



# ***Cracking the Code of Communication Strategy***

## ***How to Use the Periodic Table of Influence***

Presented by Alan Kelly

CEO and Founder, The Playmaker's Standard, LLC.

Author, *The Elements of Influence: The New Essential System for Managing Competition, Reputation, Brand and Buzz*

Adjunct Professor, USC Annenberg School for Communication

Columbia University, New York

February 14, 2009

[akelly@plays2run.com](mailto:akelly@plays2run.com)

[www.plays2run.com](http://www.plays2run.com)

301-990-9406 (o)

*Now why would I  
need that? I already  
know I'm up in the  
air...?!*



(see pp. 3-4, *The Elements of Influence*)

**What are the  
communicator's most basic  
instruments?**

1	IA																	0
1	H																	He
2	Li	Be											B	C	N	O	F	Ne
3	Na	Mg	Al	Si	P	S	Cl	Ar										
4	K	Ca	Sc	Ti	V	Cr	Mn	Fe	Co	Ni	Cu	Zn	Ga	Ge	As	Se	Br	Kr
5	Rb	Sr	Y	Zr	Nb	Mo	Tc	Ru	Rh	Pd	Ag	Cd	In	Sn	Sb	Te	I	Xe
6	Cs	Ba	*La	Hf	Ta	W	Re	Os	Ir	Pt	Au	Hg	Tl	Pb	Bi	Po	At	Rn
7	Fr	Ra	+Ac															

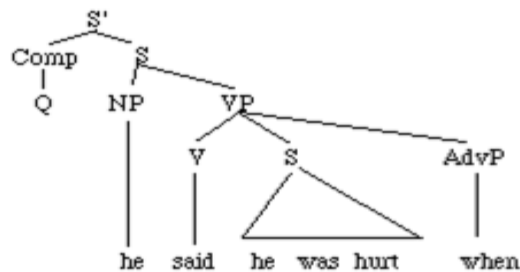
Musicians have the music notation system



*Lanthanide Series	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71
	Ce	Pr	Nd	Sm	Eu	Gd	Tb	Dy	Ho	Er	Tm	Yb	Lu	
*Actinide Series	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103
	Th	Pa	U											

Chemists have the periodic table of elements

Software developers have object-oriented programming



Linguists have transformational grammar



Biologists have the phylogenetic tree

(see p. 14, *The Elements of Influence*)

# What do we have?

Principles, best practices, laws, rules.



**More is** needed to effectively manage and measure messages, opinions, perceptions, behaviors, awareness, credibility, word-of-mouth, brands and reputations.

# I want to know how



Crises resolve...or worsen



Reputations are built  
...and squandered

Brands are created



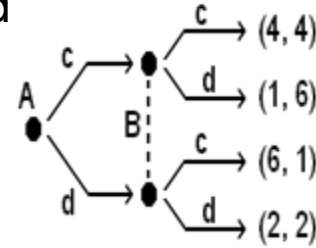
...and debated



Negotiations come together ...or unravel  
...and de-positioned



Politicians are positioned



A prisoner's dilemma plays out  
...or a game escalates



Markets are amassed...and passed

Word-of-mouth spreads like wild fire  
...or a slow burn



**What are the  
communicator's most basic  
units of practice?**



Are they strategies, tactics, outputs,  
outtakes, outcomes, messages, headlines,  
stories, angles, words, behaviors, perception,  
sentiment, tone, loyalty, credibility,  
awareness, reputation, trust, brands,  
relationships, stakeholders, media?

**Strategies are** the most  
basic means by which we  
influence publics and  
stakeholders.

**If communication is  
based on strategies, why  
haven't they been  
systematized?**

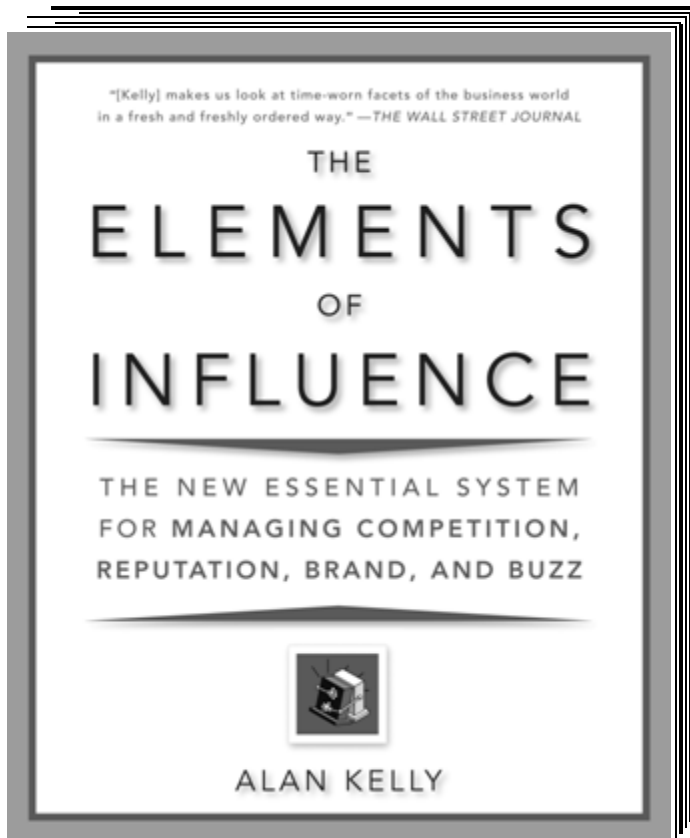
**Because strategy** is  
creative, grey, nuanced and  
misunderstood.

Or is it?

Communication's primary function is to **influence** publics, not just inform them.

Its fundamental purpose is to improve **competitive advantage**, not only understanding.

Its most basic units of practice are the **strategies** practitioners employ, not the tactics.



