



Territorial Games – Self-Awareness Survey

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Every group in every organization will, at one time or another find that territorial games have de-railed some of their best efforts. Someone feels slighted, resources seemed unfairly allocated, or there is “evidence of favoritism.” No one will ever know who started it...the best you can do is stop these games before they do even more damage.

How?

Get the topic on the table, expose any hidden sabotage, and help people take responsibility for their actions. Most game players are either unaware that they are perceived as game players or in denial about the impact of their actions. This survey allows you to let the group self-examine at the same time they give feedback to others. Exposing these hidden dynamics allows the unaware game players to change their behavior, and the unrepentant to see that this behavior may not be getting them what they think they want.

1. Introduce the ten territorial games to the group. You can download a PowerPoint presentation from <http://www.groupprocessconsulting.com>. Ensure that the games are presented in a way that makes it “okay” to admit these feelings/behaviors.
2. Photocopy the survey so you have enough for all team members.
3. Pass out the survey and ask team members to check the three territorial games (three in each of the three columns) that they feel are
 - a. Played on them by co-workers
 - b. Played on them by their boss
 - c. Played by them to protect their interests
4. When the surveys are complete ask someone to tabulate the frequency of the check marks.
5. Report the results to the group. Ask the group to discuss the following issues:
 - a. What creates territorial feelings?
 - b. How often do we feel like we need to protect our own interests at work?
 - c. How would this organization run if we trusted each other to protect our interests?
 - d. What are some realistic agreements that might increase trust?
6. Bring in people from other parts of the organization to continue the dialogue.



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Territorial Games	Used by your Peers	Used by your Boss	Used by You
1. Occupation Marking territory; maintaining an imposing physical presence; acting as the gatekeeper for vital information; monopolizing relationships, resources, or information			
2. Information Manipulation Withholding information, putting a “spin” on information, covering up, or giving false information			
3. Intimidation “Growling”, yelling, staring someone down, scaring off, or making threats (veiled or overt)			
4. Powerful Alliances Using relationships with powerful people to intimidate, impress, or threaten others; using name dropping; making strategic displays of influence over important decision makers			
5. Invisible Wall Actively instigating circumstances or creating counterproductive perceptions so that an agreed-upon concept is, if not impossible to implement, very, very difficult to implement			
6. Strategic Noncompliance Agreeing up front to take action and having no intention of taking that action, or agreeing just to buy time to find a way to avoid taking that action			
7. Discredit Using personal attacks or unrelated criticisms as a way of creating doubt about another person’s competence or credibility			
8. Shunning Subtly (or not so subtly) excluding an individual in a way that punishes him; orchestrating a group’s behavior so that another is treated like an outsider			
9. Camouflage Creating a distraction, emphasizing the inconsequential, or deliberately triggering someone’s anxiety buttons just to distract him or her			
10. Filibuster Using excessive verbiage to prevent action, outtalking any objectors at a meeting, talking until time for discussion is exhausted, or simply wearing others down by outtalking them			

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Adapted from: *Territorial Games: Understanding and Ending Turf Wars at Work* (AMACOM 1998) by Annette Simmons