

THE NEW TRENDS OF SIMULATION GAMES FOR MANAGERIAL TRAINING

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Abstract: Nowadays, the use of electronic tools like computers and the Internet, the E-learning system, has emerged as the fastest-growing segment in the field of training and development. And one of the newest trends is computer-aided simulation. Players work on computers through tasks that are present in real life: they can start as an employee or they can become managers. In this paper we will present a research that we made on a number of five Romanian managers from which we wanted to find out if they know the utility of simulation games and if they use them in their training process.

1. TRENDS OF MANAGERIAL SIMULATION GAMES

Managerial games put emphasis on developing economic skills for managers and other specialists.

Examining the content of management simulation games in recent years, designed and used to train managers and professionals, has led to the development of several trends. Graphically, these trends can be presented like this:

The major changes from recent decades, the adoption of the lifelong learning principle, developing participatory management systems, Internet development, etc., are reflected in partial modification of the design and use of management games in the sense of taking into account the need to build and develop learning organizations. That's the reason why, performing management games have the capacity to ensure that training participants' knowledge will increase, as well as the potential and competitive ability of the organization to which they belong. [<http://www.marketplace-live.com>]

The challenge of management games makers is to develop ever more effective games than the existent ones and strongly differentiate them by taking into consideration economic and managerial training and competency levels of training participants. As a result, more future managers, economists and specialists in management, marketing, etc. will use management games in order to simulate some situations they confront to every day. A managerial game usually begins with simple games, referring to lower spheres of business activities and / or management problems, and finally they reach the general game, which takes into account all the activities of a mid-size or large company and all major components of an organization's management. Frequently, these processes take place over several years, on a 3-5 year strategy designed by training participants. [Nicolescu, O., Cochina, I., Anghel, F., Entrepreneurial management simulation]

The increased internationalization of business activities in recent decades has resulted in substantial changes in training and development process of managers, economists, etc., reflected in the introduction of new economical, sociological, psychological, etc. courses. The internationalization was mainly reflected in the following ways:

- Management game designed with multicultural content, mostly provided by operating companies located in simulated markets from several countries and / or simulation of intense import-export activities and / or use of multiple currencies;
- Use of games between teams of people from many cultures, in which relations and managerial work processes implement a multicultural dimension acquired by using the conditions of the Internet;

- Use of games in multiple simulated markets operated by national teams of students or experts from several countries, each developing its activity in that country; this way is the most complete and effective, providing a complex and multicultural business environment.



Figure nr. 1 Trends in design and use of managerial games and simulations

Adapted by: [Nicolescu, O., Cochina, I., Anghel, F., Entrepreneurial management simulation]
These trends of using management games reflect rapid proliferation of the Internet. Games designed for the Internet differ from conventional computer games by the following characteristics: [<http://www.scribd.com/doc/18923636/Training-and-Development>]

- They can be used by people situated at great geographic distance from the educational institution
- Participants in the training process are more heterogeneous in preparation and culture
- The variety of strategies, leadership styles and types of analysis used by participants in training within the games.

- The games are adapted to specific industries, sub-branches and organizations, making them more easily understood and used by people working in the field, reducing the need to consult and be guided through direct contacts and intensified by trainers.

A general consequence of these trends is considered the extremely rapid diversification of management games.

The process of making simulation managerial games increases the competence of designers and users that have the ability to design and operate a new game in a relatively short period of time and / or adapting existing games to the specific requirements of certain groups of people or sectors. That requires a lot of work because computers need the software that make possible the development of games, with substantially less effort and in much shorter periods than in previous decades diversifying and expanding demand for game use, under specific environmental coverage (as an organization, industry or geographical region) in which participants play active. [<http://www.scribd.com/doc/7798685/Lecture-1-07ME>]

By following these developments, game designers try to extend the practice of management in order to make games specifically for certain organizations or firms in a given area. Specialized companies that develop games adapted to their management, update them periodically, usually annually.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF MANAGEMENT GAMES FOR ROMANIAN MANAGERS

After analysing the trends of managerial games, we wanted to know if Romanian managers use them and if they consider that such games are useful for both the organization and for their career. We applied a questionnaire on a number of five managers from Bihor County. In this questionnaire, they had to answer with “I Agree” and “I disagree” to a number of fifteen sentences. The results are the following:

Sentence	Number of managers that agreed	Number of managers that disagreed
1. I never heard about simulation management games.	0	5
2. I consider that these games are useful just for students not for managers.	0	5
3. I would like to purchase a managerial game, but I can't find one.	0	5
4. We have such a managerial game in our company, but we don't know how to use it properly.	3	2
5. Managerial games help managers to develop some specific skills.	5	0
6. Managerial games are created in order to test abilities and the capacity of making decisions.	5	0
7. Managerial games help the organizational management to adapt to the continuous technological changes.	4	1
8. Managerial simulation is a procedure that allows the manipulation of a real system by changing parameters.	5	0

9. By using managerial simulation, a manager can see in a short period of time the long-term effect on the decisions they take.	5	0
10. The managerial simulations are used only for some typical activities that occur repeatedly.	5	0
11. Managerial games are very useful for the welfare of the organization.	5	0
12. One of the advantages of using managerial simulation is that it provides team work by the helped by Internet.	5	0
13. I used to follow some management simulation games courses.	4	1
14. I think that the extension and development of the Internet has a great impact on organizational performance.	5	0
15. I recommend to all Romanian managers to use managerial simulation.	5	0

As we can see, the majority of the managers that we interviewed have heard about managerial simulation games and they use them in order to improve some personal skills, to make the best decisions and to ensure the organizational performance.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Managerial games and knowledge management are becoming increasingly important for both managers and the organization as long as there is a continuous change in societies and economies, where, training, research, innovation, and knowledge are the major components.

The main advantages of managerial games can be considered the following: [Mchaney, Roger, *Understanding Computer Simulation*, Ventus Publishing, 2009]

- a lot of people can have access at these games at low cost;
- increasing the preparedness of learners and their ability to solve problems not only in managerial, but also in economically and technically working fields
- using games for training management is easier and cheaper than other methods
- because the managerial simulation is handy, we can see the increase of the number of people receiving benefits through training preparation
- it is done mainly through the access to all employees or a significant part of them adapted to the organizations
- simulation games increase the capacity to deal with the group and they are essential to the complex problems that organization faces.

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