

FOUNDER'S SPEAK

The Lost Dutchman Virtual is an equally engaging game that brings out all those amazing behaviors we seek. The debrief is evenly powerful, as it leaves a profound impact on the audience.



I have been playing The Search for "The Lost Dutchman's Gold Mine" board game across diverse sectors and geographies from 2008 onwards. It is a highly engaging exercise that brings umpteen reflective learnings right from the leadership level to the bottom of the pyramid based on the kind of debrief we give participants.

When the world underwent the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it brought an abrupt halt to all the in-person sessions, including the playing of the Lost Dutchman in-person sessions. It was apparent that we had to have an online version of the game. I will be candid here as I was apprehensive about how this exercise would be able to bring in the same energy and enthusiasm virtually that were being exhibited in the in-person sessions.

However, all my doubts were taken care of when I first experienced the Lost Dutchman - Virtual. I realized that the game is equally engaging and brings out those amazing behaviors we typically look for. The debrief is evenly powerful, as it leaves a profound impact on the audience.

The team of Jeff Simmerman and Scott Simmerman (our Expedition Leader) at Performance Management Company did a wonderful job of developing an online version of the Lost Dutchman way ahead of time. They have gone to great lengths to retain the interactivity, group involvement, balance, and overall group goals, objectives, and learning outcomes in the transition to this virtual model.

In no time, it became a blessing in disguise and we found a way to mine gold from anywhere in the world with LD-V. We have already rolled out a significant number of programs for our corporate clients. We are fairly certain that the engagement and learnings the Lost Dutchman Virtual brings to the table are going to be a real solution for -

- Anybody looking at how they can become better leaders
- Any leader finding ways to manage their teams better
- Organizations looking at how to maximize the sense of possibilities through the options available
- Communication, collaboration, and celebration.

Thank You!

Happy Reading!

Dr. Jimmy Jain
Founder
Society of Design Thinking Professionals

Editor's Speak

In the month of May 2022, I (for the 1st time ever) experienced something beyond my personal goals, the in-person session of The Search For The Lost Dutchman's Goldmine. Being a remote-working mom, I always held my family as the strongest support system in terms of health, wealth, career, or happiness. As I believe if you're synced with the people with positive vibes, then there's nothing you cannot achieve.

Like, an energy sync.

When I attended the first session of LDGM, it felt like an ice-breaker to open up with my colleagues, to connect, to ponder upon and acknowledge my strengths & weaknesses. It wasn't limited to observations, however, explored into various patterns of how we can learn from each other, an experiential learning process. For me, it became a mindset of collaborative efforts to strive and sustain my growth process.

I have played Lost Dutchman - Virtual too, it resonates the same energy as LDGM, and is as fun to play as the board game. It has a simple, intuitive, and user-friendly interface to hit the ground running instantly.

Please write to me at afreen@sdtp.co.uk, in case of feedbacks, inputs, or you want us to cover any specific topic.

Afreen Fatima
Content & Community Manager
Society of Design Thinking Professionals



Dr. Scott J Simmerman

Ph.D., Former Managing Partner Performance Management Company



“One of my legacy goals is to enable our team-building games and products to help managers better involve and engage their people in workplace improvement initiatives and to have some real positive impacts on people and performance.”



Introduction To The Lost Dutchman's Gold Mine Virtual (LD-V)

Let me start with an image that might apply to the performance issues of the workplace and maybe to Design Thinking in general. This is part of my series of debriefing images for The Search for The Lost Dutchman's Gold Mine, our team-building game and with some feedback, I may more tightly align “the issues and opportunities” in Design Thinking to our Dutchman debriefing processes and support materials. This work is just getting started and the LDV game is rooting from the ground up arduously.

