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New LINKS Papers

Two LINKS white papers have joined the “LINKS Papers” collection in the Instructor Resources section of the LINKS website.

1. “Best-Practice Teaching With Business Simulations”

[\[http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/PAPERS/Best-Practice.pdf\]](http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/PAPERS/Best-Practice.pdf)

2. “Extreme Customization With LINKS Simulations”

[\[http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/PAPERS/Extreme.pdf\]](http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/PAPERS/Extreme.pdf)

The “LINKS Papers” collection includes articles, presentations, and white papers about the LINKS simulations.



Nine Frequent Instructor Questions

1-Industry Setup:

“After I send my event setup in (schedule and students’ e-mail addresses grouped into teams), how long does it take to setup and initialize my LINKS industry?”

We’ll initialize your LINKS industry (or industries) within 24 hours of receiving your complete setup info.

2-Game Run Turnaround Time:

“If my input submission deadline is 200pm, when can my students expect to be able to access their new results?”

LINKS takes about 15 minutes to run (download inputs, check inputs, run simulation, check results, upload new results, and send everyone “Results Available” e-mail message.) However, due to peak load management issues, we might not be able to

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Nine Questions

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complete your game run immediately after the input submission deadline. Our executional goal is to complete all game runs scheduled between 800am and 1000pm US Eastern time within three hours of their input submission deadlines.

3-PowerPoint Slide Decks:

“Are PowerPoint slide decks available to instructors?”

Yes, look in the “Instructor Resources” section of the LINKS website for our PowerPoint decks to support each LINKS simulation variant.

4-New Student Joining the Course After Initialization:

“How can I add another student to my LINKS industry?”

After LINKS is initialized, advanced to round #3, and students are e-mailed their LINKS passcodes, instructors can modify (change, add, and delete) entries in the LINKS e-mail address database via the “E-Mail Address Management” function in the instructor’s “firm-0” webpage for a LINKS industry in the LINKS Simulation Database.

5-Student Payments:

“How do I deal with a student who paid for LINKS with an e-mail address other than the official university-based e-mail address that I included in the e-mail addresses provided to setup my LINKS industry?”

Have the student access the “Payment Questions?” link on the LINKS website to update

the LINKS payment records with the two e-mail addresses, to permit us to correlate the student’s payment e-mail address with the official e-mail address in LINKS.

6-Schedule Changes:

“What happens if my LINKS game run schedule changes?”

Send your scheduling adjustments to Randy Chapman (Chapman@ChapmanRG.com).

7-Questions That I Can’t Answer:

“If I have question and I’m not sure of the answer, what do I do?”

First, look in the manual. Second, look at the LINKS FAQs (and, remember, there are Instructor FAQs in the Instructor Resources section of the LINKS website). Third, if the first two information sources don’t answer your question, contact Randy Chapman (Chapman@ChapmanRG.com).

8-Passcode Retrieval:

“How can I (or my students) retrieve a lost or forgotten LINKS passcode?”

Access the “Retrieve LINKS Passcode” link on the LINKS website to retrieve a LINKS passcode.

9-LINKS Benchmarking Survey:

“What is the LINKS Benchmarking Survey?”

Information about the LINKS Benchmarking Survey is available in the Instructor Resources section of the LINKS website.

LINKS Train-The-Trainer Seminars

March 10-12, 2009

LINKS Train-The-Trainer Seminars are offered for the enterprise management, marketing, services, and supply chain management LINKS variants.

Current LINKS instructors are invited to pass along this announcement to faculty colleagues and advanced doctoral students who might be interested in learning more about teaching with LINKS.

Experienced LINKS instructors sometimes participate in a LINKS Train-The-Trainer Seminar to refresh their memories of LINKS details just prior to teaching with LINKS or to explore another LINKS simulation variant for a future teaching activity. Such experienced LINKS instructors may elect just to participate in the TTT's four-round simulation event, ignoring the public teleconferences included in the LINKS TTT program. (PowerPoint decks are e-mailed to all LINKS TTT participants before each teleconference, so such experienced LINKS instructors may freely choose to participate in all, some, or none of the teleconferences as per their availability and interest.)

