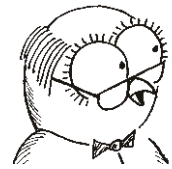


# Organizational Zoo

## Ambassadors Network



### Metaphor Role Play

**Purpose** How to facilitate interactive role plays to simulate/explore options around behavioural implication of decisions and actions.

**Note:** Guidelines are indications for novice practitioners. Experienced facilitators can adjust the methods to achieve specific outcomes. Please ensure a confidential and safe-fail environment to ensure all participants feel comfortable and to ensure optimal involvement.

**Step 1:** Choose if you are role playing a conversation with an individual stakeholder or a stakeholder group. Engaging in a dialogue with a diverse group of stakeholders is much more difficult and is not recommended for your first exercise. However, with experience it is possible for one team member to dialogue with a range of other team members each acting as a separate stakeholder in their preferred animal style.

**Step 2:** Have each player choose one or two cards from a deck of Zoo Character Cards to represent the dominant behaviours of your upward stakeholder. They should stay in character for the entire role play unless it has been agreed they will change as indicated in the variant above.

**Step 3:** Player one opens the dialogue with the stakeholder(s) as one or two short sentences hoping to solicit a specific response. The stakeholder(s) should react within the character of the stakeholder they are playing.

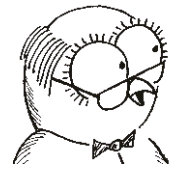
**Step 4:** Continue the interactions between players for three to five exchanges, trying to stay within agreed character at all time, unless it becomes apparent that either player would in reality change if they role play was real. In this case the players should change behaviour and continue to simulate the possible outcomes.

**Step 5:** The players should reflect how they felt about the exchange and how comfortable they were with it. Consider the impacts on the feelings, thinking and actions of the stakeholder. Challenge yourselves as to if you would have received what you wanted from the exchange. If not, what do you need to change to get your desired outcomes?

**Step 6:** Agree how to adjust plans based on learnings generated by the role plays. Does the pitch need to be changed? Should the order of activities be changed? Do we understand the stakeholders? Should we approach the situations with different behaviours?

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### Practicalities and alternatives:

Sometimes a player may want to play a specific script for a specific stakeholder (such as pitching an idea or plan to their boss or a media representative). In these cases they should prepare their own script, especially the first sentences, for maximal impact. What they don't know is how their target will respond, so this becomes the unpredictable part. They can practice their pitch on a variety of other players (playing their own interpretation of how they target will respond) to get a wide variety of options and be ready to adapt their pitch if they need to.

Another variant is for the stakeholder players to be constantly changing their animal. The presenting player must then adjust their style to align with the changes. Team members not directly involved in the exchange should observe and provide independent feedback on the plausibility of the exchange and the likelihood of the displayed behaviours being real. They should also assess if they players are being true to the animal(s) nominated.

It can be fun to differentiate between what the players are **saying** compared to what they are **thinking** as highlighted in the image below. Sometimes things are said to influence, but the real motivation for the statement can be quite different from the literal meaning.

### Outputs and Outcomes

There does not need to be specific (tangible) outputs from this exercise as it may be run just to test a situation. However, often notes are taken about alternatives and plans or communications can be adjusted as a result of the learnings from the role play.

The (intangible) outcomes of the exercise are normally represented in a greater behavioural awareness of the stakeholders being played and a greater sense of relationship between the players. Having "played" together they develop a stronger sense of common understanding and deeper insights in each other. This helps to build trust and relationships across the teams.

### Tools

Tools are not necessary, but use of the **Organizational Zoo Character Cards** helps to develop a more rich exchange in the role play and also provide greater insights into the behavioural relationships. They also make the interaction more fun.