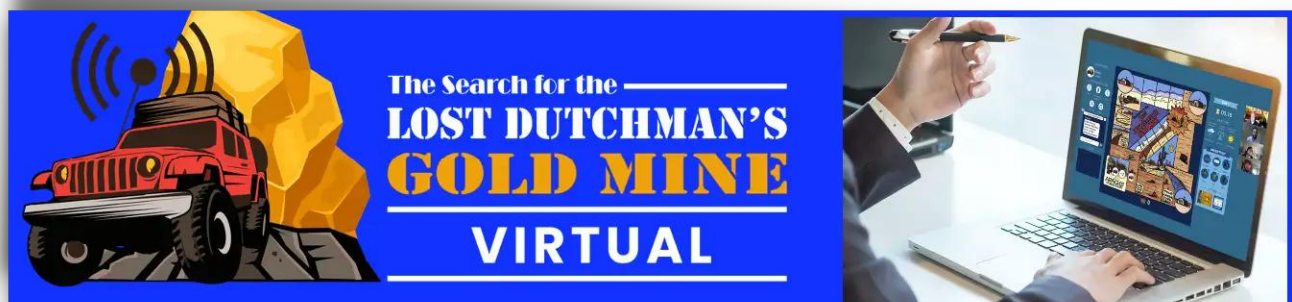


It seems like the team working hard to move their vehicle forward but bogged down by the mud, which might represent all the glop found in most organizations when productivity is desired but inhibited by stuff like politics and culture. And it might be grinding paste, and not mud. That stuff will wear everything down.

- In the background are the silos common in organizations and the causal factor around why “interdepartmental collaboration” is an antinome in so many workplaces.
- We also have those Spectator Sheep in the background, also common in organizations and generally heard “voicing their support” by going “Naaa Baaa” as they watch things not getting done and the people up to their axles in the mud.
- On top of everything, we have The Customer. It is hard to focus on them with so many other things like mud and stuff going on.
- Note that all of them are working hard individually to get things done, however, there are more than a few organizational realities that they have to deal with. What would you do if you were out there pulling and pushing all day, every day?

So, here's my initial thinking about how LDV can be directly applied to impact the implementation of Design Thinking in organizations, to get things down to the workers and supervisors where the real action needs to occur.

Dr. Scott Simmerman is a designer of team-building games and organization improvement tools. Managing Partner of Performance Management Company since 1984, Scott is the original designer of The Search for The Lost Dutchman's Gold Mine team-building game and the Square Wheels® images for organizational development. His specialities include Collaboration, Teamwork, Dis-Engagement, Innovation, Facilitation and Motivation are key frameworks for the tools he has developed. Memorable team building, leadership development, managing and leading change, motivating and involving people are some things he does well. He is a Certified Professional Facilitator by the IAF and a Certified Professional Trainer (IAPPD) with 30+ years of presenting experiences.



The Search for The Lost Dutchman's Gold Mine team-building exercise is designed so that the facilitators can generate teamwork among a team as well as focus on the collaboration versus competition dynamic among the different teams. Generally, some teams will choose to work together and share resources and information with other teams while some will frame their efforts on winning. The design of the game is that the attempt to win will often result in less success and it can also measurably sub-optimize the results of the group.

One of the deep design goals for the online, remote version of Dutchman is to enable the supervisors to deliver the game with their people, functioning as a facilitative Expedition Leader, one whose defined role is, "to help teams be successful and to mine as much Gold as WE can." The operation of the game is straightforward and easy to learn, while the act of facilitating may be a new behavior for many of these supervisors. The game can teach or improve this skill and change the behavior of that manager because facilitation is a critical aspect of the success of the gameplay.

- Design Thinking generates inclusive thinking. Some groups begin the game by working together and sharing ideas while others find competitiveness to block such efforts. The game encourages inter-team collaboration and provides real prospects to change the kind of collaboration that occurs within the workgroup.
- Design Thinking generates progressive adaptability and allows spontaneous change based on new information and ideas for improvement. There is a lot of information in the LDV game that can change the strategies completely, and those who look for information measurably improve performance. The organizations playing LDV have takeaways like the capability of change and performance-focused improvements. It bridges the gap for cognitive dissonance to be a catalyst for change.