A descriptive book of influence strategy



A prescriptive online strategy tool

**def. Play:** *A stratagem, one of a finite set of discrete strategic maneuvers a person or organization employs to improve its relative competitive advantage in a marketplace.*

**def. Playmaker:** *A strategist whose stock in trade is to call, run, decode, and counter competitive moves in a marketplace. Playmakers have influence over a player's policy, position, and agenda and are stewards of its intangible assets.*

**def. Playmaking:** *A discipline for deploying and systematically managing plays—in combinations, sequences, and patterns—to continually influence, control, and sustain the sentiments, discussions, and decisions of a marketplace.*

(see pp. 326-330, *The Elements of Influence*)



**You call** and run plays. You are  
a Playmaker. You are expert in the  
ageless discipline we call  
Playmaking.

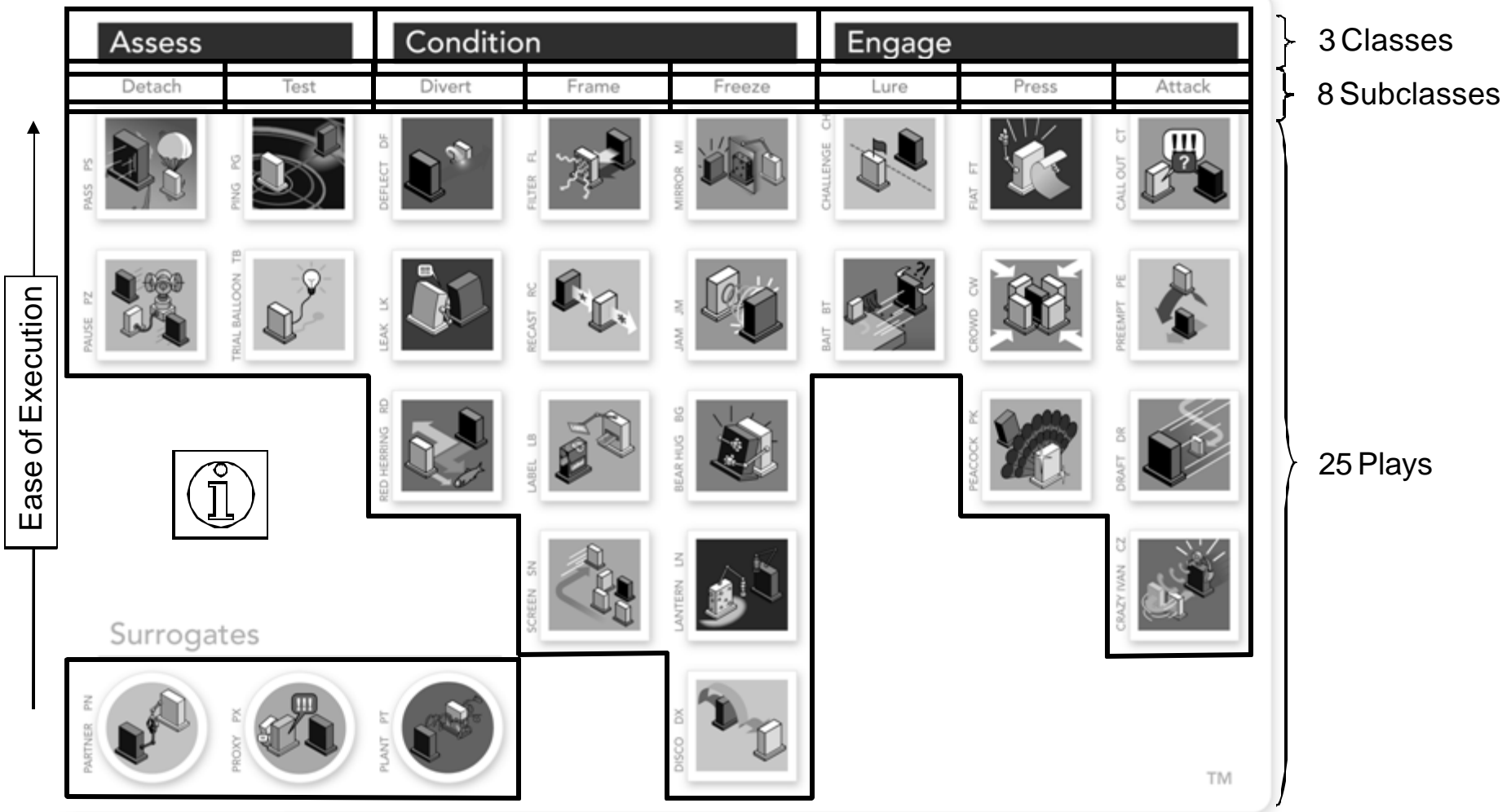
(see p. 1, *The Elements of Influence*)

**And this** is your  
periodic table.

# The Playmaker's Standard™

(see pp. 9, 44, *The Elements of Influence*)

As featured in *The Elements of Influence* by Alan Kelly (Dutton 2006) | [www.plays2run.com](http://www.plays2run.com) | [blog.plays2run.com](http://blog.plays2run.com)



Copyright © 2006 The Playmaker's Standard, LLC. Reproduction or distribution without permission of The Playmaker's Standard, LLC is prohibited. All Rights Reserved. All indicated trademarks are owned by The Playmaker's Standard, LLC. Patents Pending.

What was this software mogul doing, when he declared...

He was running a Call Out... on rival Bill Gates and the Microsoft PC monopoly.



*"The PC is a ridiculous device! The [PC] is so complicated and expensive. What the world really wants is to plug into a wall to get electronic power and [also] plug in to get data."*

– Billionaire and Oracle Corp. CEO Larry Ellison, at a Sept. 1995 Paris technology conference, immediately preceding a keynote by Microsoft's Bill Gates

Call Out, *def*: An overt public expression of doubt or concern, usually aimed at a competing person or organization, intended to call into question a flaw in an opponent's position or message set.

(see p. 17-20, 222-224, *The Elements of Influence*)

What was this regulator's ploy  
when he said elliptically...  
It was a Ping on a market run-  
amok.



