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The LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® method is officially writing in caps and registered with ®. We use in our article mostly the abbreviation "LSP", to improve the reading for you, our readers.

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PLAYGROUND FOR **ENTREPRENEURS**

Some reflections

By Inge de Dreu, Laxman Murugappan and Michel Cloosterman

> 'The Playground for Entrepreneurs' board game launched in 2021. An initiative from Inge de Dreu, a dedicated professional with a decade of experience in entrepreneurship education and coaching. Over the years, Inge has been privileged to work with more than 500 start-up teams, for years in Colombia, but now also on a global scale.

> Inge developed a board game and started her business using elements of play to talk about serious business challenges for entrepreneurs and start-ups. The game is initially intended for the early-stage entrepreneurship and enhances entrepreneurial thinking and behaviour. Besides the fact that facilitators of the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP) method like play, two other elements attracted us to talk with Inge about the ideas behind 'The Playground'.

The ideas behind 'The Playground'

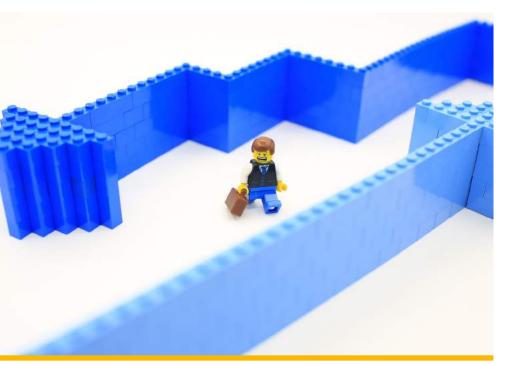
Inge mentions that many people know Alexander Osterwalder's Business Model Canvas as a classic approach of nine strategic decisions to developing your business. Another well-known author is Eric Nies who wrote the bestseller 'The Lean Start-up' and, amongst many other things, shared the failure of his first start-up; essentially because he was busy launching his product, instead of understanding what his customers wanted. Besides these sources of inspiration, Inge worked with Steve Blank and Bob Dorff - two highly experienced investors and initiators of mutual start-ups.

From her work in Columbia and the exchange with Steve Blank and Bob Dorf, Inge shares that starting a business, does not start with writing a business plan. That might surprise people, but essentially that those kind of plans don't work in the starting phase. What does work is interacting with your environment, your potential customers. What is it they want? And does your product or services answer that question? So, essentially what are you offering that creates value for the customers and makes them willing to pay for

EXPERIENCES ON HANDLING OBJECTION

Feedback and Insights

By Pippo Sorrentino and Imma Ripoll



Navigating uncertainty

1. FORGET THE BRICKS, ENJOY PEOPLE

Let's start with a question; after all it is the core process!

Pippo, how much experience do you have with the LSP methodology? Cool, less than 20 months and so many things, reactions and feedback already taken home.

I'm a man of big jumps

Six years ago, I closed my family company after 54 years of business then, about two years ago I jumped into a methodology totally unknown to me, that today is a real masterpiece in what I offer to my clients. At the very beginning, I must admit, bricks were the powerful bullets I used to introduce myself to clients and, not so incredibly, it worked. I took my income to a more satisfying level, and I got satisfied too, playing with bricks, but...

...Per Kristiansen's words were rebounding in my head.

Question: How do I sell LSP? Answer: It's simple, don't sell LSP.

No, is also an answer

I moved my focus from bricks to people and the magic appeared; I began to say "NO" to

LAWYERS AND LEGO®

Positioning your offering and winning work

By Claire Rason

Lawyers and LEGO®. It might be an alliteration, but they aren't two words that you would necessarily put together. In this article, Claire Rason explores how she gets lawyers playing with LEGO, and in so doing, articulates some lessons that you can take away to boost your business development efforts.