The Rewards of LD-V Game

- Adaptation to new ideas.
- It links to the key aspect of Mining More Gold.
- The teams focus on a common goal and make short-term strategies and tactics for more successful solutions.
- Getting Turbochargers to generate more gold and result in generating more sustainable solutions for the actual work and performance demands.
- Teams make decisions that lead to better results, and peer pressure/support allows the team to perform better.
- An essential component of successful play is to listen to the different ideas within a team that enable optimal planning and risk management.
- The structured debriefing and post-game follow-up allow the supervisor to better relate the gameplay and the planning and decision-making to the real issues and opportunities in the workplace.

Alignment and Commitment

The goal of designing the game, back in 1993, was to have a very tight game design that rewarded collaboration over competition and that allowed the Expedition Leader to behave very congruently to the overall goal of maximizing the ROI of all the teams. This tight design (and we made a lot of changes to improve it over the years) was to make debriefing the REAL reason for play. It is in the debriefing where actual issues of workplace improvement, alignment to shared goals, and a customer focus can be discussed and where REAL issues of implementing change can be framed.

LD-V will continue to evolve into a great tool to help managers optimize the performance of their workgroups and align their players toward shared goals and better communications and collaboration.

Jeff Simmerman

Managing Partner

Performance Management Company



"Our main focus always is to translate that into the overall customer experience, and end-user experience. We prioritize L&D (alteration and improvement) of our products to keep them relevant to the current workplace and trends."



Jeff's work experiences in customer service, supervisory, and management positions motivated his decision to join PMC to help further create products leading to a healthier and more efficient organizational culture for everyone. He has been responsible for overseeing the development of the Lost Dutchman's Virtual team-building game and looks forward to positively supporting employees and organizations impacted by today's changing workplace environments.

Below is the detailed discussion around LD-V (Lost Dutchman - Virtual)

Why and how do you think simulations help organizations?

We see a wider transformation in perspective. After the teams finish their simulations, amidst the debriefing process, most teams observed when they were focusing on a shared goal, they were indicative of the way they worked beyond their comfort level. Consequently, experiential learning became a real-time application for most participants to learn and evolve by playing the game. It helped them evaluate the following points:

- How do they interact with each other?
- How do they share resources and information?
- How do they prioritize communications and negotiate with the other teams?
- How efficient are they as a group?
-

Then allow them to open up conversations about their goals, aspirations, and learning perspective to reach that optimal level of communication, efficiency, and overall workplace environment.

Performance Management Company has been involving employees in creating a cooperative culture since 1993, what is the success mantra?

Flexibility. We've tried to be very fluid, open to feedback, constantly improving, and accommodating to all our clients and customers. Our main focus always is to translate that into the overall customer experience, and end-user experience. We prioritize L&D (alteration and improvement) of our products to keep them relevant to the current workplace and trends. Our flexible approach is not limited to our services, however, we can get a multitude of results.

- Inter-team collaboration
- External team collaboration
- Resource management
- Planning and strategy
- Restructuring management
- Employee retention

So, it all drips down to choosing the suitable exercises to establish grounds for your desired outcomes, and get the potential results congruently.

How did LD-V come into existence?

The pandemic affected the way that the remote workplace translates into or has evolved around the world within virtually any type of company. We were a little ahead of the curve on that because we began development for LDGM on a remote, online platform back in 2018. We were working with the University of Southern California (USC) Marshall School of Business. The project was spearheaded by Beth Haley with the Experiential Learning Center. The program had a few issues, however, it was an overall success and a great learning experience for the practical applications of converting the board game to a digital platform.

During the Fall of 2020, we began working with a software development company. We took the lessons learned from the USC version and applied those to the new platform. Over the next year, through multiple sources of feedback, trial and error, and more than a few successes, we created the current version which exists as of today. The game will continue to undergo updates and improvements, however, we couldn't be happier with the end results. The finished product became a truly unique experience for online and experiential learning in the remote workplace environment. As I'm currently aware, there aren't any similar or competitive products offering the experience that LD-V does.

What is the similarity or difference between LDGM and LD-V according to you?

