manager of Hardware design came up with a brilliant improvement to boost the power of the system (to promote incredible 3-D graphics appearance--better than Sony or Nintendo by a factor of 10!) So, your department had to redesign some things and the software designers will need to reprogram some things to take advantage of this improvement. The VP of Engineering and VP of Production were not too pleased--more work for them, you guess. Surprisingly, the VP of Marketing is also overly concerned. You would think the Marketing people would be ecstatic about promoting this. Anyway, once you get your feet on the ground, they'll have greater trust in you and your department. It's so early in the project; there is plenty of time to get back on schedule.

APPENDIX 9

MANAGER OF HARDWARE DEVELOPMENT ROLE SHEET

You have been with Omega Enterprises almost since the beginning. Although you're approaching 60 years of age, you pride yourself on the energy, enthusiasm, and creativity of a teenager. Sometimes you like to do your own "Market Research." You enjoy going to the Arcades and watching the kids use the products. You have been asked several times to take a VP job, but you don't want to be hindered by all the "Administrative" and "Political" hassles. You don't care about titles; you care about autonomy to explore possibilities. You are self-driven and you often work 16 hours a day. You have a great group of young people working with you--very creative, energetic, and competent.

You prefer to let the VP of R&D handle interactions with other departments; administrative red tape is a pain. It takes away from development time. Innovation is what is important in this company. The last VP of R&D didn't last too long--he didn't manage the "Realforce" project too well or maybe he just had real bad timing. But this new VP seems like an affable person and doesn't get in your way--you expect to get along fine with him.

APPENDIX 10

SOFTWARE DESIGN MANAGER ROLE SHEET

You oversee the production of software for Arcade Games, Home-Video Games, and PC games. Although that seems like a huge task, there is some redundancy. Essentially, you take the software that is designed for the Arcade Games and develop Home-Video Game and PC versions. Other, independent software developers also develop games for the Omega Home Video Game systems, but the ones developed by your department are superior to the outside vendors.

Software innovation is key to the success of the company; hardware design gets most of the attention around here, but that's mostly because the Manager of Hardware Design is kind of a legend and is such good pals with the CEO. It's just the way things are around here.

You have to admit, the hardware people have come up with some amazing innovations in hardware design. You just wish the timing of their innovations would be more convenient. It seems like once you have a new game about finished, they introduce some new hardware innovation. The problem is that the game was conceptualized to fit the hardware capabilities at the time the decision was made. So, you end up doing small things to "enhance" the software of the game, but you aren't really able to take advantage of the new hardware capabilities. Then, the hardware design group feels that we didn't appreciate what they did for us. If we had the innovation information earlier, we could do more with the technology--but that's not the way it should work anyway. They should develop hardware capability to fit our software designs.

It's fine for now; the manager of Hardware Design is old and will retire in the next few years. Also, there is not much innovation in hardware left to create anyway. It's like the computer industry; the real future of innovation is in the software.

APPENDIX 11

VP ENGINEERING ROLE SHEET

You are in charge of creating blue prints for production. Everybody seems to think that you simply slap a bunch of wires in a box, but it's very complicated. You have to break down each component of the process, determine the sequence for production, develop the tools and process of production. R&D doesn't design with production in mind--that's what you do. R&D comes up the ideas, but you make it a reality.

The biggest problem is when changes in the design take place--everybody gets all excited about some new innovation. This is good, you know, but it's very difficult to accommodate the production plans. Each time they come up with a "minor" change, it's a major hassle for your department. Usually, you have to just start over from scratch. The other thing is that people in R&D don't document very well--they just get carried

Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 31, 2004

away with the new idea and they don't take the time to work out the "bugs" in the system. Then, if you don't catch their mistakes, a product can be faulty and consumers return them like they did with some of the early shipments of the Dreamweaver system.

It seems like every time there is a new project, we agree in principle to limit the number of changes, but each time there always seems to be some "critical opportunity" that we try to push through. You can't think of a time when a new idea came through and Omega didn't try to include it.

The production department is also problematic. They can't seem to follow the blueprints as we lay them out. Our instructions are very clear but they don't seem to take the time to read them carefully. We often have to meet with them multiple times to clarify issues.

APPENDIX 12

VP PRODUCTION ROLE SHEET

You are in charge of production of Home Video Platform systems, the Home Video Game Cartridges, and the standing Arcade Games. The greatest pressure falls on your shoulders. The marketing people have made all sorts of promises about the availability of product that you simply cannot provide. You're getting constant phone calls about product shipment date and no one seems to care about what it takes to assemble complicated products like these.

The blueprints are always getting to us late and then changes have to be made. You try to do as much pre-production work as possible, but you never know what is going to be changed at the last minute. Also, the blueprints that you get are not always workable. That's not the way things are supposed to work: How can you possibly plan for materials inventory, work schedules, and shipping when so much is unknown? You feel like you are between a rock and a hard place! Marketing wants products delivered on time, yet Engineering can't seem to be able make up its mind and commit to the "original" plan.

