

## Board Game in Change Management: Mechanism, Rules, and Duration

Dr. Chaiyaset Promsri

Rajamangala University of Technology Phra Nakhon, Bangkok, Thailand

### \*Corresponding author:

Dr. Chaiyaset Promsri

E-mail: Chaiyaset.p@rmutp.ac.th

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**Abstract:** A board game has become one of useful components in training programs. Effective board games provides numerous benefits for learners or trainees such as helping them quickly understand the related concepts and get engaged in experiential learning as well as learn to solve problems in a specific situation. In addition, using board game in training can help increase practical skills and knowledge for learners of all ages on all topics. The purpose of this study was to develop a board game in change management in Thai context. To develop a board game in change management, two major steps were involved. The first step was a documentary analysis in which keywords such as change board game, change management board game, board game for change and board game for organizational change were used for search on Google. The second step was an integration of board game design and development concepts and change management concepts to create the change management board game prototype. After conducting two critical steps, the game prototype had been published, which identified the number of 4-6 players and 1-2 hours for time duration of play. This game style was “snake and ladders”, which contained 50 spaces for pathway to victory space excluding a starting space and victory space. This game included element of luck in determining reward and punishment written on the different card number that had been identified on some specific space on the board. A total of 24 cards were used in this game, which each card began with “C” alphabet followed by the number. The core mechanic of this game was discussion after some players open the card. This helped increase experiential learning among players.

**Keywords:** Change management, Board game, Game design, Thai board game.

## INTRODUCTION

The traditional management approach widely used in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is no longer appropriate to drive a modern organization for success. Today’s organizations require a new form of leadership and management that involves with the capability of dealing with complexity. The ability to managing change is considered as a major factor required by today’s leaders. As organizational activities are evolving and influenced by various forces in business environment, knowing how to cope with those factors is a key for business success and goals achievement. Change management is one of numerous essential skills that leaders and managers need to develop in order to effectively cope with change in a digital era.

To enhance change management skills for leaders and managers, many organizations usually employ the traditional methods such as lectures delivered by experts in change management, which is

important but somehow viewed as a less effective approach to increase individuals’ skills in a specific area. The recent study found that learners who had been delivered a traditional lectures approach were 1.5 times more likely to fail than learners who had been in classes used more active learning methods [1]. Thus, using other effective approaches is required to help increase change management skills in leaders.

The experiential based learning tools have increasingly become more popular and been utilized in training nowadays. Research revealed that individual’s learning has increased about 70 percent through experience, which the application of using game-based learning tools in training [2]. There is no doubt that games have become one of useful components in training programs. Effective game can have numerous benefits for learners or trainees such as helping them quickly understand the related concepts and get engaged in experiential learning as well as learn to solve problems in a specific situation [3]. In addition,

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using board game in training can help provide hands-on skills and knowledge for learners of all ages on all topics. Individuals have effective learning experience and gain more knowledge when they are having fun and the board game also provides an engaging atmosphere for teamwork.

Board games in change management have been offered as a supportive tool for learning enhancement in related topic in managing change. Many board game designers and developers have attempted to create board games in change management. Based on the literature reviews, this study found three well-known and widely used board games in change management including Wallbreakers® [4], Sys Teams Change® [5], and The Game of Changes (version 1.5) [6]. As noted in The Game Inventor's Guidebook, the big mistake that many game designers usually do is to not looking at the similar games they are trying to invent because they do not want their ideas to be influenced by those similar games [7]. However, this notion is a big mistake because a game designer needs to know the purpose of other similar games and try to avoid developing the game that has already existed. Like board games in change management, although numerous games have already been published, those games are very complex and sophisticated to play and not applicable for Thai context. Moreover, some of them are not a free game that can be accessed from the internet. With these rationales, it is appropriate to create a board game in change management to use in Thai context as this kind of board game is innovative and has not been previously created to use as a supportive tool for training. Therefore, this study aimed at designing and developing board game in change management, and identifying game core mechanic, rules, and duration. This study provided various benefits for the field of board game design and development and training and development.

## METHODOLOGY

The primary goal of this board game is to increase knowledge and skills in change management for Thai executives and managers. To develop a board game in change management, two major steps were involved. The first step was a documentary analysis in which keywords such as change board game, change management board game, board game for change and board game for organizational change were used for search on Google. Results from this search were synthesized by the researcher based on the concepts of Promsri [8], Tinsman [7], and Silverman [9]. Thereafter, the researcher used the results of synthesis to prepare for the development of board game in change management. The second step was an integration of board game design and development concepts and change management concepts to create the change management board game prototype. In this step, efforts of listing relevant issues in change management based on concepts of Kurt Lewin [10] and Kotter [11].

