# Looking beyond the ropes course, *Google* embraces *GoCross-Office* as next-gen teambuilding solution

## CHALLENGE

Google's large New York office, spread across four floors, is often placing people from different projects in close proximity. Google realized they could benefit from building stronger connections between floor-mates who may not typically interact with each other on a day-to-day basis. Traditional off-site teambuilding options were expensive at this scale and left Google's young and tech-savvy work force needing more.

> " *This kind of game is a product of how people live and interact today*, with the offline aspect as part of the draw," said Jonathan Rochelle, a New York product manager at Google …. He views it as similar to software like Google Calendar and Google Docs — *tools that enhance real-world collaboration.* "
>
> **The New York Times** , 3/21/08

Google looked for GXO to provide value in three ways:

1. **Teambuilding**

   - GXO better connects employees/floor mates through online teamwork
   - GXO increases workforce efficiency through better communication between floor mates

2. **Supplied high tech solution to tech savvy work force**

   - Emerging gaming platform encourages and motivates participation among younger and older employees alike

3. **Leadership identification and development**

   - GXO organically establishes new team leaders through colleague election

## SOLUTION

GoCrossOffice seeks to facilitate a new form of teambuilding involving strategic thinking and online social interaction by providing custom-built enterprise games for companies with offices around the globe.

Tired of the ropes course, Google set out to search for a teambuilding event for the next generation. A 20-year-old Ivy League intern proposed that the company participate in a trial run of GoCrossOffice, a new, cost-effective online team-building game. Google management quickly moved to adopt the game, planning a month-long contest starting in July 2008. The game would be spread primarily by word-of-mouth across the company, starting with an intra-company email to a small percentage of employees.
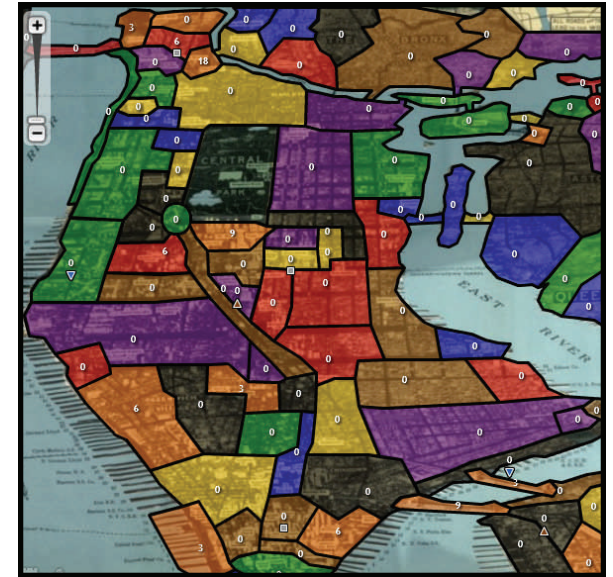


GXO is a territory conquest game similar to the classic board game, RISK ™

## RESULTS

What started as a small trial game quickly became a full-scale engagement of 350 employees in the New York office lasting over 30 days. GoCrossOffice successfully provided a platform for Google employees to engage with fellow floor-mates in a meaningful, interactive way.

> " *Rather than isolating us in an online world, GoCrossOffice enhances our interactions in the real world."*
>
> **Jonathan Rochelle,** Product Manager, Google

Through our post-game survey, we determined that a majority of Google players believed that the game:

- **Encouraged and facilitated strong team work ethics toward a common goal**

- **Increased morale at work**

- **Was fun to play**

Furthermore, a majority of all players would recommend GXO to another company or friend.

The survey demonstrated that the program met all three of Google's goals. GoCrossOffice increased communication between teammates in a fun, casual environment that encouraged participation among all demographic groups, including younger workers. Finally, all teams elected commanders, facilitating the natural formation of leadership among working groups.

## GOCROSSOFFICE

### THE PURPOSE

Currently, engaging your employees in fun, competitive strategic experience involves spending tens of thousands of dollars and a day traveling to a "corporate retreat." A new type of strategic social experience is needed. Enter **GoCrossOffice**, an unprecedented massively multiplayer strategic social gaming platform. By bringing the world of casual strategy gaming to your company, GoCrossOffice seeks to facilitate a new wave of **strategic thinking and social interaction for your employees** by providing custom-built games for offices around the country.

Not only does GoCrossOffice feature a world of dynamic social interplay, the platform also facilitates **meaningful**, **competitive** and **highly motivated** interaction between employees through the complexities of open strategic gameplay. By uniquely tapping into pre-existing competitive spirit and team pride, GXO succeeds in engaging teams, not only online, but also in the real world of their actual work environment. (Plus, it's great fun and super-addictive.)

### THE GAME

The easiest way to describe GoCrossOffice is to think of a traditional world-domination board game, like RISK™ or Diplomacy, complete with armies and territories. But rather than a map of the world, **the map is one of your very own work environment**, divided into real territories and familiar locales. Now raise the number of players to your entire employee population organized into teams (divided by corporate division or geographical location), creating a massively multi-

player team-based gaming arena **with engaging strategic social dynamics.**

The object of the game is to **collaborate with the rest of your team** to take over all the territories on the entire office map. While each player gets to control and place his/her own armies, **everyone is playing for the greater good of their full team** – thus, teams **collaborate**, **organize**, and **socialize** together so as to maximize strategic effectiveness. In addition, the game is globally turn-based on a daily basis, meaning that **everyone has a full day to play their turn—which only takes two minutes!** While playing the game is quick and simple, the strategic interface allows some players to get far more involved in the competitive depth of the game.

Google™

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