Oil and Water

I am a coach and a business development expert. I combine consulting and coaching to support professional services firms with growth and relationships. I work with lots of law firms and consequently lots of lawyers. In the interests of disclosure, I actually started of life as one! My inside knowledge of law firms is what drew me to LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP). I could see the value of it, and now I am an accredited facilitator, I am on a mission to show law firms the value of it too.

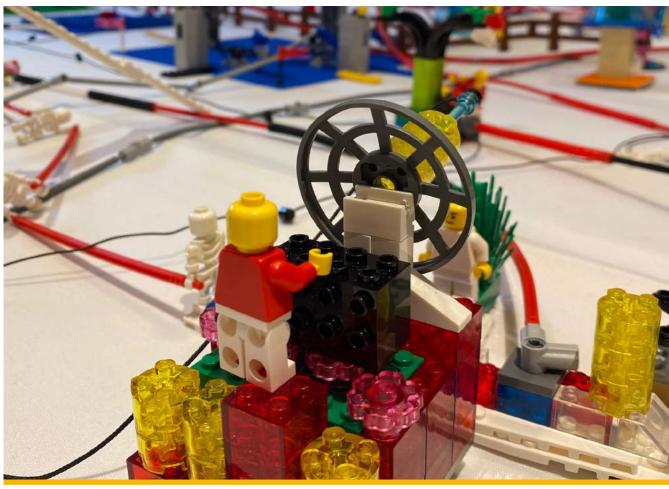
Lawyers are often thought of as a serious bunch. As a collective, they can be daunting and introducing play to their world might seem a little bit risky. However, the LSP method and lawyers aren't like

oil and water, instead LSP is a powerful tool to encourage deeper thinking and cut across some of the politics that are often present in law firms. When lawyers get their hands on LEGO it is more like peas and carrots. They just need to give themselves permission to play!

Positioning LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®: who and what

As a marketing and business development expert, a lot of what I do comes back to positioning. Positioning in a marketing sense is about the space you want to occupy in your consumer's mind with your product or service. It links to how your customer thinks about you when they come to making a choice. It is the reason customers will choose you.

The first thing that you need to do when you want to sell is to understand who you are selling to. Client Talk sells to professional services firms, with law firms being a key market within that. LEGO SERIOUS PLAY appeals to so many markets. However, if you want to be successful in selling your skills facilitating it, you need to think about where you are



A LEGO model

going to focus.

Once you have established the who, you then need to think about what value you bring to your market. Before you do that though, you need to understand their why. Why would vour market be looking for you?

Most customers buy because they are looking to generate a gain of some sort, or to avoid some pain. It is here that you need to put yourself into your clients' shoes. What is it that they might be looking to achieve? Let's use lawyers as an example. Being for-profit, one of the things that lawyers are looking for is to make money. There are lots of dreadful jokes about lawyers and money, so that particular insight is perhaps not so insightful. However, digging deeper into it, they are looking to be trusted advisors. They are looking for a way to meaningfully connect with their clients. They are wanting to deliver great service. Some are now thinking about how to deliver value outside of the relationship itself, for example including the environment as a stakeholder. All of those things will help lawyers make money, but that is secondary to the other gains they are thinking about.

In terms of what they might be avoiding, one pain that is particularly prevalent in the legal industry is the pain of good people leaving. The industry is striving to be more diverse. Many firms don't have a problem with attracting talent, but they struggle to see some of this diverse talent make its way through. If attrition can be avoided, then firms succeed.

The value

We have the who, and we know what they are looking for. Now it's time to connect

A CODDIWOMPLE TAKE ON BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Coddi-what?

By Stephanie Wheeler

'Coddiwomple' - to travel in a purposeful manner towards a vague destination.

This has been my motto of business development. Let me say at the outset that I am not a business development expert, so I'm not offering advice or a tried and trusted method on expanding your LSP offering. Instead, I'll share with you some of my thoughts about my own business development journey with a sprinkling of coaching questions, some of which I hope might resonate with you and be helpful.