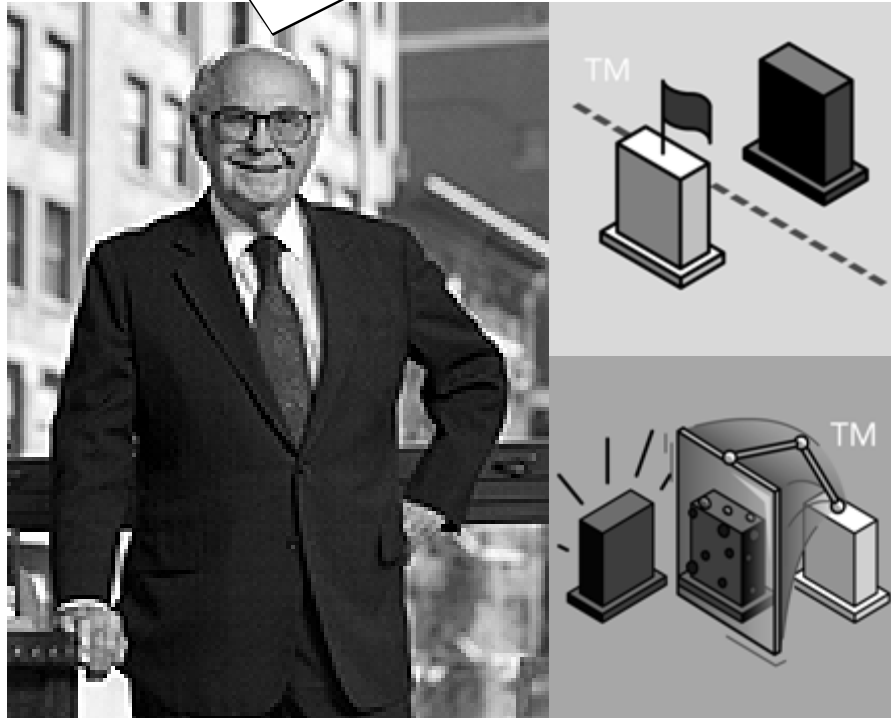
*“How do we know when irrational exuberance has unduly escalated asset values, which then become the subject of unexpected and prolonged contractions as they have in Japan over the past decade?”*

– Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan, 1996  
4,300-word-speech in to D.C. policymakers

Ping, *def*: An oblique reference or suggestion, enabled either by a player's mere presence in a marketplace or its implied interest in topics, ideas, events and developments.

(see p. 74-78, *The Elements of Influence*)

Harold Burson raised the familiar yet uncomfortable possibility that the PR industry might self-license.



Challenge, *def*: A public appeal, suggestion or demand by a player that conveys a benefit to the targeted player.

Mirror, *def*: A specialized Call Out that contradicts a rival's position or point of view.

What was this PR icon doing at ICCO this fall? He was running a Challenge + Mirror

What was Apple doing to Microsoft and Vista in this ad?

Play #1. "By 'problem,' he means a few early adopters have faced some minor challenges."



Play #3. "No comment."

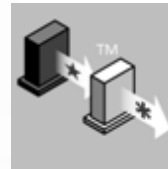
Play #2. "And by 'downgrading,' he means they are upgrading to a more familiar experience."



Alpha Call Out, *def*: An overt public expression of doubt or concern.



Proxy, *def*: An associate who advocates for and supports the agenda of a player (roll tape).



Recast, *def*: Reinterpretation of an action, event, information, message, or symbol.



Deflect, *def*: The attempt by a player to divert a rival's attack, either to avoid or minimize its impact.