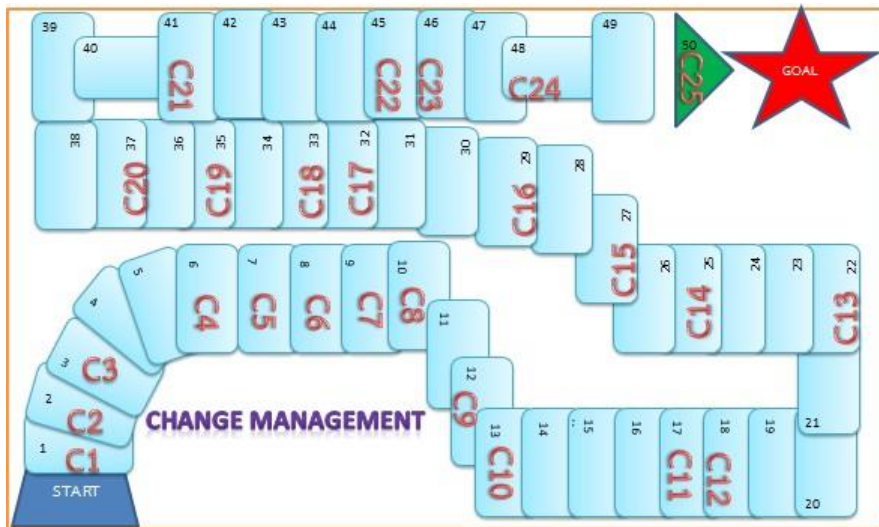
Additional information relating to change management concepts of scholars in management such as Cumming and Worley [12], Hitt, Miller, and Colella [13], Slocum and Hellriegel [14], Daft [15], and Certo and Certo [16] was included. These concepts later were used to develop important statements to determine key results of game players (rewards or punishments) when felled into the specific space on the board. These two steps altogether were conducted to create the game prototype, which was to be tested by the managers in different sizes of corporations in Thailand.

## RESULTS

After conducting two critical steps of developing a board game as mentioned previously in methodology section, the game prototype had been published with details in mechanism, rules, and duration as the following statements:

- This game was appropriate for 4-6 players and time duration of play was 1-2 hours
- The game style was “snake and ladders”, which comprised of 50 spaces for pathway to victory point. The victory point was not included in 50 spaces, and named as “goal achievement in change management”
- This game included element of luck through the determination of reward and punishment written on the different card number that had been identified on some specific space on the board. Players would have fun in challenging each other while playing this game and would be moved back and forth based on the dice and luck happened from the card opening.
- There were 24 cards used in this game, which each card began with “C” alphabet followed by the number. “C” represents “Change” in this game.
- The core mechanic of this game was discussion after some players open the card. This helped increase experiential learning among players.
- To win the game or to reach the victory point, a player needed to roll the dice with the specific number of the rest spaces to the victory. For example, if a player's position was on the 50<sup>th</sup> space and had one single step to a victory, a player needed to roll the dice to number 1 to get move to the victory point. If a player got the different number, a setback was applied.
- This game also applied the catch-up features, which the first player to the victory space does not win until he/she was able to describe the main concepts of change management proposed by Lewin [10] and Kotter [11] correctly.

Figure 1 showed the prototype of board game in change management, which comprised of 50 spaces excluding a starting point (start) and a victory point (goal) on the board. The number of different cards was identified on the specific space, which a player needed to open the card when fallen into that given space.



**Fig-1: The Prototype of Board Game in Change Management**

Table 1 demonstrated “the statements” related to change management concepts that were written on each specific card, and consequence received from that

statement. Also, table 1 displayed the number of space that a player had a chance to open the card and the source of the concepts.

**Table-1: Statements Related to Change Management Procedures and Consequences**

Code	Statements	Results	Position	Sources
C1	“Don’t assess business environment forces that have an effect on organizational change”	Go back to the starting point	1 <sup>st</sup> Space	Daft [15]
C2	“Don’t create the sense of urgency for change”	Withhold for one round	2 <sup>nd</sup> Space	Kotter [11]
C3	“Using power of organizational members to drive change in an organization”	Move forward two spaces	3 <sup>rd</sup> Space	Slocum & Hellriegel [14]
C4	“Determine change agents from their expertise and experience”	Roll dice one more time	6 <sup>th</sup> Space	Certo & Certo [16]
C5	“Don’t create shared vision for change in an organization”	Move back 5 spaces	7 <sup>th</sup> Space	Cumming & Worley [12]
C6	“Don’t communicate vision of change to organizational members”	Move back 2 spaces	8 <sup>th</sup> Space	Lewin [10], Kotter [11]
C7	“Explain the importance of change to organizational members”	Move forward 2 spaces	9 <sup>th</sup> Space	Lewin [10], Kotter [11]
C8	“Explain the negative effects and consequences of unchanged reaction for organizational members”	Move forward 1 space	10 <sup>th</sup> Space	Hitt, Miller, & Colella [13]
C9	“Determine just only one type of change without integrating employees, structure, and technology change”	Move back 5 spaces	12 <sup>th</sup> Space	Certo & Certo [16]

