

# Chaos in Everyday Work Life:

## How Rules of the Game Can Help Restore Order

Tuesday morning, 9 a.m. The meeting begins, or rather, is supposed to begin. First, there's some waiting. It's not entirely clear what's on the agenda and what doesn't belong here. Who's moderating? Who's taking notes? After an hour, no one is much wiser, but the next meeting is already waiting. Rules of the game? Nowhere to be found.

This is how days go by, turning into weeks and months. It's not just annoying; it costs time and energy, damages productivity and hurts team and company culture. Pure chaos.

What has been illustrated here using the example of meeting culture can be applied to all types of group dynamics: Wherever people work together, different values, talents, and perspectives collide — conflict is inevitable.

Does it always have to be that way?  
No, not always. Because there is an antidote to chaos:  
**Shared rules of the game.**

As the term suggests, it's about **how** we play together. If you've ever attended ARGO seminars, you're familiar with the psychological games of the drama triangle, which often become problematic.

To play successfully, we need healthy rules of the game — ones that are lived and shared!

The question, "Who does what, when, how, where, why, and with whom?" serves as a mental guide. It should be answered for aspects such as collaboration, goals, responsibilities, processes, expectations, and so on.

Rules of the game foster collaboration because they create clarity and provide stability. They serve as a compass by which we can align our mindset and behavior. They form a shared foundation through which a group of individuals can become a team.



Manuel Hunold  
Trainer & Coach

This is easy to grasp in theory - but challenging in practice – because this is where misconceptions begin to take effect.

## **Misconception 1: “It’s enough to just agree on the rules. Then everyone will follow them!”**

If that were the case, we’d never have needed confessions. After all, the Ten Commandments clearly stated how we should play! No, the mere existence of rules is not enough – because we are fallible and tend to follow unconscious habits. If we want to change those habits, it takes time during which living the rules are reinforced with positive feedback and rule violations are met with appropriate consequences.

## **Misconception 2: Only the leader can – and must – set the rules!**

Unfortunately not: Leaders are neither all-knowing, nor all-powerful, nor infallible. That is why it is not only legitimate, but often necessary, that some rules of the game are created together with the team. Of course, many rules already exist (e.g. labor laws, safety regulations), but why not co-create rules in other areas or where there is a need?

This engages the team, leverages collective intelligence for better results and increases identification with the rules through the opportunity to participate.

## **Misconception 3: Rules of the game mean a loss of freedom!**

Yes, any rule implies limitations, which can provoke resistance. The misconception here is that resistance equals total loss of freedom. It is also a misconception to believe that we must believe every unpleasant emotion as if discomfort is somehow objective and all-knowing.

In other words: Yes, rules can be annoying, and at the same time, they can be useful and necessary!

Take meeting rules again as an example: Drafting agendas, considering participants, fulfilling the moderator role, documenting outcomes – this is all effortful and might feel like a loss of freedom. But zooming out shows us that when these rules are followed, the minor sacrifices of freedom yield returns: Lower stress levels, improved focus and productivity, fewer misunderstandings and conflicts.

## **Misconception 4: Rules of the game last forever or “We’ve always done it this way!”**

Yes, some rules are so effective that they stay relevant for a long time. At the same time, ongoing adaptation to a changing world is necessary. That means rules of the game can, and must, be adjusted repeatedly. If that were not the case, we would still be sending faxes and punching time clocks instead of working from home. If you are now feeling nostalgic, you might be about to fall into the next misconception...

## **Misconception 5: There's a perfect rule for everything!**

Believe us, we have searched long and hard for it. The one rule to rule them all, to save us, to drive out chaos and bind everything together forever. We haven't found it yet because, as Thomas Sowell put it, "There are no solutions, only trade-offs."

That also applies to rules of the game. There are no perfect ones; they all come with pros and cons. And they come with exceptions.

When those exceptions arise, it might mean the rule needs to be discarded or adapted, or that it is simply an exception that can remain as such.

## **Misconception 6: Rule violations must be punished!**

Why is that a misconception, especially after we just spoke about critical feedback during implementation?

What seems contradictory becomes clearer when you distinguish between consequences and punishment: Consequences are about learning. They are neither too harsh nor too mild. They offer a path to restitution without causing someone to lose face.

Punishments, by contrast, are too harsh. They foster resentment, resistance, and antipathy. They can lead to shame and loss of face, and at a minimum lead to limited learning. They damage the sense of belonging and can create a climate of fear.