Clarity on values

How clear are you on your top 3-5 values? Do these differ from your business' values? If so, in what way? Whether we are conscious of it or not, our values drive much of our behaviour (not always in the direction we would like!). For example, one of my top values integrity and learning.

During my transition from my previous roles as a lawyer and stay-at-home parent to coach and LSP facilitator, my plan from the outset was to start by building a strong foundation of knowledge. I completed a MSc in Coaching for Behavioural Change at Henley Business School, undertook further courses, published peer-reviewed research articles and more recently a book. For the first few years, learning, rather than business development was my focus. I was starting off my coddiwomple intentionally focusing on learning my craft. I know plenty of others who launched businesses which appear to be going well with far fewer qualifications - I'm not making a judgment, just being clear on what is important to me.

Being clear on your values is just the start, however. Too much or too little can slow down or mis-direct your journey. When values are being



Let's coddiwomple!

pushed up against, we can feel and think things that lead to behaviour which slows down or takes us away from our desired direction of travel. For example, if I'm not careful, my value of integrity and learning can hold me back - they can be fuel for my inner critic (for example, 'I don't know enough', 'I don't have enough experience' which might sound familiar to you). If my inner critic gets too much air time, it can lead to behaviour like procrastination and avoiding potential opportunities, neither of which are supportive of business development. Equally, if I focus too much on my values, it might slow down my speed of travel. It's all too easy for me to stay in the comfort zone of learning (and there's no shortage of courses and books) rather than giving myself a nudge to step into my lesser zone of comfort of networking and business development.

Ideal is an awareness of our

values and checking in frequently to see what emotions and thoughts are coming up for us in the day-to-day and if necessary, adjusting our behaviour to keep us or get us back on course. As an example, when my reflex is to sign up for another course, dismiss a potential opportunity as I doubt my expertise or procrastinate on a task which would help my business, I try to remember to check in whether any of my core values are driving this behaviour. If I need to redress the balance, I'll have a kind word with myself (or seek out some coaching) to free up my behaviour in a way which does support my business and ultimately my values.

Clarity on Strengths

For many of us, it can be far to easy to focus on our weaknesses, on what we need to improve. While of course this is important, there is a considerable body of research in the

LSO BE HEARD?

The LSP podcast

By Kerstin Müller

Teaching a haptic method auditorily

First of all, let me tell you I've been a passionate podcaster since 2017 which might explain how I came up with the idea of starting a podcast with my esteemed colleague Matthias Renner.

The idea came to me during many conversations with Matthias. In 2021 we worked intensively on his website, because 'website creation, strategic marketing, and branding consulting' remains my main business. I have to admit that I had never heard of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP) before meeting Matthias when a whole new world opened up for me. It then took until May 2023 until we published the first episode of 'Enten-Talk - der LEGO® SE-RIOUS PLAY® Podcast'.

Why a podcast about LEGO SERIOUS PLAY?

Good question! It's mainly

because I love challenges and don't let them stop me from trying something before I've tried it. But of course, through my podcast experience, I also know how powerful this medium can be and that more and more people are listening to podcasts. You end up directly in the ear of your target audience and can build a very personal connection as a result. I also enjoy listening to podcasts myself.

A podcast is a wonderful marketing tool that is perfect for showcasing your expertise and, of course, that of your guests. It allows us to present exciting topics on a different level. Each of our episodes is designed as an interview. Either Matthias and I interview each other, or we invite exciting guests join us. The art here is to conduct an interview that is precisely prepared and yet sounds natural. Entertaining knowledge transfer is the focus for us and also the challenge that the episodes must not become too long, because we also

For me it looks a little different. I've been a facilitator since the beginning of 2023, and for me, at the moment it's just one method of many that supports me in my work, but also opens up new subject areas at the same time. I have created a separate website for LSP, because I must not confuse my existing clients, otherwise they will think that I no longer make websites. That's why I only post about LSP on LinkedIn and Instagram on Thursdays, and on my 'normal' website there is only a small link to the new website, because the target groups are still very different at the moment. It's a bit of a balancing act and the plan is that the two things will eventually grow together. It remains to be seen whether LSP will get a bigger share of my overall business in the long run!