# The Playmaker's Standard™



As featured in *The Elements of Influence* by Alan Watts

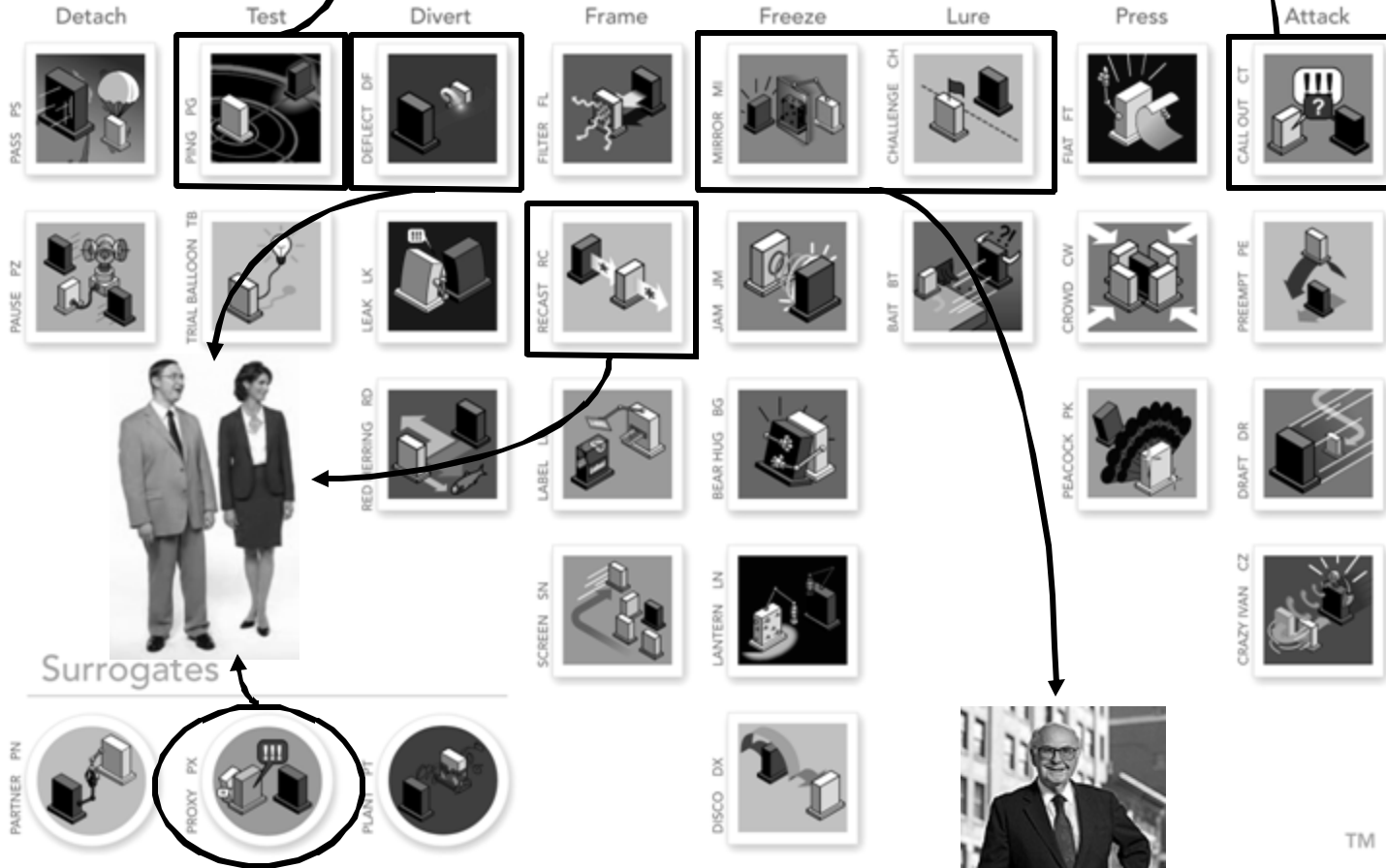


www.plays2run.com | blog.plays2run.com

## Assess

## Condition

## Engage

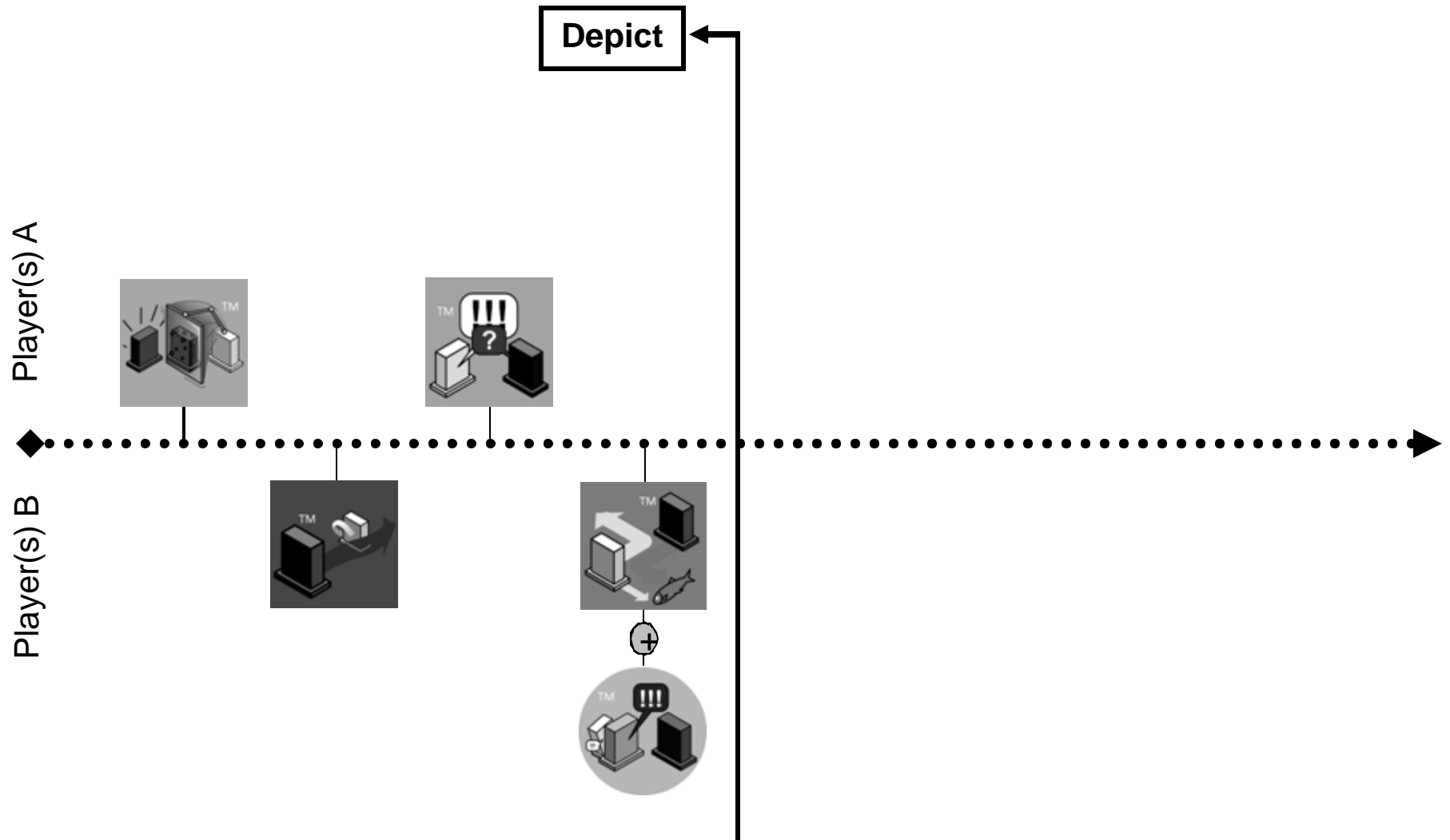


## Surrogates

Copyright © 2006 The Playmaker's Standard, LLC. Reproduction or distribution without the permission of The Playmaker's Standard, LLC, is prohibited. All Rights Reserved. All indicators are trademarks of The Playmaker's Standard, LLC. Patents Pending.

