

MARSLANDER – ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Behaving your way to Value

“As Mission Director of MarsLander I have come to realize that the success or failure of our missions does not lie in our use of technology, or the policies and practices we adopt. It lies in our people and their behaviors and the way in which they collaborate.”

In a recent mission we explored how both #ITIL4 and #OBM (Organizational Behavior Management) can be used to shape high performing teams. We particularly focused on the Guiding principles of ITIL4.

Learning-by-doing

Delegates took part in the MarsLander business simulation, which is an interactive, experiential learning exercise in which a team is challenged to apply new agile ways of working such as Agile, DevOps, Lean and ITIL4 principles and practices, and how these need to be translated into *‘desirable behaviors’*. Many organizations adopt the new ways of working and focus primarily on the *‘Practices, Processes & Procedures’* or the supporting and enabling *‘Tools & Technology’*, *assuming and hoping* that these will result in new behaviors and a new culture. *Often, too little attention is given to the desirable behaviors we are trying to support, enable and sustain using these practices and tools.*

Organizational Behavior management (OBM)

In the workshop the team first explored what Behavior is, and what it isn’t and the importance of an approach to behavior management.

If we ask: “Which behaviors would you like to see in an agile/DevOps/ITIL4 environment, people usually say:

- Ownership
- Taking responsibility
- Being proactive

In this Marslander session responses were:

- Kindness
- Collaborative behavior
- Customer focus

These words describe what most organizations and their leaders would like to see more often. We fully agree. Only, there is a slight issue with these descriptions. These words do not describe *‘observable behaviors’*. There is a lot of room for misinterpretation and ambiguity in these descriptions. How would you demonstrate *‘proactiveness’*, or *‘customer focus’* ?

What needs to happen is that these descriptions, which are good starting-points in themselves, need to be *operationalized*. This means: ‘translate into observable actions that you can see other people do’. What does ‘collaborative behavior’ look like? Please, understand there is no right, or wrong here. The team simply needs to find *consensus*.

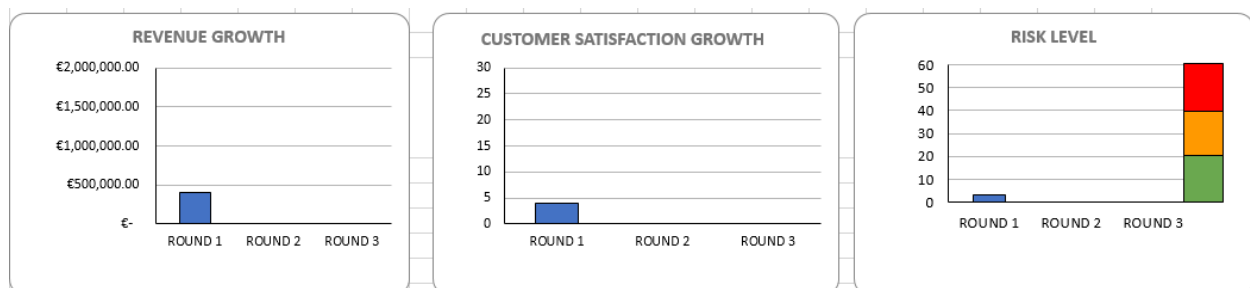
Effective collaboration

Then the team was given time to design and agree the way in which they would collaborate and work together as a Mission control team to apply ITIL4/agile/Lean/DevOps practices to make the mission successful. The game facilitator played the Mission Director (CEO) and challenged the team to deliver value.

We then launched the Mission. Business demands were introduced into the simulation. Incidents and Events occurred, the workload was piling up. There were too few resources to perform all of the demands. There was confusion around roles, agreements and responsibilities, confusion around priorities and goals. Not everybody was doing what they said they would do, there were many assumptions. There was frustration.

Reflecting on performance

At the end of the simulation round we reflected on the value they had delivered (Revenue growth, CSAT, Risk levels).



