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Value Stream Management Coffee Game

EKOS International

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Summary of "Value Stream Management Coffee Game"

- Dynamite management education game, played in teams over 2 1/2 hours
- Demonstrates need for managing design, production, processes, and people across the entire value stream of product/service creation, use, end-of-life
- Lays the groundwork for Enterprise Agility and Sustainable Value Creation
- Powerful addition to management education on Strategy, Sustainability, or Lean Thinking & Agility

EKOS International has developed for executive/ management education a Value Stream Management Game that has been getting rave reviews. The game is currently a core part of a two week residential Executive Education for the top 2,000 managers of a Fortune Fifty Corporation.

This fun, interactive game provides a vivid illustration of management across the entire value stream -- participants see the advantages of applying principles of lean thinking, design, and production through the extended enterprise of suppliers, suppliers' suppliers, and customers, and customers' customers. The game reinforces requirements of the new economy such as lean and agile enterprise management, mass customization, rapid time-to-market, intellectual capital, innovation, environmental and social responsibility. Additionally, participants see the importance of metrics, relationship building, human resource development, and stakeholder management. Underlying the structure of the game are the principles of World Class Management, Sustainability, and Knowledge Creation.

This game holds a great deal of promise for use in any company concerned with leveraging improvements and increasing collaboration at a Value Stream level. Managers truly go through a paradigm shift between the first Cycle and second Cycle, away from sub-optimization toward collaborating and managing the entire value stream.

The Value Stream Management Coffee Game uses the entire value stream of coffee production, from raw materials (the Growers) through transport, roasting, coffee marketing, coffee equipment design and manufacturing, to wholesale and retail distribution. Managers team up to play one of 8 key roles in this value chain, making investment decisions in order to try to double their market value. There are two cycles of investments with market feedback. In Cycle 1, people typically try to optimize their individual company, whereas Cycle 2 is designed to elicit collaboration across the value stream and optimization of the whole system. Managers consistently report the experience as both paradigm shattering and fun!

The game takes 2 1/2 hours -- it can stand alone, or help reinforce other key learnings. One typical scenario for a seminar is a brief introduction to requirements for managing in the new economy, playing the game with a short summary, lunch, then interactive lecture, group analysis, and discussion about the implications of "Value Stream Management" in participants' companies. The seminar with game is easily customized to an organization's specific strategic priorities and learning objectives. Also, it is very powerful when done with representatives from customers and suppliers. It works best when about sixteen people "play" at each table, and can be designed to accommodate one to four tables at once (16-64 people).