C10	“Building synergy for change efforts”	Move forward 1 space	13 <sup>th</sup> Space	Kotter [11]
C11	“Provide essential resources for change efforts”	Move forward 1 space	17 <sup>th</sup> Space	Lewin [10]
C12	“Provide education and training activities to employees, which leads to effective change in an organization”	Move forward 1 space	18 <sup>th</sup> Space	Lewin [10]
C13	“Don’t link all activities and strategies to new vision, and don’t take actions that is related to vision”	Withhold for one round	22 <sup>nd</sup> Space	Kotter [11]
C14	“Leave threats existed without eliminating or managing them”	Move back 2 spaces	25 <sup>th</sup> Space	Kotter [11]
C15	“Build a short-term victory by selecting a successful project of the first stage of change management process”	Roll dice one more time	27 <sup>th</sup> Space	Kotter [11]
C16	“Don’t analyze cause of change resistance”	Withhold one round	29 <sup>th</sup> Space	Slocum & Hellriegel [14]
C17	“Provide feedback for change progress leading to adaption and adjustment through the change process”	Move forward 3 spaces	32 <sup>nd</sup> Space	Slocum & Hellriegel [14]
C18	“Don’t assess impacts of change on stakeholders”	Move back 5 spaces	33 <sup>rd</sup> Space	Lewin [10], Kotter [11]
C19	“A manager doesn’t want to communicate with resisting change employees because of anxiety and fear”	Withhold one round	35 <sup>th</sup> Space	Lewin [10], Kotter [11]
C20	“Evaluate results of change continuously in each step of change process”	Move forward 3 spaces	37 <sup>th</sup> Space	Certo & Certo [16]
C21	“Don’t establish reward structure both monetary and nonmonetary to reinforce or motivate employees to demonstrate preferable behaviors in change process”	Move back 3 spaces	41 <sup>st</sup> Space	Hitt, Miller, & Colella [13]
C22	“Establish employment and promotion systems that encourages change supports”	Move forward 2 spaces	45 <sup>th</sup> Space	Hitt, Miller, & Colella [13]
C23	“Implement training system that to alleviate related skills and knowledge in sustain continuous change”	Move forward 1 spaces	46 <sup>th</sup> Space	Lewin [10]
C24	“An executive claims victory too soon making employees stop supporting change process”	Move back to the starting point	48 <sup>th</sup> Space	Kotter [11]
C25	“Don’t support employees to maintain their behaviors for change until change becomes part of organizational culture”	Withhold 2 rounds	50 <sup>th</sup> Space	Kotter [11]
GOAL	Explain change management process based on the concepts of Lewin [10] and Kotter [11]			

### Conclusion, Discussions, and Recommendations

The objective of this study was to develop a board game in change management and describe mechanism, rules, and duration of game play. The prototype was finally published based on two essential steps of methodology. Related concepts in change management proposed by scholars and experts in this field were utilized for board game development. Overall, this change management board game contained 52 spaces, which included a starting space and a victory space. A total of 24 cards were implemented as part of game mechanism. Each card contained an important statement related to change management process. This board game was the first board game in change management in Thai context with the efforts to utilize

in corporate and academic training to enhance executives’ knowledge and skills in change management. The design and development of this board game were created based on board game development concepts proposed by Tinsman [7] and Silverman [9]. However, this board game placed its focus on the enhancement of knowledge and skills in change management process solely. The application of these knowledge and skills needs to be followed up. Thus, to ensure knowledge implication, the next prototype of change management board game should create additional part of the game that helps players be able to put theory into practices.

Besides having fun during the game play, individuals who play this board game will learn more about change management process from the pathways to the victory space. This game surely increases individuals' learning and encourages their experience during the game. However, playtesting is still required for this board game to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the game. Also, the playtesting with different groups of people including experts in change management and executives in distinctive sizes of organizations can provide ample feedbacks to a game developer to adjust the game that suits for the target groups. Additionally, this board game is encouraged to be utilized as a supportive tool in training and traditional classroom to examine whether people have better understanding and learn more about change management compared to the traditional learning approach.

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