Additionally, Matthias and I write blogposts about the individual episodes to feed the search engines and also to pick up the less auditory interested with a shortened version of the episode. To make this work easier for us, we partly use transcripts of the audio file and Artificial Intelligence.

Conclusion

What originally started as a fun project, the podcast has become an integral part of both of our marketing strategies and provides a good answer to the question of whether a haptic method can be presented auditorily. The answer is a resounding "YES."

Ready for a good talk!

Enten-Talk:

https://enten-talk.com

Kerstin Müller

https://mueller-macht.com

Matthias Renner

https://brickolution.com

About Kerstin:

Kerstin Müller supports solopreneurs and companies with their web presence to be visible and successful in the long run. She advises them on strategic challenges and their marketing strategies. As a LEGO SERIOUS PLAY Facilitator, she adds to her toolbox of methods to support her clients even more extensively.

WHEN WORLDS 1EET **Growth FOLLOWS**

A networking opportunity

By Sander Kuin

What we do

I'm a relatively new kid on the block, having trained at the beginning of 2022, and since then on a quest to bring the experiences of a workshop with the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP) method to people. I work as an Activation Manager at PLNT, the centre of innovation and entrepreneurship in Leiden (Netherlands). We are initially a foundation and incubator to support entrepreneurship within the Leiden region. We work closely with the education system (universities, secondary vocational education), municipalities and local companies to support innovative ideas. We have been doing this for five years with a team of 19 people. We have a big and diverse ecosystem that caters to all needs for emerging start-ups, and we do that by organising and facilitating free start-up programs, international hackathons, educational collaborations and so much more.

Ambitious

Sometimes matches are made in heaven. Since my training I've delivered workshops within PLNT supporting hundreds of talents to grow their start-up idea. This has become so successful, that nowadays most of the workshops and all of the personal coaching in these programs are done using LSP. But there is more. Not only do we apply the LSP method in the start-up programs, but also for larger events, like student career markets, activation events, coaching and corporate training.

The Challenge

Something amazing is about to happen at PLNT incubator. Since quite a lot of the applications of LSP needs to become or stay accessible in the near future for the participants, there is a speculative ambition within the incubator to create a large physical 'serious play' haven where we

RTFD AS A NOVICE **FACILITATOR**

Some advice

By Marije Kooi



Meet Marije

Did you also enjoy the four--day LEGO Serious Play (LSP) training as much as I did? My mind was brimming with the intense inspiration from those days. However, later, I realised that the real journey had just begun. What was I going to do with all this wonderful new knowledge?

I was certain that I wanted to pursue this path, but I grappled with how to put it into practice. This led to a period of self-reflection: What kind of facilitator did I want to become? How could I integrate this with my current work? If I were to focus solely on the LSP methodology, how would I kickstart my entrepreneurial journey? And of course, I had numerous practical questions.

Now, over three years later, I've found my way. Most importantly, I realised that while I wanted to use the LSP methodology extensively, the core of my business lies in my educational and work background. My roots are in art therapy and organisational anthropology. Presently, I concentrate on addressing organisational inquiries related to learning cultures.

For most organisations, cultivating a learning culture entails a fundamental shift in their approach to work and learning. In such a culture, learning, exploration, and experimentation are integral to the work process. Generating new ideas, experimenting, sharing feedback, reflecting on actions, coaching, and various other forms of learning are regarded as productive, not a waste of time.

Focusing on fostering a learning culture within teams has given my entrepreneurial journey a clear direction. Additionally, I inform my clients that I approach this playfully and creatively. I view play as a valuable quality that adults often underestimate but could employ more effectively.