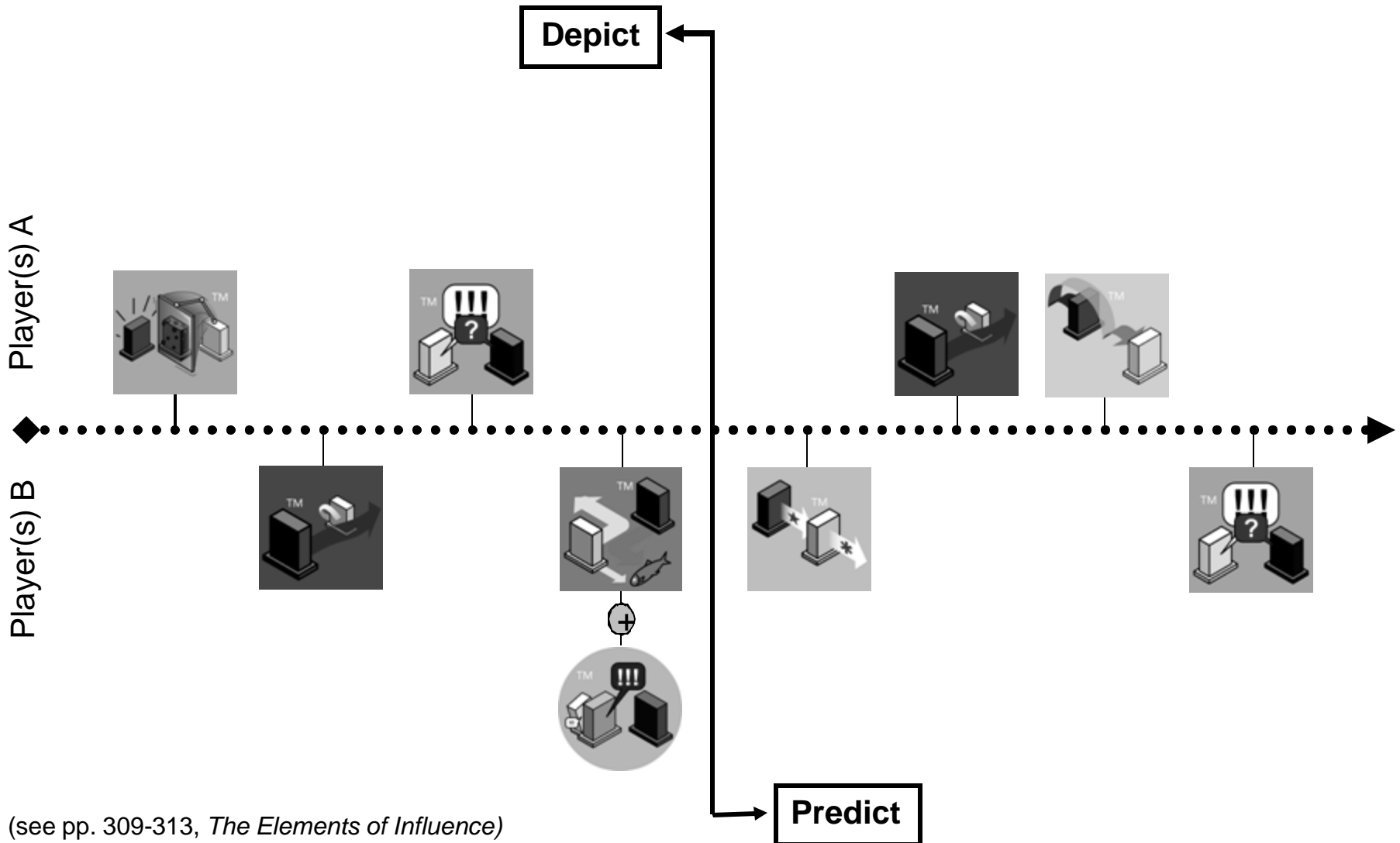


Plays can be mapped to reveal patterns, sequences, trends and tendencies.



(see pp. 309-313, *The Elements of Influence*)



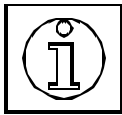


(see pp. 309-313, *The Elements of Influence*)

**Every news** release is constituted and explained by plays. So is every earnings statement, annual report, newsletter, grassroots campaign, product launch, special promotion, mass (e)mailing, advertisement, position paper, speech, blog, vlog, protest, crisis and legal brief.

(see p. 23, *The Elements of Influence*)

Let's map some strategy.



# The Playmaker's Standard™

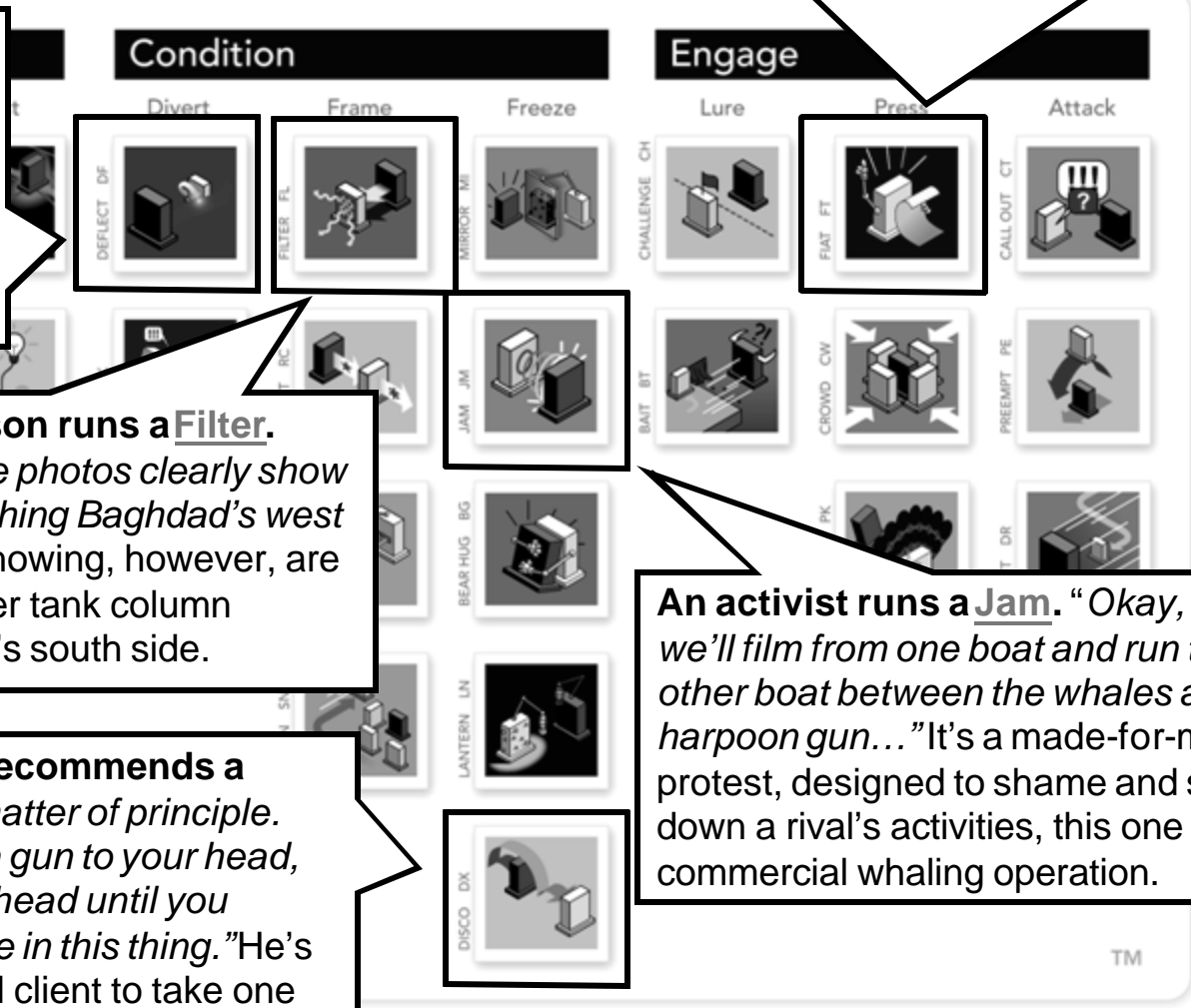
**A product manager runs a Fiat.** *Claim: Crest is the number one toothpaste preferred by dentists. It's a simple communication of a product's benefit and position, not much more, but it's a play.*

