

# Let's Be Awesome

*A framework to improve customer and team collaboration  
Game Objective and Rules of Play*

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## **Background:**

“Let’s Be Awesome” is an ideation framework for customers, stakeholders and teams to have recurring, focused discussions to determine what aspects of the team / customer relationship require the most attention at the current time. The framework then guides the selection of practices that support prioritized needs. In prior experience we have learned that the characteristics of a successful relationship between team members and their customer varies between teams - this is due to the uniqueness of the people involved and the variation in the nature of work being performed. We have observed the relationship between team members and customers can suffer when standard processes are used without consideration for unique needs. Other teams struggle when they establish customer-working agreements at the beginning of a project, but don’t realize when it is necessary to update those customer agreements as changes occur. We have also seen teams struggle to meet delivery expectations when they were mandated to support standard processes for customer interaction; however, the teams could have found more time to focus on software development and delivery if they had autonomy to use fewer or different practices. “Let’s Be Awesome” is intended to facilitate a safe discussion where team members and customers can share their needs, identify and decide on practices to support those needs, and all leave the game with clear priorities to focus on. The “Let’s Be Awesome” game board has been designed so team members and customers leave a game session having created an information radiator with actionable working agreements to build and sustain an effective customer / team relationship.

## **Objective Of The Game:**

The objective of “Let’s Be Awesome” is to achieve consensus between team members and customers on what aspects of the team / customer relationship require the most focus at the current time. The game board is intentionally constrained forcing players to focus on what is most important. As needs are identified, practices to support needs are suggested. Lastly discussion includes the frequency by which the identified practices should be executed. All discussion, selection and prioritization of needs, practices and frequency should be done mutually to include both customer and team member needs. As consensus is achieved during a “Let’s Be Awesome” session, customers and team members emerge with a clear understanding of what the group feels are the current drivers to build a successful relationship. Having achieved consensus during the game, all participants can hold each other accountable to execute the practices selected during the game at the specified frequency.

## **Game Roles & Roles for Workshops:**

“Let’s Be Awesome” should be played with teams, customers and stakeholders for software development work. If you happen to be playing “Let’s Be Awesome” in a workshop, decide on a role / persona for each member of your group - your group should have a mix of people who understand (or have performed) these roles in the past.

## **Game Setup:**

- “Let’s Be Awesome” is intended to be played like Poker game - players can sit at a table surrounding the game board, or the game board could be setup like a canvas on the wall where all players can focus on it.
- Find your packet of “Set” cards - these are the cards used to create your game board:
  - Layout cards 1-7 across the top of your game board to create your columns
  - Layout cards 8-14 downward under “Priorities” (card 1) to create your lanes
- Next find your packet of “Play” cards - these cards include an assortment of the following:
  - **Needs (N)** - core elements of the customer / team relationship
  - **Practices (P)** - activities that teams & customers can do to support needs
  - **Frequency (F)** - how often the team & customer will support a practice
  - Each “Play” card has a large upper case letter in the upper left hand corner to denote what type of card it is.
- Shuffle the “Play” cards well and then deal out the entire deck to players - it is acceptable if players do not all receive the exact same number of cards.
- As players receive their cards, they can look at them, but they should keep them hidden from other players.

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## **Game Setup Diagram:**

After you setup your game board, it should create a grid that looks similar to this:

PRIORITIES	NEEDS	PRACTICES	FREQUENCY	WHY	HOLDING AREA	INCINERATED
First Priority						
Second Priority						
Third Priority						
Fourth Priority						
Fifth Priority						
Sixth Priority						
Seventh Priority						
Eight Priority						

## **How To Play:**

During play, the following card placement, movement and limit rules are in effect at all times:

- The “Needs” Column may ONLY contain Need cards (marked with N in the upper left)
- The “Practices” Column may ONLY contain Practice cards (marked with P in the upper left)
- The “Frequency” Column may ONLY contain Frequency cards (marked with F in the upper left)
- Cards may not be stacked or layered anywhere on the board, unless they are in the “Incinerated” column
- No more than 8 cards of any type may be in the “Holding Area” at anytime
- Only cards in the “Holding Area” can be moved to the “Incinerated” column
- An unlimited number of cards may be placed in the “Incinerated” column
- Once a card is placed in the “Incinerated” column, it cannot be removed

**YOUR TURN** - Play begins with a person volunteering or a suitable random selection method to determine who will take their turn first.

