

MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCES SIMULATION

David Rahn
Chico State University
DRahn@csuchico.edu

ABSTRACT

The name of the game is Managing Human Resources Simulation. This simulation is a set of connected case studies situated within the Human Resources function, and occurring over time. This approach corresponds to the learner-centered model referred to as "Problem-Based Learning" or PBL. Participants learn to analyze information, solve problems by applying what they've learned in the course, and then assess their results. This means that while they are making decisions and analyzing outcomes, participants are "discovering" the cause and effect relationships that are true for HRM and the organization in the simulated company.

This simulation may be used effectively in a university course that surveys HRM, a capstone integration of an HRM major or minor, a graduate course that surveys HRM, or an organizational training program on human capital decision-making. The game can be played in-class, entirely online, or with a combination of in-class and online approaches.

PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

The purpose of the simulation is problem-based or discovery learning which is based on learning by doing and then reflecting about what was observed and experienced. Consequently, the learning objectives emphasize the application of learning from other sources, and the practice of skills already or about to be acquired. Here is a list of participant learning objectives:

- Increase understanding of the relationships among HRM practices and organizational outcomes.
- Practice analytical reasoning and critical thinking.
- Practice working with data and basing decisions on it.
- Develop a more strategic focus for decision-making by linking key results to decisions about practices.
- Experience managerial decision-making.
- Stay within a budget and balance competing priorities.
- Practice team project management with multiple, complex projects.
- Develop reports and presentations that analyze and explain results.
- Apply what participants have learned in their readings.
- Supplement knowledge of current issues in HRM.

Time Required

The game can be played for 1 to 8 quarters. In order to accomplish the basic learning objectives, at least one quarter must be played and analyzed. Being conservative with allotting time I would suggest a 1 hour slot allotted as follows:

15 minutes for Introduction
15 minutes for team decisions
15 minutes for analysis
15 minutes for debriefing

Minimum Number of Players

The game can be played by as few as one player. In the classroom this game can be played by up to 15 teams with any number of players. For this conference I would suggest that 8 teams with 3 to 4 players would be a realistic maximum.

Equipment I Provide

I bring a laptop with a broadband connection card. Hand outs of work forms and briefing information. I can run the entire game from this machine with no other materials needed by players.

Equipment Players Need

None, although it would help if any had laptops with Internet connections. This would speed up entering decisions.

Room Configuration

It would be nice to have tables for teams to place reading material and decision forms which I provide.

Other relevant information

Time beyond the hour suggested could be used to run additional quarters of the game.