STOP SEFING

Using NLP and changing your perceptual position will help you in promoting LSP

By Sergio Hernandez Ledward and Martijn Nas

Imagine a passionate and experienced LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP) facilitator who truly believes in the transformative power of this methodology. The LSP facilitator has witnessed first-hand how LSP can unlock creativity, drive innovation, and foster collaboration. This could be any of us!

However, this facilitator faces a significant challenge - despite the deep conviction - struggling to persuade potential clients to embrace LSP. Time and time again, we encounter objections, such as "We don't have time for play" or "Isn't it just a gimmick?" These objections can leave the facilitator frustrated, feeling like hitting a wall, unable to convey the true value of LSP to our audience.

In the realm of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), perceptual positions are con-

sidered a powerful tool for enhancing communication, understanding, and sales success. These concepts seamlessly integrate with the LSP methodology not only to promote effective communication but also to bolster your product or service promotion. Basically, these positions invite us to explore the world - or the LSP proposal - from four different mental locations. So, let's delve into them and explore how you, as an LSP facilitator, can employ them to enhance the promotion of your LSP service.

1. First Position (Self)

In the first position, the facilitator must see the world from his own eyes and first examine their own perception of themself and the service on offer. While their enthusiasm is genuine, they need to refine their understanding of why LSP is so vital in today's fast-paced business environment. They should reflect on the tangible benefits they have personally gained from LSP, not just in terms of creativity, but also in problem-solving and team dynamics. By articulating these benefits clearly, the facilitator can convey their genuine passion and belief in the transformative potential of LSP to potential clients.

The first position revolves around your own perspective (see picture 1). Your own feelings, thoughts, and experiences. As an LSP facilitator, you can use this position to promote your services by understanding how it aligns with your own vision, values, and expertise. Ask yourself the following questions and as always, we suggest building a model on that and give yourself reflection time.

- What is unique about my facilitation of LSP?
- How is my approach and expertise different to other services in the market?
- Why am I so passionate about it?
- How has LSP improved my own life or my work?

These insights will help you speak even more authentically and passionately about you and your services facilitating LSP, it will build trust with potential clients. This first perceptual position puts you in contact with the unique gifts that you can offer.

2. Second Position (Other)

No matter how important it is to use your own style and understand your own talents, values, and experience as a facilitator of LSP, the service you offer is not about you, but

about the issues and aspirations of your clients. To be of real service (not to say to address objections effectively) the facilitator must step into the client's shoes. They need to understand the aspirations. concerns and limitations faced by these clients; try and see the world through their eyes.

Let us exemplify this using the issue of time. By genuinely empathising with the time constraints that organisations deal with, the facilitator can reframe the way they present LSP. Instead of pitching it as a 'playful workshop that will take X hours' they can focus on how LSP is a time-efficient tool for generating innovative solutions and accelerating decision-making. By showing that LSP can save time through fostering better communication and more efficient problem-solving, the facilitator can overcome this common objection.

The second position entails understanding the world from the perspective of the other, in this case your potential and actual clients (see picture 2). As an LSP facilitator, you can use this position to promote your service by thoroughly comprehending the needs, desires, and challenges of your target audience.

Suggestions for reflection (and building) on this position are:

- What are the problems my client is grappling with?
- How are those problems seen/felt from my client's perspective?
- Why is my client trying to solve this particular pro-
- What benefits and outcomes does my client want to achieve?
- How can my service align