**PLAY A CARD** - When it is your turn, you may do **ONE** of the following actions:

- Place a card from your hand into an open position on the board
- Move a card on the board to another open position on the board
- Swap a single card in the “Needs”, “Practices”, or “Frequency” column with any card of the same type in the “Holding Area”.
- Discard a card in the “Holding Area” by moving it into the “Incinerated” column - once a card is incinerated it is out for the remainder of the game.
- Pass - you do not wish to play a card at this time.

**TELL YOUR FELLOW PLAYERS WHY** - As you are playing your card or after you make your move, you need to share with the group why you played as you did - this is especially important if you “Pass”, as if you don’t see a need to play a card or move cards on the board, please share why. Increased frequency of people passing demonstrates the group is working towards consensus around how the cards have been placed.

**NEXT PLAYER** - After explaining why you played (or passed) as you did, play advances to the next player.

**LISTEN TO YOUR FELLOW PLAYERS** - While waiting for your turn, you may NOT speak, rather you should LISTEN and pay attention to how your team members play their cards and the reasons for why they played or moved cards as they did.

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## **Tricky rules that some players struggle with:**

As play begins, it does not take long for the game board to become full - remember you can only play a card from your hand onto the board if there is an open spot on the board.

- Stacking or layering of cards is only allowed for **“Incinerated”** cards – no stacking or layering anywhere else

When the board is full, you **ONLY** have the following options:

- Move any card in the “Holding Area” to the “Incinerator” to create an open space on the board - the open space created by this move will be in the “Holding Area” but on future moves others will be able to move / swap cards in / out of the “Holding Area”
- Swap a single card in the “Needs”, “Practices” or “Frequency” column with a card of the same type in the “Holding Area”
- Pass - don't forget to share why you passed

As the board fills up, remember you are only allowed **ONE** play per turn, so if you want to move cards around to adjust priority, or make space for a new card on the board from your hand, you will have to work with your fellow team members to do this. If you have an idea for a complex move, wait for your turn then share the idea and ask if others are willing to help you achieve that idea by moving cards when it is their turn to support your plan.

If you have a card in your hand that you do not wish to play (it is not needed), cards may **NOT** move directly from your hand to the “Incinerated” column - you are allowed to play a card from your hand into the “Holding Area” if there is an open slot in the Holding Area, and ask if another team member would help you move it to “Incinerated” on their turn.

## **Ending The Game:**

“Let's Be Awesome” game play ends when all players have no cards remaining in their hands and there is consensus on how the cards have been placed. The following two events trigger the end of the game:

- #1 - All “Play” cards have either been placed on the game board in accordance with the rules or have been “Incinerated”.
- #2 - There has been two consecutive rounds of all players “passing” on their turn – this demonstrates consensus has been achieved on the placement of the cards on the board.

Before leaving the game, team members are asked to reflect and to capture reasons or motivations why they prioritized “Needs”, “Practices”, and “Frequency” as they did. These reasons are captured on large Post-It notes and added to the game board in the “Why” column. Team members can discuss & write these “Why” statements for each need, practice, frequency combination working as a full team, in small groups or in pairs and then sharing and posting what they wrote.

At conclusion, the game board should be displayed or captured as a reminder of how the team and customer agreed to work together and the team and customer should set a future time and/or criteria which remind them to come back and play again to ensure they are focusing on the most important needs to build a successful customer / team relationship.

## **Game Play Options:**

- **Write-Ins** - Allow players to provide Write-In cards for “Needs”, “Practices”, or “Frequency” that they think of during discussion in the game - use Post-Its to allow Write-Ins - once introduced, a Write-In card is played like any other card in the game. Standard card rules apply for Write-Ins: the card needs to be placed in an open spot on the board, it can be moved to the “Holding Area” and it can even be “Incinerated” if necessary.
- **Time-Box** - Rather than allowing play to continue until all cards have been played and consensus is achieved, establish a time-box for the game (~20 minutes) whereby the team and customer will agree to honor the cards on the board as they are displayed at the end of the time-box or consensus is achieved (whichever comes first) - adding a time-box to the game creates a sense of urgency supportive of increased focus and staying on task as people play.

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