

Bonus Track: Six Rules for Designing and Running your Corporate Earthquakes

1. All in the Lead

New corporate realities must be accompanied with new corporate roles in order to sustain the positive changes over time. The time for static supervisor/subordinate relations is running out. Now, we need guides more than experts, followers more than leaders, and hackers and artisans more than employees.

In this sense, use the implementation of this hack as a splendid opportunity to invite your hackathon participants to fulfill a new and thrilling role: to act as the provocateurs, guides and conspirators of change.

2. Look for Crises, not Emergencies

It is important to make a distinction between a crisis and an emergency. The former is the one you should focus on in order to implement this hack.

Crisis: is defined by [Merriam-Webster](#) dictionary as “an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending.”

Emergency: also defined by Merriam-Webster as “an unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state that calls for immediate action”. Please note that a situation, which requires an *immediate action* from your organization, may not force your company to look for unthinkable solutions and; therefore, learn in the process. Instead, it will demand the implementation of the regular, remedial, and obvious approaches in order to reset the company to its original state. For example: a challenge stated as “your best client has an enormous complaint, what should we do?” would require just to follow your customer service guide book or your ISO standards.

In essence, your corporate earthquake challenge must not be based on trying to avoid the occurrence of the earthquake but on how your company can move on from that inevitable change of conditions.

3. It is not all about Nightmares and Terminators Chasing you

Not every crisis is necessarily negative. There are some unexpected opportunities that will demand to think out of the box in order to solve the equation. Previously, we used the example of receiving a 10 million \$ gift. Now, here’s another one: what if some extraterrestrial creatures abducted your competitors? In that case you will have a light-tone riddle to play with.

4. Challenging the Sacred

Identify a sacred belief, something that anyone in your company including you hold as immutable and untouchable, and run a corporate earthquake challenge to defy it.

Here are some examples:

- This is our star client.
- This is our core business.
- This is what our business is about.
- These are our core competences.
- This is how we should compensate people.
- This is the best way to communicate internally and externally.

After the challenge is over, you can ask yourselves: was this [put the name of the sacred belief here] as vital as we thought before?

5. Less is More

Make it fun!

Make it simple!

Don't get too real!

Sci Fi allowed!

6. Debrief Debrief Debrief

Nothing more is needed to be said in order to understand this step than the following. As stated by Thiagarajan, mentioned by Borodzicz and van Haperen in their paper *Individual and Group Learning in Crisis Simulations*, "people don't learn from actual experiences, instead they learn from reflecting on the experience."