It depends on the individual situation of the customer and the clients. So with LD-V, we tried to encapsulate the user experience through inter-team dynamics, the competition vs collaboration notes, and the overtones that make it similar to that of the board game version. Focusing on communication priorities (zoom or video chat option) allowed the participants to communicate and strategize with other teams, and their own teams swiftly.

In hybrid culture, communication is the efficiency factor as you need to prioritize bringing people together while assessing time management. So, LD-V becomes a phenomenal product leveraging a benefit to engage the participants from both remote and in-office cultures. Also, it allows you to sync the same kind of energy that you get from the live game translated to the remote workplace as well.

Would you like to say a few words about your collaboration with Square Sequel Consulting?

We're excited about the future, and up to this date have received nothing but positive feedback and experiences and are looking to the future for the opportunity for continuous improvement of the platform so we can remain one of the best platforms for online team-building and learning experiences available.

Especially with a collaborative effort, a lot of ideas are in the course of implementation in marketing, back-end support, and the delivery of the game itself. I am curious to witness the next stage of development. It's been wonderful so far, and I've no doubt that it's going to continue down this wonderful path in the future with Square Sequel Consulting.



Experience the Lost Dutchman Virtual!

LETS MAKE IT HAPPEN →

Nasira Banu

Learning and Talent Head

Carl ZEISS, India



Nasira works as a Learning and Talent Head at ZEISS Group, India, having an overall experience of 12 years in the Learning and Development sector. She has completed her bachelor's in Pharmacy followed by Masters's degree in HR and Marketing. As of now, she is pursuing a Ph.D. in Human Resources and Organizational Behaviour.

She has experienced LD-V recently, here are her views about the virtual version of The Search for the Lost Dutchman's Gold Mine board game:

Now that everything's back to normal, what prompted you to choose LD-V over the Search for the Lost Dutchman's Gold Mine board game?

Two factors led me to choose LD-V: the fear of Covid-19 resurge, and the opportunity to consider virtual engagement through management games during the last quarter of the financial year. The other reason was to avoid gathering all the Managers under one roof, who are running the last mile, under the risk radar of COVID-19.

As we are in the initial stage, our L&D fraternity is focussing on promoting virtual learning because it saves us various investment terms like travel, stays, and time constraints. Having a virtual setup for participants brings a lot of excitement and curiosity at the same time. It has become our USP to upsell the virtual programs within the organizations. Now, our goal is to change people's perspectives & mindsets about adaptability from in-person sessions to virtual setups.

Since ZEISS Group is a large organization, do you intend to try LD-V for other departments as well?

Currently, if I had to talk numbers, we anticipated covering approximately 180 managers across different departments of the organization. Definitely, we are looking forward to using it for our leadership team in the near future.

You have recently experienced LD-V. What would you like to share your experience?

There was great positive feedback, I think it's more of a learn-to-recreate process for them & us when we make them go through the entire session. Debriefing helps the participants register the experience and learning in their minds for a long time. It is all about bringing in experiential learning, making them overcome those challenges, and difficulties, and analyzing their potential. Similarly, the LD-V session came through with such a positive outcome. Although it was a virtual setup, it could have been a challenge to move people when everyone is on one screen. However, Zoya Natterwala (Customer Engagement Manager, Square Sequel Consulting) facilitated so gracefully, in terms of navigation - hopping from one breakout room to another while helping them, and it was managed flawlessly.

As people are still apprehensive about virtual training sessions and collaborative event simulation, what would be the message that you will convey to people about the virtual simulations?

I was excited to have a virtual run-through of the board game. Initially, I was a bit apprehensive about the virtual version, however, experiencing it was quite exciting. Yes, there were challenges in the limits of creating more pods, and Jimmy suggested the solutions that worked out effectively for us. The gameplay was easy, interesting, and user-friendly altogether. We played the game for 30-40 minutes and had a debrief session, which seemed satisfactory enough for a day to play virtually.

Experience The Search For The Lost Dutchman's Gold Mine - Virtual Today
Contact Us At - jimmy@sdtp.co.uk or Go To - <https://squaresequel.com/lost-dutchmans-virtual/>

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