Therefore: the "rulebook" must also define consequences!

This was a brief excursion into the world of rules of the game, including common misconceptions we often encounter in our work. Of course, there are many more aspects and false assumptions that deserve attention.

So we're curious to hear about your experiences with rules of the game!

*Which rules have worked in your team?  
What do you need them for? Where are they missing?  
Which misconceptions do you know?*

aboard

## **We're looking for reinforcements!**

We currently have open positions in both office management and consulting.

You can find more information here:  
<https://www.argo.at/category/job/>

We're excited to welcome new ARGOnauts on board!

**JOIN OUR TEAM!**

## Our Christmas party

this year was held under the motto Creativity – and we had to prove it, although not quite as planned: **Dieter Bernold**, the jazz guitarist among the ARGOonauts, had arranged for us to record an ARGO Christmas Song at the JAM Music Lab, with professional support and top equipment.

He had already finished the lyrics and arrangement, and the first ambitious ARGOonaut musicians were already rehearsing – but then the flu hit Dieter! A studio recording without our lead guitarist Dieter was unthinkable, so the project was postponed last minute during our joint Christmas brunch.

Instead, creativity flowed over champagne and eggs benedict and delivered an alternative Christmas program:



First, a visit to the Vienna Museum with a fascinating guided tour (highly recommended!) followed by a "Who Knows What?" walk through the Advent-lit city center of Vienna.



Experiencing the inner city – so loved by tourists and on social media – from a local's perspective while listening to all the surprising nuggets of knowledge ARGOonauts had to share about their city was simply refreshing!



And yes: the mulled wine stalls definitely weren't missed!



The day concluded at Loca, where we enjoyed casual fine dining and voted on the name for the queen of our first ARGO beehive. **Queen B.**)

ARGO's Christmas 2024 internal event wasn't all about fun, games, museums – and mulled wine!



As part of our regular "Brainathon", where we work to develop our consulting and training skills, we had the pleasure to welcome actor **Jonny Hoff**. Jonny is not only an accomplished actor in film and theatre, but he also supports leaders, and anybody else who is interested, to develop their stage presence through training voice and body.

To be honest, this too was a whole lot of fun! Jonny led us through a series of exercises to help us to develop personal power and presence when presenting or training. We definitely foresee working with Jonny further in the future, not only for our own development, but also to support our customers.

## SIZE up your Team

**"SIZE up your Team"** You know your team, but would you like to better understand what motivates each of them? You cooperate well as a team, but do personality differences keep making everyday life unnecessarily complicated? You are used to working in a dynamic environment, but is it challenging to constantly adapt to new and different people? You are successful, but managing yourself even better can add that little bit more!

### 1. Preparation:

Participants receive a link and fill out their SIZE profile.

### 2. Team building with the SIZE personality profile

- Using the SIZE model, you will learn about and recognize the individual strengths and talents of different people.
- You will become more aware of and be able to explain how different personality dynamics lead to typical tensions and misunderstandings, and you will learn how to avoid them.
- You will be able to identify individual stress behaviors and learn to manage them.
- You will learn how to fulfill your own and others' basic needs to foster motivation and connections between your team.
- You will learn how to get into contact with different personalities and communicate effectively with them.
- You will apply your own SIZE profile and that of your team members to meeting challenges and managing conflicts in your everyday professional life.

Duration: 2 days, max. 12 participants

Investment: 2 days for the SIZE trainer at the agreed daily rate

### 3. SIZE Debriefing:

After starting together on the first day, participants will receive their SIZE personality profile from a SIZE coach in individual discussions parallel to the seminar. By the end of the seminar, all participants will know their personal profile. Participants will learn to recognize each other's profile and can share their evaluations if they wish. Participants will deepen what they have learned and be able to recognize the SIZE elements playing out in everyday life. And based on these learnings, the team will develop measures to meet address current team challenges.

One-to-One Duration: approx.

1 hour per participant

Investment: 2 days for the SIZE Coach at the agreed daily rate

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Barbara Thoma  
ARGO Personalentwick-  
lung GmbH  
Dresdner Straße 43/DG  
1200 Vienna  
tel +43-1-369 77 00  
mail: b.thoma@argo.at



Barbara Thoma  
Managing Partner

*Barbara Thoma*