

# LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®

## *Hands-on team work*

*By Ricard Huguet (www.learnbydoing.com)*

### **What is LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®?**

LEGO SERIOUS PLAY is a methodology that uses LEGO blocks as a tool to facilitate learning, a powerful tool designed to develop competences that help innovate and improve the work of people in any kind of company or organisation.

Using your hands to develop think and imagination allows the establishment of a connexion to the brain that converts the process in an effective tool for change. This tool helps the participants to express themselves and listen to others, which in turn favours problem solving in an assertive way.

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® starts by posing a question, building with LEGO pieces, sharing in the building process and reflecting on the results. Starting from that basis, there are different techniques that can be applied, depending on the strategic objectives and the desired scope

The origin of LEGO SERIOUS PLAY is the search for a tool to unblock innovation inside the LEGO Company itself, and the solution came from within the company: for years it had invited children to build their dreams and now it was time

for adults to start building their own strategic visions for the future. This meant putting in practice the first and main idea of LEGO SERIOUS PLAY, which is the fact that the solutions come from within the group and not from external actors. In this way the team is forced to take full conscience of their company and their work.

Currently this methodology us used in companies all over the world as a way to fortify the work relationship and collaboration among and staff towards the goals of the organisation.

### **Why do we use LEGO blocks?**

There are numerous reasons for using LEGO blocks in this methodology.

In the first place, the power of knowledge that comes from the connection between hands and mind. Our hands are connected to 70-80% of our brain cells. The brain has limitations to the amount of information it can handle





consciously at any given time, but with the help of all the neural connections we have in our hands, we realise we know a lot more at a given moment than we thought. This tool allows participants to express themselves in more detail and they listen to each other. Additionally, the ideas and thoughts are more easily understood and remembered. In addition, LEGO® blocks give each participant a voice to express their ideas. This material makes it easy for the participants to physically model concepts and situations they wish to communicate. No technical knowledge is required, and even if they have never use LEGO blocks, building significant models is an intuitive process. LEGO blocks have different shapes and colours and they can provide inspiration for metaphors even fortuitously. So knowledge that is present in a person or work team is used to the full.

## Why SERIOUS PLAY?

The LEGO SERIOUS PLAY materials and methodology are effective when there is more than one correct answer, and when a company wishes to be conscious of all the available knowledge in its team, to ensure that not only the best solution but also the biggest commitment will be found.

To give a few examples, the LEGO SERIOUS PLAY methodology is very effective when the subject at hand is complex and can be worked at from different angles. It is in those cases that the need to get the whole picture arises, and it becomes important to find all possible connections and explore all potential options and solutions. In these situations, we come to realise that the same question posed to different members of a team results in substantially different answers for each one, a situation in which the comprehension of the team is improved, a common vision can be outlined and the frustrations resulting from innuendo is avoided.

LEGO SERIOUS PLAY can also help when there are no obvious answers to situations that arise, forcing us to acquire new knowledge, perceptions and ways of thinking. Working on complex matters requires a constructive atmosphere, and this can be obtained if we make sure the participants, members of the team, express themselves without any barriers to their feelings or any intimidation. In addition, this tool helps to avoid discussions that could eclipse the purpose of the session without even needing to moderate the debate.

Finally, LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® helps to elevate the interest in the meetings that some consider a useless waste of time, increasing the level of productivity of these meetings by focussing the debate on the message rather than the messenger. It also helps to avoid that members of a team feel their opinion is undervalued or don't feel part of the project.

In order to work as a facilitator you need to get a LEGO SERIOUS PLAY Certification, during which ideas and theories that underlie the methodology are set out and you gain the necessary knowledge to work as a facilitator for workshops using LEGO SERIOUS PLAY through practical training.

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® proposes a training and strategic transformation process that is profoundly experiential.

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