**A CFO runs a Deflect.** *"Well that's a complex question. I'll have to get back to you on that." She's buying time to find the answer or figure out a way to avoid it.*

**A military spokesperson runs a Filter.** *"These reconnaissance photos clearly show coalition tanks approaching Baghdad's west side." What she's not showing, however, are pictures of a much larger tank column advancing on Baghdad's south side.*

**A crisis consultant recommends a Disco.** *"I know it's a matter of principle. Sure they're holding a gun to your head, but you won't move ahead until you acknowledge your role in this thing." He's advising his embattled client to take one step back in order to take two steps forward.*

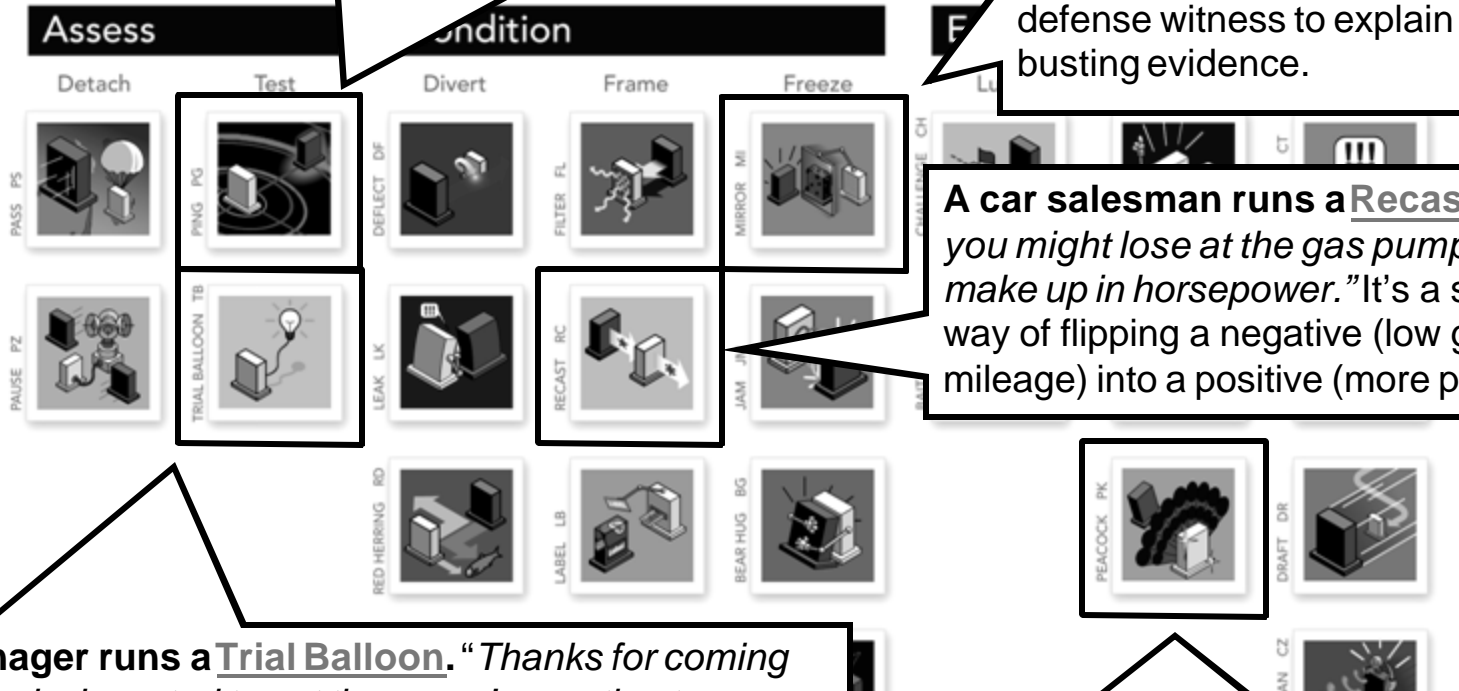
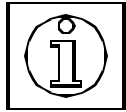
**An activist runs a Jam.** *"Okay, look, we'll film from one boat and run the other boat between the whales and the harpoon gun..." It's a made-for-media protest, designed to shame and shut down a rival's activities, this one being a commercial whaling operation.*



(see pp. 33-34, *The Elements of Influence*)

**A union boss runs a Ping.** “We sure wouldn’t want to have to call a strike.” It’s a tacit signal that the union rep is already thinking about it.

**A trial attorney runs a Mirror.** “Then how do you explain the fact that these three people saw you pull a gun?” He’s asking a defense witness to explain alibi-busting evidence.



**A car salesman runs a Recast.** “What you might lose at the gas pump you make up in horsepower.” It’s a simple way of flipping a negative (low gas mileage) into a positive (more power).

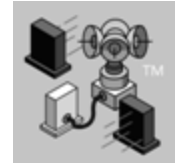
**A HR manager runs a Trial Balloon.** “Thanks for coming in, everybody. I wanted to get the group’s reaction to some new benefits we’re considering.” If employees like the plan, it can be implemented. If they don’t like the plan, it can be retracted. And if it gets implemented anyway, the HR manager will know the nature of the support and/or objections.

**A publicist runs a Peacock.** News Release: *See Richard Branson’s Full Monty in Times Square*. It’s an attention-grabbing stunt to launch a new product or service.

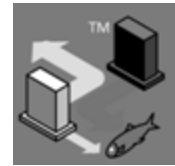
Copyright © 2009 The Playmaker's Standard, LLC. Reproduction or distribution without the permission of The Playmaker's Standard, LLC, is prohibited. All Rights Reserved. All indicated trademarks are owned by The Playmaker's Standard, LLC. Patents Pending.