- ‘Is this good or bad?’ I asked the team as CEO. There was silence. Nobody knew. One of the characteristics of ‘Collaboration’ is having a shared goal¹. It is also a core guiding principle in ITIL4 ‘Focus on Value’.
 - but what IS Focus on value?
 - which behaviors will we see that demonstrates this?

....As strong as the most challenged link.

One of the core discoveries in the team was the role of the Individual. I won’t say a team is as strong as the weakest link. I will say the *most challenged* link. Not all individuals in a team, when given a new role and new behaviors are able to adopt, understand and easily apply new behaviors. A team may try and circumvent or ignore somebody they perceive as slowing them down. A team may ‘assume’ that silence means acceptance, understanding and willingness. Whilst there may really be fear, uncertainty, doubt

¹ Goal setting is also an important step in the seven-step OBM Protocol, which we use as a structured approach for sustainable performance improvement.



and an inability to perform a new role or function. If a team does not recognize this and is not supportive and empathetic an individual can feel alienated, insecure, left-out and the team becomes frustrated and performance suffers. It can lead to blame.

If you are blamed – especially if you feel you are *not* the one to blame - you usually experience a strong negative consequence, which easily devastates motivation and produces all kinds of negative emotions. Remember: blame *never* increases performance, it *never* improves collaboration, it *never* supports *value creation* in any sustainable way.

The team discovered the importance of *'empathy'*, creating a safe environment which makes it OK to say: *'I don't know', and ask for help*. The importance of team member offering help, support and coaching. Ensuring that feedback captures these uncertainties, fears, doubts and reserves time and effort to work on these challenges.

Unintended undesirable behaviors

After the initial design phase and first round it was clear that besides the Individual challenge mentioned above, not everybody knew what was agreed in terms of who does what and when. It was *'assumed'*. Intended *'desired behaviors'* became unintended *'undesirable behaviors'*. It was difficult to give feedback and correct behaviors when these had not been clearly defined, understood, agreed and enabled (enabled with knowledge, processes, tools, authority).

“Changing behaviors is more than creating a list of guiding principles and new corporate values.”

What were some of the captured behavioral success factors.

As we reflected on what went well and what needs improving, we also captured success factors we recognized in terms of embedding desirable behaviors.

- ✓ Confirm agreements and decisions made on behaviors (who does what, when and how)
- ✓ Direction, guidance and help to be ABLE to understand AND emit the agreed, desired behaviors.
- ✓ Apply appropriate leadership styles. Tell it, Show it, and Coach it.
- ✓ Confirm the ability (and willingness) to emit the new behaviors.
- ✓ Recognize that new behaviors may be frightening and stressful. Show empathy and understanding for peoples frustrations and doubts.
- ✓ Make it safe for people to give feedback, to tell concerns and ask for help.
- ✓ Ask how defined behaviors (and procedures) support goals, and what desired behaviors we want to see.
- ✓ Recognize and positively reinforce desirable behaviors.
- ✓ See to stop undesirable ways of working and prevent falling back into old ways of doing things.

