

Game-Storming

“Play to get ideas”



By Alex Ow

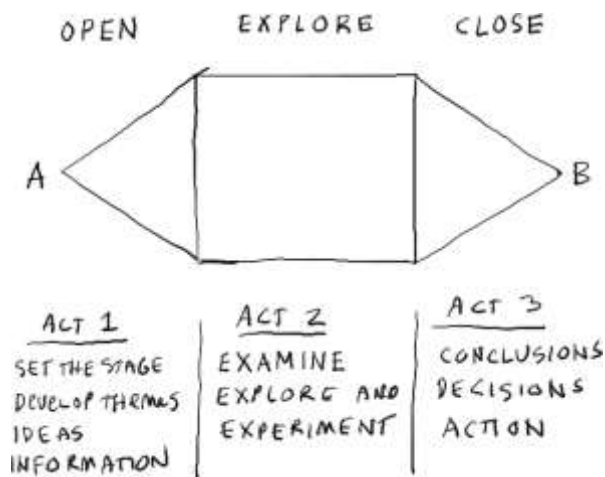
Game storming can lead to serious business results

I used game storming in an energy company to bring people to work together and remove communication barriers. Teaming is great and with the right simulation I managed to draw engagements and participation from all levels in meetings and discussions. The biggest problem is not playing the activities but to develop and evolve the challenges raised into solutions and feed into meaningful action plans for execution. I need approaches to encourage collaborations that embed the value of inclusion and equality – that means taking a diverse and inclusive approach.

When I think of team value, diversity and innovation, it's about tapping into each individual's talent and knowledge sharing. When everyone work together with respect, recognising each other's talents, ideas will emerge and all constraints will be removed – no more egos, self-pride and conflicts.

For example, on one occasion, I need to build a positive and innovative workforce and I asked the group to discuss what they think their workplace should look like. They ended up with a list of staff benefits and incentives because the staff is concern with their own welfare. They are not thinking outside the box. Then I said, "Let's think of how we can work together and build an innovative culture. Draw out the outcomes, the behaviours required and the challenges faced." I encouraged them to think, work in a team and focus on the topic. The team energy was channelled towards a common purpose and ideas started to flow. Then the team put some selected ideas into action – such as the idea on walking meeting to save time, use visuals instead of all texts in minutes writing, trying out flexible break hours and having fun at work through "Creative hours" session. One team created its own "know your staff – a strategy to break down communication barrier." They ran a campaign on getting to know each other and it generated a lot of interest.

In the book title "Game storming: A Playbook for Innovators, Rulebreakers and Changemakers" by Dave Gray, Suni Brown and James Macanufo, it mentioned that the knowledge worker must be creative, innovate, surprise – we cannot defend ourselves with the classic excuse, "Oh, I am not a creative person any more". The authors further explained on how using the games are able to help us in our creative process. There are three phases in playing any games and must be clearly differentiated.



- Opening - where the situations or conditions of the game and the goal are determined
- Exploring - during which the game really takes place, developing and evolving the different questions arise from the opening phase
- Closing – which must serve to cover all the components in the game. It is important to always conclude and close a game

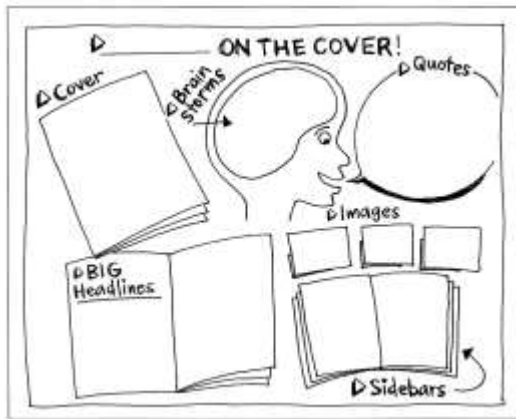
My experience in setting goal, it is equally important to consider the players' perception and experience as much as a game driver or organiser. People will engage better in

a structured sessions as compared with a badly facilitated open sessions.

Why Games works?

Game is based on several studies in cognitive psychology that examine how we think about the future through playing sessions. When we ask the question “What should our product or service do?” we are not framing the terms of reference. Whereas when we ask the question “What will our product or service have done?, we generate longer and detailed descriptions. This is an example of a game called “The Cover Story” based on The Grove Consultants International’s Leaders Guide to Accompany the Cover Story Vision Graphic Guide®

The object of the cover story is that you ask your players to think of the future where their project/team/organisation has achieved a remarkable success. Remind the players to suspend all disbelief and envision a future state that it landed their organization on the cover of well-known magazine.



Now your players should draw the Cover - including a title, Headers - write down the big headlines, Sidebars – statistics, numbers and facts, Quotes – testimonials from anyone imaginable, images – pictures that support the cover story and Brainstorm – write down ideas before starting the activity.

After all the cover stories are complete, allow each group 5 minutes to present their ideas. Then as a team reflect on the similarities and shared ideas that can actually be applied in their organisation. Cover Story allows the players to dream of the

possibilities and free themselves from any constraints and restrictions. When you free yourself from all restraints, you can think big and imagine what your organisation should do and where it should grow!

Games is fun to play and helps to liven up boring concepts and theories. Companies have been using games to train managers to be a better strategist. They say games “allow managers to suspend normal rules in an acceptable way and they provide an effective audio visual medium for absorbing ideas.” It gives you immediate rewards and encourage playful competition besides promoting collaboration among teams. As suggested by Professor James Gee, “Human minds are plug-and-play devices; they’re not meant to be used alone. They’re meant to be used in networks.” This is what he terms as “collective intelligence.”

Companies have successfully engage their employees using Gamestorming – games set the rules and let you play freely but with a common purpose. The positive effects of games are endless and if you game it, they will play it.

Informa Corporate Learning will be running a 2-day training course on:

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14 November 2018 | Sydney

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