

Teams are everywhere. In spite of the popularity of “team-based organizations,” it has been my experience that many leaders struggle with creating, managing and motivating their teams. For instance, research has found that team members are often frustrated with both the process and result of working in teams. Others complain they are on so many teams that they can’t get any work done.

No leader can make a team perform well, but all leaders can create conditions that increase the likelihood that it will. With these issues in mind, I developed a university course designed to address the fundamentals of when to use a team and how to get it going. Course modules included: (1) Leader behaviors that create conditions to foster team effectiveness; (2) the organizational context and its influence on the emergence of leadership in teams, and; (3) the role of moods and emotions in work teams.

The ultimate goal of the course is to familiarize students with the topic of leadership and team behavior. Thus, although the course includes some “traditional” lecture, the majority of the course involves field work and experiential “in-class” exercises. I am of the opinion that experiential types of learning have a more profound and lasting impact on students; much, much more compared to what can be gleaned from a leadership textbook or research article.

Consequently, I asked Martin Wyler to provide a group of my students the experience of a lifetime. That is, a GemaSim experience.

Michael S. Cole, Ph.D.
Senior Research Fellow and Lecturer
Institute for Leadership and Human Resource Management

My experience with GemaSim

I found that the training with GemaSim was a great opportunity for me to learn about my personal leadership style and the dynamics within a team. Not only did it reveal facts about me, but it also helped me see what effects I can have on other people and even how they influence me. The simulation also created an understanding about the fact that teams are not stable but dynamic: their composition, their decision-making process and their division of power can change over time. The video-sequence made this dynamic visible.

All in one, I think that GemaSim is an extraordinarily helpful tool to assess different people, to help them develop their leadership style and team behavior and, generally, to establish an understanding of how teams work and how their composition and dynamics are key to success.

Jürg Kronenberg, B.A.HSG in Business Administration