Picture 1: First position



Picture 2: Second position



AROUND THE GLOBE

Meet Wendi Dykes McGehee, PhD

How did you get to know **LEGO SERIOUS PLAY?**

Early in my professional career, I began working for The LEGO(R) Group in 1998 as a member of the LEGOLAND California (USA) grand opening team. I spent 11 years with the organization primarily in the Training and Organizational Development space. In the early 2000's there were murmurs around the office of LEGO(R) SERIOUS PLAY(R) (LSP) but I did not actually get certified in the method until 2017. By this time, I had transitioned to higher education and was working as a university professor at Azusa Pacific University in the Los Angeles area. While earning my PhD in Human and Organizational Systems, I decided to work with the best system I know, the LEGO system of play, and study how engagement in the methodology of LSP can help to develop the muscle of creative confidence that exists inside all individuals. Exercising this muscle, allows individuals and teams to generate creative, plausible, and sustainable solutions to the challenges facing their workplace. Since this time. I have continued to use the LSP method in my research and have published on topics such as, 'Reframing Play in the Adult Vocabulary," "Constructing Creative Confidence with LEGO(R) Serious Play(R), " and "Play Produces Serious Results."

Can share you anything about LSP in your country/state. Is it know to people and/or clients? Is there a community or growing?

From my vantage point, the popularity of LSP is growing exponentially in the United Organizations States. LinkedIn, VISA, Kaiser Permanente Healthcare, and the US Navy have set out to prove they are "mature enough to play."

For many Americans, play is often viewed as a frivolous, mindless, and unproductive activity which merely serves the purpose of fun, jovial camaraderie, escape, and/or relaxation. Those who chose to engage in LSP are experiencing play with purpose and discovering how serious play can transform their workplace. Play is being redefined as a tool that includes (a) meaning, (b) intentionality, (c) process, and (d) learning. Seriousness and playfulness do not have to compete.

And what are your plans with LSP for your business/education?

Currently, the School of Business and Management at Azusa Pacific University, has incorporated LEGO SERIOUS PLAY into our classrooms. Using the methodology to teach complex topics like organizational systems theory and change for our graduate students and personal leadership development for our undergraduate students, the LSP method is proving to be an excellent pedagogical tool that offers deep learning and a lasting understanding of theoretical concepts.

We have recently piloted using a model, introduced by Robert Rasmussen, called "thinking in 3D with LEGO SERRIOUS PLAY" to combat the challenges educators are facing with ChatGPT and its ability to write papers and generate test answers through artificial intelligence.

This Fall, our faculty team is conducting a study with First Year students to explore if engagement with LSP can increase vocational identity among this demographic.



Wendi Dykes McGehee, PhD. wmcgehee@apu.edu

Certified LEGO(R) SERIOUS PLAY(R)facilitator Faculty School of Business and Management at Azusa Pacific University in Southern California, USA.



WHAT'S NEXT: WINTER ISSUE

The LSP Magazine

Who needs prove when you can play?

From this edition, on how to position the LEGO® SE-RIOUS PLAY® method, another question came to my mind. A question also regularly asked by customers: Is there any evidence that this method works? You may be wondering where the objection comes from. And I really hope that after reading issue 12, you have found a way to deal with this kind of question.

As we know, the 'proof question' can be interpreted in different ways. Does your client mean, are there examples, business cases, similar organisations that have dealt with this LSP method? Or is it about quotes, can he/she call someone to hear what the experience was? Or is it that they don't



immediately trust you as a facilitator to tackle their serious business problems in a playful way?

Your clients may want to know if this is just playing with LEGO® bricks, or has anyone thought about this? The fact that it stems from a project initiated by the CEO of the LEGO company helps. But still, you sometimes see your customer thinking 'they make toys' (well, maybe that is not all they do).

So the ultimate question might be: is there science behind this method?

And yes, there is. After three years of the LSP magazine, maybe it's time to do an issue on the subject of Science and LEGO SERIOUS PLAY. And what issue would be better than issue 13?

Will you be contributing?

Our question to you, member of the LSP Magazine.

Do you have any experience or expertise on topics like flow, neuroscience, learning theories, imagination, innovation, real-time strategy, play ... or any other topic related to the LSP method? Or did you conduct research yourself or were you part of a team conducting a research project?

Or can you give us tips, suggestions of colleagues, researches anywhere in the world who have written, presented or delivered a wonderful lecture on science and LEGO SERIOUS PLAY.

LET US KNOW!!! -THANK YOU

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