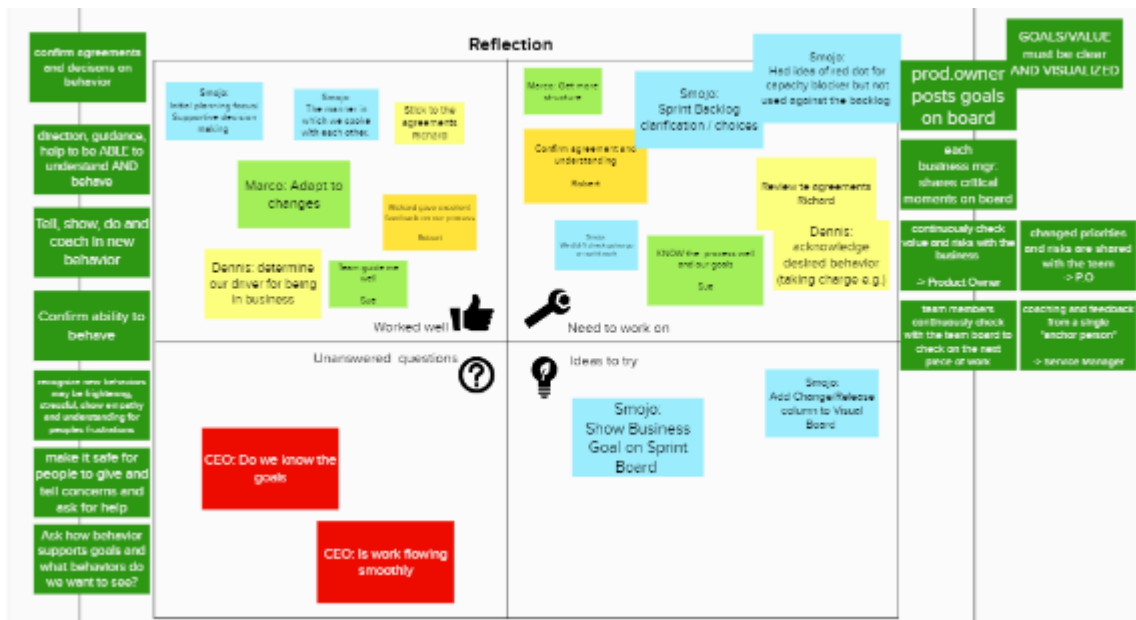


Image:

screenshot of the actual Mural session during the simulation.

Progress iterative with feedback

Using the feedback captured and new ITIL4 insights, the team then agreed improvements to the way they would manage and foster these new behaviors and how they could adopt and apply the new ITIL4 concepts to help support and enable these behaviors.

We explored the Service Value System, the different types of value of the value formula, the guiding principles and started to practice 'Collaborate and promote visibility', 'Focus on value' and agreed 3 key iterative improvements.

What behaviors do we want to see that demonstrates a focus on value?

- ✓ The Product Wwner shares the goals and ensures performance is aimed at goal attainment (the goals are visualized on the team backlog board and discussed with the team)
- ✓ The business roles share their perception of what value they want to see (discuss and pinpoint value & outcomes, versus costs and risks).
- ✓ The product owner and Service manager prioritize the backlog using the goals; choose what to do first. Explain why an item is a priority, by linking backlog items to business goals.
- ✓ When there are resource conflicts, the team escalates this and discusses with the product owner. Which work goes first and why? What value will it deliver? Which work is left until later and what is the risk and impact on value?

These were some examples of visible behaviors that the team agreed. We could then check each individual to ensure they were willing and able to emit these behaviors. The team could then use this to give feedback and to socially reinforce these desired behaviors and address undesired, counterproductive behaviors.

Desirable behaviors

In the second game round the team was talking in terms of business value and outcomes, rather than Events, Incidents, Problems, Features. The team had situational awareness (through visible goals, the backlog, resource constraints and conflicting priorities) and was able to effectively prioritize work to 'focus on value' and ensure goals were being achieved. The team applied coaching and support to ensure all individuals were able to emit the agreed behaviors.

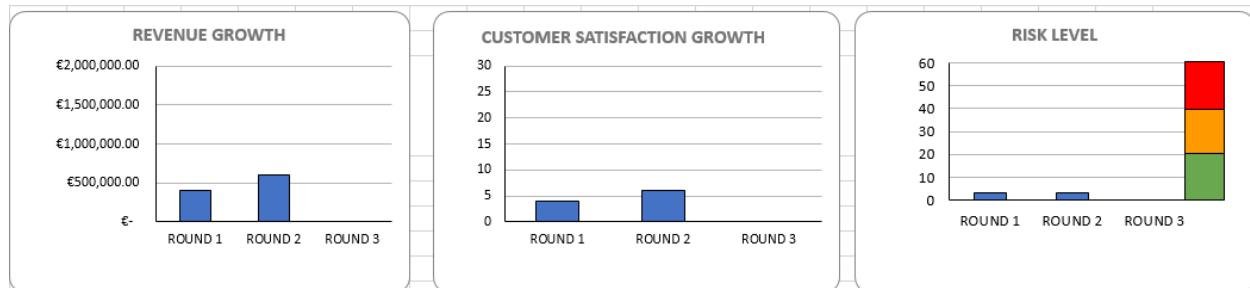


Image: the score after completing round 2. Note how customer satisfaction and revenue growth have increased, and how effectively risks levels have been managed.

