PROJECT COMPETITOR

PROJECT COMPETITOR© is a KISS class simulation game of a project management situation. It has an individual or single team model as well as a competitive one and it can be played as a computer run simulation or in a manual mode. The noncompetitive model can be briefed, played and debriefed within a single, 50-minute period and the competitive model takes only slightly more time. The game, as described, simulates a project that needs to be completed within a specific time limit and under a stated budget. This project has three required elements: an analytical component, a technical component and a commercialization component. The simulated project is broken down into four periods in which the player(s) receive(s) feedback and can make needed changes in order to complete the project on time and under budget in only the last 3 time periods. (The designation of a KISS type simulation occurs when the model is to Keep It Simple and Short.)

1. Single player

The participant plays the role of a project manager who has received a project that requires 1,000 hours of time of analytical skills, 1,200 hours of time of technical skills and 1,000 hours of commercialization skills time and the project must be completed within a 12 month period of time and cost less that 25,000 currency units, utilizing no more than three specialists at any one time. The project management task’s skill needs are shown in Table 1.

In this simulation each worker has a set of three specific skills that are needed in the project management task, but the worker seldom excels at all three skills, but when the project manager uses a worker he hires the entire worker not just a single skill. Each worker will be able to devote exactly 300 hours of effort toward the project management task, but the amount of standardized hours of time the worker accomplishes is a function of the workers skills levels. If a worker has a skill level for analytical work of 125, it means that the worker accomplishes 125 hours of analytical work with 100 hours of actual working time.

The specialists are each described on a separate card (about the size of a playing card). This card has the name of the specialist at the top, followed by the identified skill levels of the specialist for all three skills and the quarterly cost for the specialists in currency units. Exhibit 1 displays an example of one of these specialist’s identity cards. The skill score number is the number of hours that specific worker can allocate to the project management task. The project manager must remember that the people he/she uses for the project management task are currently employed by the firm and are, in essence, on loan to the project from their regular department.

Table 2 displays the contents of all 10 cards. These 10 cards are shuffled and three cards are given to the game player. These three cards represent the project manager’s initial team. Note that if the game is played anywhere in the world, the names given above may be changed to fit whatever culture might be best for the location of the game exercise.

The project manager then records the information on the record sheet as shown in Exhibit 2. Sums the four columns on the line called resources consumed, then subtracts these values from the values recorded on the project needs line and records the differences on the remaining needs line. The project manager then decides if he/she needs to replace a specialist with another selection. Note that only one specialist may be replaced per decision round. The simulation is over after playing a total of four rounds. To be successful, the player needs to fulfill all three skill needs within the standardized hours’ constraints and be at or under the projected budget.

1. Competitive model

This project management simulation can be modified slightly in order to make the game a competition between two project managers. The competition mode requires the use of one moderator for each set of two competitive project managers. The project managers review the set of 10 potential workers and if each selects the same person from the list, the project manages bid for the services of that person. The moderator notes the winning bid and the losing project manager then must select his/her second choice from the list; he same record sheet as show in Exhibit 3.

If the first three values in the remaining needs line on Exhibit 2 are all zero or negative, the project manager has completed the project. If, in addition, the budget value on this line is zero or positive the project has been successfully completed.