Details about LINKS Train-The-Trainer seminars may be accessed via these URLs:

- <http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/TTT/EMttt.pdf> [Enterprise Management]
- <http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/TTT/MSttt.pdf> [Marketing]
- <http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/TTT/SMttt.pdf> [Services Marketing]
- <http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/TTT/SCttt.pdf> [Supply Chain Management]

After the March 10-12 LINKS TTT Seminar, TTT seminars will be offered in May, June, July, and August.



Did You Know?

There are a number of easy and quick links on the home page of the website for the first-time student to review, and also for new instructors to learn what's available on the LINKS website.

New Students should see these links:

- [1st-Time Visitors' Help](#)
- [3-Minute Student Tour](#)
- [8-Minute Accenture Video](#)



New Instructors can check out the following:

- [5-Minute Instructor Tour](#)
- [Instructor Resources](#)

Manitoba International Marketing Competition

The 27th annual Manitoba International Marketing Competition (MIMC) was based on the LINKS Marketing Strategy Simulation. This is the fifth consecutive year that the LINKS Marketing Strategy Simulation has been used in the MIMC.

The MIMC has three key elements: an internet-based computer simulation (LINKS Marketing Strategy Simulation), a strategy statement, and final presentations.

Undergraduate student teams from 13 colleges and universities in the Americas, Europe, and Africa participated in the 2.5-month marketing strategy simulation competition during October-December 2008:

- KNUST School of Business (Ghana)
- MacEwen School of Business
- McMaster University
- Saint-Etienne School of Management (France)
- Universidad EAFIT (Colombia)
- University of Alberta
- University of Applied Sciences Bielefeld (Germany)
- University of British Columbia
- University of British Columbia - Okanagan
- University of Manitoba
- University of Northern Iowa
- University of Winnipeg
- Zurich University of Applied Sciences



The final presentations were held in early January 2009 in Winnipeg, Manitoba hosted by the University of Manitoba's I. H. Asper School of Business. Special congratulations to the top-three finishers: the University of Winnipeg, the University of British Columbia, and McMaster University. This is the second consecutive win for the University of Winnipeg!



Manitoba International Marketing Competition Website:
<http://www.umanitoba.ca/mimc/home.php>

LINKS

Spotlight

Comparative Information About The Five LINKS Marketing Simulations

The Simulations offered are all sophisticated, team-based, competitive marketing management simulations which differ in scope and range. Most LINKS firms are manufacturers in the simulated set-top box industry.

Both the **LINKS Marketing Principles Simulation** and **LINKS Marketing Strategy Simulation** engage participants in all aspects of marketing management: strategy; segmentation; market selection; differential advantage and product-line portfolio management. Analysis of: customers; segments; markets; competitors; environment and marketing mix management is also covered.

LINKS Marketing Principles Simulation is designed for the undergraduate or MBA student to augment their first marketing course. It emphasizes product and service product-line portfolio management through indirect and direct channels in multiple market regions. Many marketing research resources are available including competitive benchmarking, concept testing, price sensitivity analysis, and marketing program experiments.

LINKS Marketing Strategy Simulation provides the criteria listed above with additional emphasis on more extensive marketing research resources including market potential analysis, test marketing, conjoint analysis, market attractiveness analysis, value maps, and brand-switching analysis.



LINKS Multi-Channel Management Simulation involves product-line portfolio management through indirect and direct channels (retail, direct/e-commerce, and major accounts). There is emphasis on branded and private-label products in multiple categories and market regions, and includes multi-channel outbound logistics management (distribution network

design and outbound transportation management). Extensive marketing research resources are available, including competitive benchmarking, market statistics, positioning analysis, customer satisfaction tracking, price sensitivity analysis, market potential analysis, market attractiveness analysis, value maps, and brand-switching analysis.

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Comparative Information ...

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LINKS Positioning Strategy Simulation is designed for academic course applications where a “modest” four-six round simulation experience is desired as part of a larger set of course activities. This Simulation engages participants in all aspects of the marketing strategy as outlined above. Many marketing research resources are available LINKS firms, including benchmarking, price sensitivity analysis, and conjoint analysis.

LINKS Services Marketing Simulation delivers “support services” (e.g., computing/IT support, financial management, health care, repair, or maintenance services) to households (consumers) and major accounts (businesses) in multiple market regions. Within-simulation performance is evaluated with a balanced scorecard of financial, operational, and customer-

facing metrics. The **LINKS Services Marketing Simulation** is a smaller version of the **LINKS Services Management Simulation** with less-detailed decisions in the services operations area and fewer research studies. Services operations decisions in the **LINKS Services Marketing Simulation** are for the firm as a whole, with region- and service-specific allocations of service personnel managed automatically by the LINKS software.