(see pp. 33-34, *The Elements of Influence*)

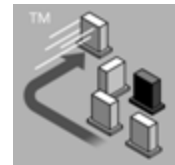
- Call and run a [redacted] play because...the marketplace or a competitor is doing what you want it to do—step back and let it progress.



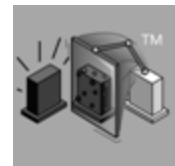
- Call and run a [redacted] play because...your opponent has resources. Well-funded rivals are susceptible to [this strategy] precisely because they have the money and teams to come after you. They're prone to hunt . . . so best you give them something to chase.



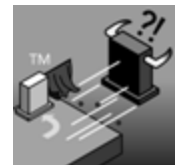
- Call and run a [redacted] play because...there may be prominent players, symbols, and other developments out there whose brands, reputations, ideas, or meanings can be brought into the game.



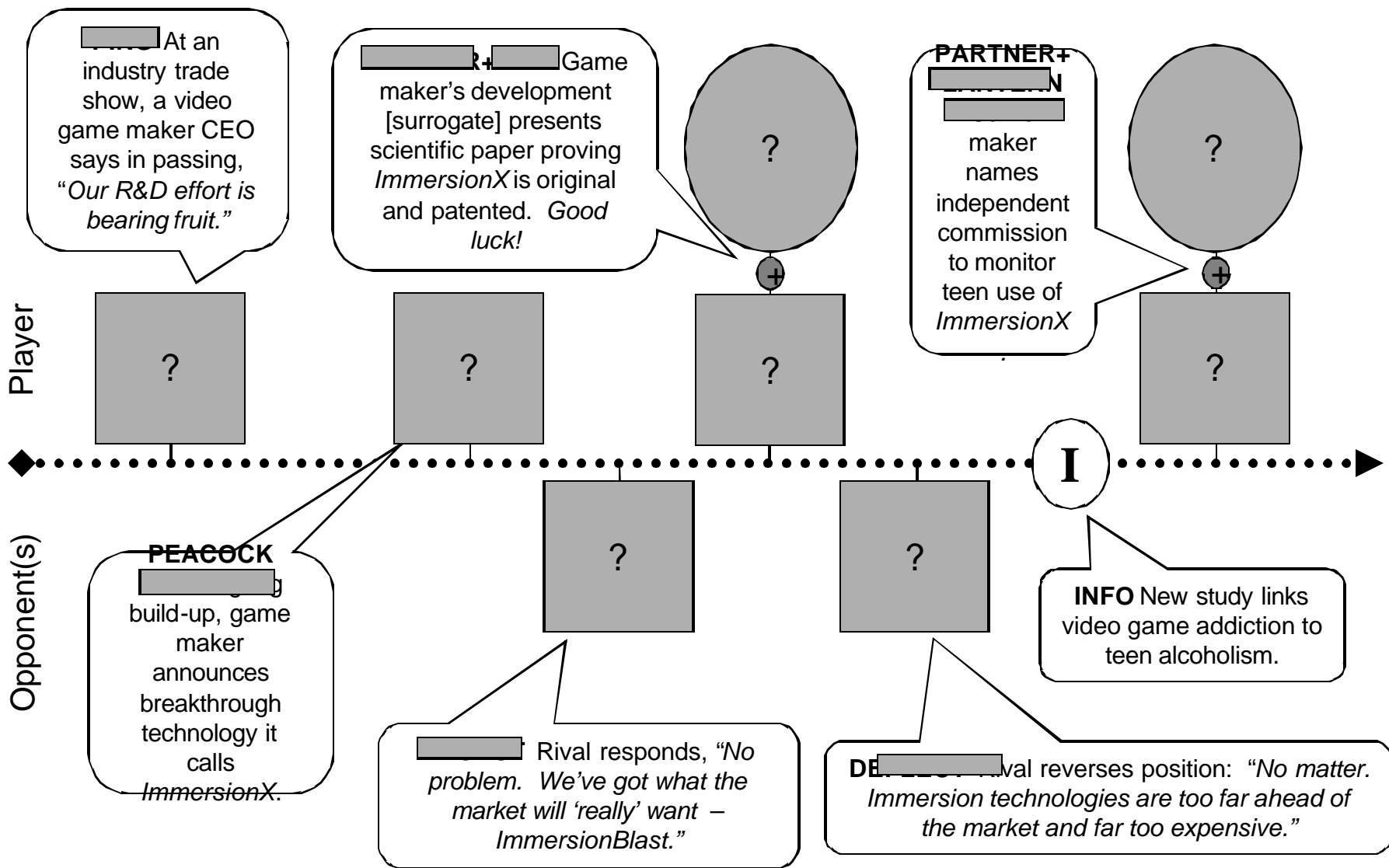
- Call and run a [redacted] play because...you have information on your rival that can be fairly and credibly brought to light.



- Call and run a [redacted] play because...your opponent is oversensitive or prone to overreaction.







# Influence Strategy Map



PLAYMAKER 1

GM

VS.



PLAYMAKER 2

GM CRITICS



Disco : DX

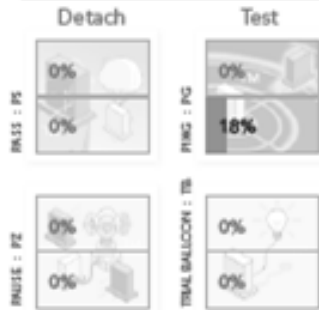


Call Out : CT

GM's overarching influence strategy is the Disco, a term coined in parliamentary debate that requires a player to concede an element of its platform to advance its overall agenda. In this case, GM wants to improve its reputation, rebuild public trust and move forward with visionary products.

GM critics' overarching influence strategy is to cast doubt upon the sincerity and intentions of the company. They use direct, aggressive language, and moral authority to make their case.