APPENDIX 13

MANAGER OF SALES & PROMOTION ROLE SHEET

Your job is to oversee the promotion of products and sales. In some ways your job is easy, but in other ways, it's incredibly frustrating. Omega has the best technical innovators in the Home Video Gaming Systems industry and the lowest market share--that makes you, Manager of Sales and Promotion, look bad! You keep telling them that it's not just the quality of the product; it's also the timing of the product introduction. Dreamweaver was better than Playstation I and Nintendo 64. You had a huge marketing campaign, the demand was there, but then the product wasn't available. You had distributors constantly calling you. Customers didn't want to wait so they bought Playstation I and Nintendo 64. Who's willing to buy their kid a Playstation I and then buy a Dreamweaver a few months later?

Another issue is quality. Kids get very disappointed when there are game system problems. It is amazing how swiftly the reputation for video games can sour through word of mouth between kids--we have to have the product right before it goes out and Omega had too many returns with the dreamweaver system.

A final issue of concern is software--the games. Omega has a software department that produces games for our gaming systems and they are quite good, but they are limited in number. They are able to take the very popular Arcade Games that Omega makes and create Home-Video versions that are very similar to the Arcade Games. But, what good is it to introduce a new Home Video Platform System if you only have 3 games that can be played on it? Usually you rely on Independent Game Software Developers to provide a greater variety of games. These Independent Game Software Developers develop games that work on our systems as well as playstation and Nintendo systems, but you're afraid they won't do very many for your system this time. Omega burned them too badly when it dropped the Realforce gaming system project--they were already in production of several games for that system when Omega shut it down.

APPENDIX 14

MANAGER OF MARKETING RESEARCH ROLE SHEET

Your job is to oversee the collection of data from surveys and focus groups to better understand your market. The Promotion and Sales group heavily uses your data. They use this information to design their campaigns to fit the interests of the target consumer groups.

You also submit your reports to the R&D department but you don't really know how the information is used. They usually just smile and say, "Thank-you, we'll take a look at it." It seems reasonable to consider the customer preferences in the process of design.

You feel proud that your company is trying to develop the most innovative technology to compete with Sony and Nintendo and that is especially important for attracting the older customers, the 20-30 year olds. But we also need to consider the younger segment of our market? Yes, the younger child games can be on our new technologically advanced systems. But what parent is willing to spend \$400 on a new gaming system so that their 6 year old can play "Sonic the hedgehog"?

Also, you just attracted a brand new group of Home-Video Game users with your rebate program for the Dreamweaver system. These were people that didn't own any kind of Home-Video Game System either because they couldn't afford it or because they were simply unwilling to pay for more expensive games. You definitely want to retain this new market segment. You're not saying that Omega should stop innovating; just that Omega should develop different options for different market segments.

**MANAGER OF QUALITY CONTROL ROLE
SHEET**

Your job is to ensure that the product produced meets the design specifications. You take great pride in your work and consider yourself a very detail-oriented person. The metric by which you are judged is the return rate of product. You are proud that the return rate of product is less than 2 per thousand shipped, which is slightly better than industry standards. It's really quite difficult to do better than 2 per thousand since faulty material is sometimes impossible to detect and damage can occur in the shipping process.

The Marketing department is under the impression that you have low standards, but it isn't true. There was a problem with the first batch of Dreamweaver systems that went out, it was noticeable because the returns were at the same time instead of spread out. That wasn't your fault anyway--that was a design issue. Your department checked to make sure that the product matched the design and it did--you can't be responsible for design flaws.

Your biggest challenge is the pressure you have to rush product out the door. You have downtime because the product isn't ready and when product is ready, then it's rush, rush, rush. You are still vigilant about your quality checks, but you are bound to make more mistakes in this kind of environment.

SAMPLE DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

Publishing

- How did you (consultants) prepare for the intervention?
- How does it feel to be interviewed by the consultants?
- How was entry for the interview made? What helped/hindered in establishing rapport with the client?

Processing

- In the interview, what organizational problems were addressed? What system was identified as affected?
- Was there resistance to change? In what way was it expressed?
- What helped/hindered in the process of consultation?
- What skills were necessary?
- What feedback do Omega role players have for the consultants (e.g., style, approach, etc.)?
- What action plan did the consultants develop?

Generalizing

- If Omega/consultants could change roles, what would each do differently?
- In organizations, does change come about in similar ways?
- In organizations, what is the role of the consultant? Is it similar/different from this exercise? In what ways?
- Have you been involved in a change effort? If you were the change agent, what would you do differently? If you were the affected party, what would you now recommend?

Application

- What have you learned about resistance to change?
- What have you learned about intervention strategies?
- What could you as a manager apply?