Current and potential LINKS instructors are invited to contact the LINKS author, Randy Chapman (Chapman@ChapmanRG.com) to discuss the LINKS simulation variant that may be most appropriate for their instructional application.



The LINKS-Simulations Newsletter is a monthly newsletter for current and prospective LINKS instructors and for LINKS friends. Please e-mail questions, comments, suggestions, and other contributions (e.g., LINKS teaching tips) to Winkler@LINKS-simulations.com.



Editor: Cyndy Winkler

Access this edition: <http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/newsletter.pdf>

Access previous edition: <http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/newsletter-previous.pdf>



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Reminders

LINKS Passcode Retrieval:

Convenient LINKS passcode retrieval for a LINKS participant (student or instructor) is possible via the “Retrieve LINKS Passcode” link on the main LINKS webpage (<http://www.LINKS-simulations.com>). Executing the “Retrieve LINKS Passcode” operation e-mails the firm’s passcode to the participant’s official e-mail address as currently recorded in the LINKS Simulation Database.

E-Mail Address Management:

LINKS instructors submit their students’ e-mail addresses (grouped into teams) as part of the information-set provided to initialize a LINKS industry. Often, these are institutional rather than personal e-mail addresses. Since some participants prefer to use a personal e-mail address rather than an institutional e-mail address for LINKS, it’s possible for participants to update their official e-mail address as recorded in the LINKS Simulation Database.

Participant updates of official e-mail addresses as recorded in the LINKS Simulation Database are possible only after initialization and publication (via e-mail to all team members) of each LINKS firm’s passcode. Using their LINKS firm’s passcode, LINKS participants may change their official LINKS e-mail address after LINKS initialization via the “E-Mail Address Management” button in the LINKS Simulation Database. Confirmations of e-mail address changes are e-mailed to the old and new e-mail addresses.

Student Payment Timing:

The published LINKS price (the discounted price) is in effect until the first round of LINKS is complete. Then, the price is increased 25%. This means that we can initialize your LINKS simulation event (and advance LINKS through to its normal starting point) and students can continue to pay at the discounted price until the first scheduled round is run. Before initialization can occur, we do need to receive your game-run schedule and the students’ e-mail addresses (grouped into teams).

It is not necessary for your students to pay before LINKS begins to have access to the discounted LINKS price. Students must only pay before the first official game run on your game-run schedule to receive the discounted price. Thus, student payments can occur simultaneously with the beginning of your LINKS simulation event.

Student payment with a personal credit card is via the “Pay For LINKS” link on the LINKS webpage. As a practical matter, a final warning/reminder will be e-mailed to those students who haven’t paid by the first game run, before implementing the non-discounted price.

LINKS Website Resources:

LINKS website (<http://www.LINKS-simulations.com>) links provide convenient access to all LINKS simulation variants, to the LINKS Simulation Database, to passcode-protected instructor resources, and to user interaction contact points such as “Pay For LINKS”, “Payment Questions?”, and “Retrieve LINKS Passcode”.

Some LINKS Resources:

- **Printed Manuals:** All LINKS manuals are freely available for download via the LINKS website. However, some LINKS instructors prefer to have publication-quality printed manuals provided for all of their students, rather than relying on their students to individually download/print the participant’s manual from the LINKS website. We’re happy to provide this service for LINKS instructors. The all-inclusive additional cost for participant manuals varies from \$18/student to \$28/student depending on the LINKS simulations variant. We normally need three weeks advance notice to arrange for production and shipping (to the instructor) from our on-demand printer.

- **What’s New Document:** Please access the following document at the case-sensitive URL <http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/WhatsNew.pdf> to obtain a detailed listing of new updates/enhancements to LINKS. Experienced LINKS instructors should access this document several months before their next usage occasion, to review the updates/enhancements to LINKS since their last usage occasion.

- **LINKS Instructor Resources Access:** You may access the evolving LINKS Instructor Resources via the LINKS webpage. Contact the LINKS author, Randy Chapman (Chapman@LINKS-simulations.com), to obtain the relevant access parameters (username and passcode).