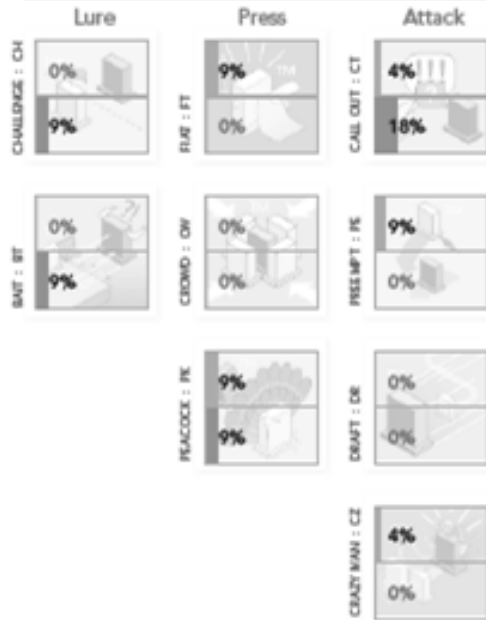
## Assess



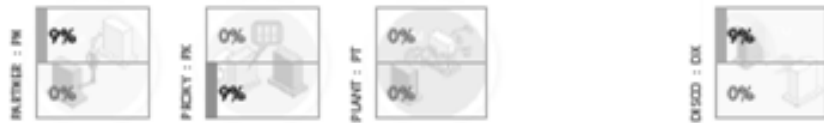
## Condition



## Engage

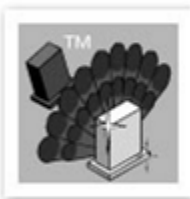


## Surrogates



# Play of the Day Archives

Play of the Day Archives

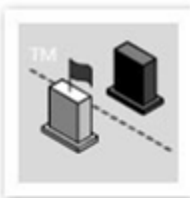


Peacock

## February 12, 2009

### Zoorotica! Animals Strut Stuff

A Michigan zoo will charge \$50 to watch animals having sex on Valentine's Day.



Challenge

## February 11, 2009

### We'd Like for You to Apologize

Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman wants President Barack Obama to apologize for saying companies shouldn't visit Las Vegas on the taxpayer's dime.



Pause

## February 10, 2009

### Phelps Slows Down

Michael Phelps says he's going to wait two or three months to decide if he's going to compete at the 2012 Summer Games in London. --Baltimore Sun

#### PREVIOUS EXAMPLE PLAYS

February 12, 2009

**Peacock**  
Zoorotica! Animals Strut Stuff

February 11, 2009

**Challenge**  
We'd Like for You to Apologize

February 10, 2009

**Pause**  
Phelps Slows Down

February 9, 2009

**Crazy Ivan**  
Ivan Loco: Migrants Sue Rancher

February 6, 2009

**Lantern**  
Toyota Reports Bad News on Own Terms

February 5, 2009

**Peacock**  
Bill Gates Buzzes His Audience



# playmakeralan

PLAY OF THE DAY: CHALLENGE - Vegas mayor wants Obama to apologize. That's a luring play from the Playmaker's Table.

[www.plays2run.com](http://www.plays2run.com)

*about 22 hours ago from web*

PLAY OF THE DAY: Pause - Michael Phelps waits to decide if he will compete in London 2012. [www.plays2run.com](http://www.plays2run.com)

*12:07 PM Feb 10th from web*

PLAYMAKER'S UPDATE: Obama's visit to Elkhart is a Crazy Ivan. Run a play at the folks who didn't vote for you to mitigate future attacks.

*12:27 PM Feb 9th from web*

PLAY OF THE DAY: LANTERN - Toyota reports bad news on its own terms. Loss 3x worse than expected. Ouch.

[www.plays2run.com](http://www.plays2run.com)

**Name** playmakeralan

**Location** DC Metro Area

**Web** <http://www.plays2...>

**Bio** CEO, Playmakers Standard; Author, Elements of Influence; Adjunct Professor, USC Annenberg School; Architect, The Playmaker's Table

17 following

19 followers

55 updates

## Updates

## Favorites

## Following



RSS feed of playmakeralan's updates

# Plays For The Presidency

SHOW BLOG DESCRIPTION

< PREV | NEXT >

< SELECT A BLOG



## Plays for the Presidency Awards:

### Best and Worst of the 2008 Campaigns

November 3, 2008 —

Presidential candidates run plays. We know this now. They employ *influence strategies* to win votes for themselves, to take them from others and, once they're in, to drive their agenda and policies. Here, on this last day of campaigning, we tap once again our groundbreaking Playmaker's Table to find the best and the worst Plays for the Presidency:



- › **Play of the Year:** For better or for worse, John McCain's signature play, the *Crazy Ivan*, was run to perfection in his radical endorsement of the Iraq troop-surge in April 2007 and his VP pick of Gov. Sarah Palin in September 2008. It makes Col. Joshua Chamberlain at Gettysburg look downright wimpy.
- › **Most Blatant Screen:** Hillary Clinton was never far from her hubby Bill and she never patted down the welcome *inference* that she, too, had eight years experience in the White House. Honorable mentions are Rudi Giuliani's shameless *attachment* to 911 and Mitt Romney's unabashed salutes to the Reagan Revolution.

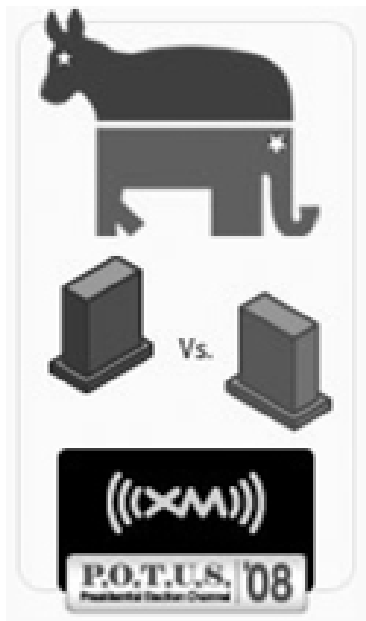
January 24, 2009  
Obama's Oath: Take Two  
*The President's Disco-play was the most unexpected of this week's influence strategies*

November 3, 2008  
Plays for the Presidency Awards:  
*Best and Worst of the 2008 Campaigns*

October 23, 2008  
Speed Chess and Politics:  
*Final Plays for the Presidency*

October 15, 2008  
It's All About Joe:  
*Final POTUS Debate is a Plumber's Screen*

October 7, 2008  
It's All About Hope:  
*2nd POTUS Debate Fails to Inspire*





*Do You Run Plays?  
Are Plays Run on You?*

*...let's discuss*