

## Using Business Interactive Games to Improve Management Skills

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**Abstract :** Continuous processes' improvement is a permanent challenge for managers of any organization. Lean management means that efficiency gains can be obtained through a systematic framework able to explore synergies between processes, eliminate waste of time, and other resources. Leaderships in organizations determine the efficiency of the teams through their influence on collaborators, their motivation, and consolidation of ownership (group) feeling. The "organization health" depends on the leadership style, which is directly influenced by the intrinsic characteristics of each personality and leadership ability (leadership competencies). Therefore, it's important that managers can correct in advance any deviation from expected leadership exercises. Top management teams must assume themselves as regulatory agents of leadership within the organization, ensuring monitoring of actions and the alignment of managers in accordance with the humanist standards anchored in a visible Code of Ethics and Conduct. This article is built around an innovative model of "Business Interactive Games" (BI GAMES) that simulates a real-life management environment. It shows that the strategic management of operations depends on a complex set of endogenous and exogenous variables to the intervening agents that require specific skills and a set of critical processes to monitor. BI GAMES are designed for each management reality and have already been applied successfully in several contexts over the last five years comprising the educational and enterprise ones. Results from these experiences are used to demonstrate how serious games in working living labs contributed to improve the organizational environment by focusing on the evaluation of players' (agents') skills, empower its capabilities, and the critical factors that create value in each context. The implementation of the BI GAMES simulator highlights that leadership skills are decisive for the performance of teams, regardless of the sector of activity and the specificities of each organization whose operation is intended to simulate. The players in the BI GAMES can be managers or employees of different roles in the organization or students in the learning context. They interact with each other and are asked to decide/make choices in the presence of several options for the follow-up operation, for example, when the costs and benefits are not fully known but depend on the actions of external parties (e.g., subcontracted enterprises and actions of regulatory bodies). Each team must evaluate resources used/needed in each operation, identify bottlenecks in the system of operations, assess the performance of the system through a set of key performance indicators, and set a coherent strategy to improve efficiency. Through the gamification and the serious games approach, organizational managers will be able to confront the scientific approach in strategic decision-making versus their real-life approach based on experiences undertaken. Considering that each BI GAME's team has a leader (chosen by draw), the performance of this player has a direct impact on the results obtained. Leadership skills are thus put to the test during the simulation of the functioning of each organization, allowing conclusions to be drawn at the end of the simulation, including its discussion amongst participants.

**Keywords :** business interactive games, gamification, management empowerment skills, simulation living labs

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