# WESELL

ABSTRACT

Participants adopt various roles to negotiate implementation of a comprehensive web-based Eco-Driving training package which has been devised by Wesell [a vehicle manufacturer] as part of its holistic Sustainability Strategy that is designed to heighten peoples' awareness of the relationship between driving behaviours and fuel emissions and economy.
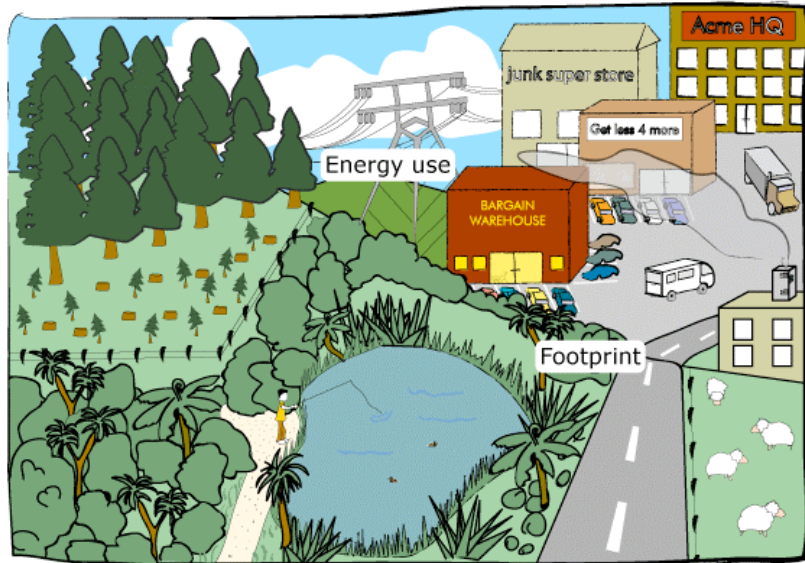
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KEYWORDS

Negotiation; Sustainability; Industry engagement

DESCRIPTION

The scenario forms the basis of a number of group negotiations around how the web-based Eco-driving training package is to be implemented both within the company and in the broader community. The various groups negotiating the implementation strategy include:

- Internal Departmental managers
- Human Resources representatives and union representatives
- Company and Supplier representatives
- Company, Driver Training Authority and Taxi Drivers Association representatives
- Company, Fuel Industry Authority and Government Department representatives
- Company and Education Department representative.

RESOURCES

- Common scenario background
- Particular scenarios facing the various participants
- Background material on company global operations
- Online discussion group facilities

AUDIENCE/GROUP SIZE

The role-play activity can be conducted over any time period between 1 week and several months. It is usually in groups of around 6. The role-play was designed in 2007 as part of an Industry-based MBA course in Negotiation skills.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The learning design aims to:

- engage participants to test negotiation theory-in-practice in a real-world negotiation
- encourage analysis and reflection on different negotiation tactics
- compare the outcome of different negotiation styles (principled, positional, and added value)

Feedback from the participants in the first iteration was extremely positive, particularly in regard to the ability of participants to reflect on the complexity of negotiations, the various interpretations that can occur that impact on communication and negotiations and the importance of understanding the various roles people adopt in practice despite the training they receive in 'best practice' negotiations.

TIME AND SETTING

The role-play can be used in a cross section of courses ranging from management/leadership; employment relations; negotiation skills; supply chain management; environmental sustainability and business strategy. The

role-play is a useful means to bring together representatives from a number of departments and disciplines to consider new ways of working.

PROCESS

The role-play negotiation is conducted using asynchronous discussion available from within the university Learning Hub. It is also adaptable for company use as an in-house role-play opportunity.

Role players can be part of a number of groups (for example as a group of Departmental Managers as well as company representatives with various other groups; as a group of employees as well as employees and union representatives).

The Discussion forums allow for anonymous or identified postings.

Common information is posted onto the Learning Hub, with individual role-play scenarios emailed to individuals. Participants know each other as fellow students (and work colleagues if held within an organisation). However they are not aware of the various role-play scenarios and individual player characteristics, although some information is shared but from different perspectives. The role-play characters have a title and role but are able to extrapolate from the outline the tactics for negotiation they will adopt.

Each character is asked to use a specific theory or style of negotiation when embarking on the role-play.

The scenarios are open ended with sufficient flexibility for any outcome to be achieved. Participants are asked to experiment with different approaches and to reflect on the various responses to their actions.

Participants are asked to post the final outcome for their group on an on-line Group Discussion board at a certain finishing time.

The online negotiation is followed by a face-to-face intensive session to debrief the role-play. The face-to-face session is an important part of the reflective process during which significant further learning occurs.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment of the participants' contribution to the role-play is two-fold. First, how effectively the participant adheres to the theory or model of negotiation they were assigned. Second, how clearly the participant is able to identify their learning from the role-play through their reflections in a learning journal.

Although it is possible to identify the number of postings made by each participant and the dates of their contribution such numerical assessment measures are not used as it is more important to place emphasis on the quality rather than the quantity of the contribution.

FACILITATOR ISSUES

The main roles of the facilitator are to assist the commencement of the negotiation and to undertake period checks of the discussion to ensure no illegal or discriminatory postings are being made and that equity principles are being maintained. The requirement for the groups to post their final negotiated outcome reduces the burden on the facilitator of having to read all postings. The role of the facilitator is central in the face-to-face session to assist analysis and reflection and debrief the participants from their role as the real-life nature of the role-play means that participants tend to adopt the persona realistically and may take interactions seriously.

REUSABILITY

The role-play is adaptable to a variety of settings with a broad spectrum of disciplines. Scenarios and role descriptions are word files. The role-play can be used in educational settings or for company/industry specific educational purposes.

References and Links

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