

Play at Work

A new board game helps employees think like a hospital CEO.

Matt Rogers

Move over, Monopoly. Catholic Healthcare Partners, the largest nonprofit hospital system in Ohio, recently completed a pilot program using **Zodiak®: The Game of Business Finance and Strategy** to teach 140 managers more about the business side of healthcare.

The board game, a product of Tampa, Florida-based Paradigm Learning, is targeted at healthcare organizations that want to help their future leaders better understand financial terms and concepts. The game lets five- or six-member teams perform problem-solving and decision-making tasks. The first portion of the game is a three-year scenario involving a fictitious accounting service firm. Players select investors as business partners, using chips that represent cash. Participants then switch gears midday and apply the morning's business techniques to healthcare-specific financial strategies. The game takes approximately three to four hours to complete.

"Our goal is to teach our associates financial concepts so they understand their role in the financial stewardship of our organization," says Debbie Bloomfield, Catholic Healthcare Partners vice president and system controller.



Zodiak®: The Game of Business Finance and Strategy

In addition to getting future leaders actively involved in understanding revenue streams as well as billing and collection cycles, the game cultivates fundamental business learning principles, says Jan Donley, corporate director of learning at Catholic Healthcare Partners. "Players go through a process of engagement, having to discover things by using critical-thinking skills, projections and planning," she explains.

Catholic Healthcare Partners initially purchased system licenses from Paradigm, which helped reduce the per-participant cost. According to Bloomfield, the organization will use the remaining licenses over the next two years. Paradigm representatives coach selected Catholic Healthcare Partners staff members, ranging from pharmacy directors to nursing managers, in the rules of the game, and those trainees then teach other high-potential, high-performance leaders how to play.

Employee feedback has shown marked improvement in participating employees' comfort levels with business strategy and terminology, which Bloomfield says is one of the game's primary goals. "We want to reinforce a culture of financial accountability within the health system and more closely connect the finance folks with the operations people."

About Paradigm Learning

Paradigm Learning (www.ParadigmLearning.com) is a privately held company based in Tampa, Florida. Since 1994, it has worked with more than half of the companies on the Fortune 500 list, creating award-winning business games, simulations, and communications tools to address specific business needs. Its flagship program, **Zodiak®: The Game of Business Finance and Strategy** has been played by more than one million people worldwide. Other products address such issues as leadership, teamwork, project management and organizational change.

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