The end result? Satisfied team, happy customers, value being delivered.

Captured takeaways

At the end of the Mission, delegates were asked 'what can you take away and use in your daily work?' Which is the first step in a 'transfer of learning' at the end of a training. These takeaways should be aligned with the 'why' question. 'Why are we attending this training? What problem are we hoping it will help solve'?

- ✓ Understand what supports the Mission of an organization (Make this visible)
- ✓ (Engage and) Talk with the Business about the Mission (and goals) in *business jargon*
- ✓ Take the time to focus on what behavior is required to achieve business goals (e.g. Product owner shares the goals, or the team asks for the goals, when there are conflicts for resources goals are used to prioritize. Each work item is discussed in terms of its contribution to or risk to agreed goals and value)
- ✓ Don't fall into the pitfall of just 'start doing' (ASSUMPTIONS). Confirm understanding, agreements, ability to perform, enable people and teams with the right information, knowledge, skills, empowerment, coaching). Remain practical and workable, prevent 'analysis paralysis'.
- ✓ Ability to articulate the storyline of the backlog priority into a business story (relate to the business 'why' and goals).
- ✓ Start with the result (and the why. Why are we here? What is our right to exist as an organization, what do we stand for) then look at the required behaviors required to produce these results. (This is an example of 'Focus on value').
- ✓ Use the value formula: $V = (VC - VL) + VI$
- ✓ Value (V) = positive measured impact of value creating work (VC), minus the measured impact of value leakage work (VL), plus the positive benefits gained from value improvement (VI) work.



- ✓ OBM (using Antecedents, Behavior, Consequences) – performing a functional analysis of behaviors and motivators. Understand why we see certain behaviors, or understand why certain behaviors are not emitted, even though we agreed on them.
- ✓ Visualizing the value formula to enable priority decision making for backlog (example of ‘Focus on value’).

We asked participants to tell us about their key learning and what they would take away and apply in their daily work. These are some of their insights, discoveries and takeaways.

Marco Jansen, Change Manager, Deloitte

1. *“In the first print I/we ran into the pitfall of get started right away and lose sight on the goals and values for the customer. We did not involve the product owner and mission control.*
2. *I will focus more on the value to be delivered and goals to be set by the business. In my new change process I received feedback that contradicted in the Agile WoW and change management. It referred to speed. I explained this with the value and goals for a particular sprint and if an exception is needed this is up to the product owner and business, not solely the business.*
3. *It gave me a lot of insight in how things work and how certain roles interact. The responsibility for decisions must be put by the correct people. Not with the ones who cries out the loudest. Where is value and what are goals to be achieved that support the projects/organizations mission.”*

Dennis Lindemans, Service Delivery Manager, CGI

“The Marslander - OBM session is a lifelike simulation which not only brings an actual experience in how destructive our “just start working” attitude is and how much can be gained by clearly agreeing on what behavior is required to be able to reach our common goals. Also, how to apply the lessons learned in our day-to-day environment.”

Richard Jacobs, Agile Coach & Trainer, Prowareness

“What surprised me the most, is the effectiveness of OBM in something as short as an introduction in the ITSM Simulation Game MarsLander®. While barely playing two rounds of the game, one could see the impact of OBM in the team performance while playing the second round.”

Want to know more about Marslander?

Please visit: <https://www.gamingworks.nl/business-simulations/marslander-agile-service-management>

Want to know more about behavioral change, or Organizational Behavior Management (OBM)?

Please visit: <http://www.trigono.nl/obm>

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