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## 2009 Pricing

While there have been many important enhancements in the design, software, server operations, and support materials for the LINKS simulations over the past year, there are no plans to raise prices during 2009. Prices will remain at \$30/student for the smaller LINKS variants, \$45/student for the larger LINKS variants, and \$60/student for the "extreme" LINKS variant (xLINKS).

These prices are, of course, the "discounted" prices for early student payment (by the first scheduled LINKS game run). After that, prices revert to their standard levels. Standard prices are 25% more than the "discounted" prices.

Some LINKS instructors wish to have publication-quality manuals for their students. We're happy to continue to provide this service in the United States. We do need **three weeks advance notice** to arrange for printing and shipping from our on-demand printer. The prices for LINKS manuals are \$18/manual for the smaller LINKS variants, \$23/manual for the larger LINKS variants, and \$28/manual for the "extreme" LINKS variants.

## New LINKS Paper

A new LINKS white paper has joined the evolving "LINKS Papers" collection in the Instructor Resources section of the LINKS website: "Adding Ethical Dilemmas To LINKS Events"

The full set of LINKS white papers includes:

1. "Best-Practice Teaching With Business Simulations"  
[<http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/PAPERS/Best-Practice.pdf>]
2. "Extreme Customization With LINKS Simulations"  
[<http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/PAPERS/Extreme.pdf>]
3. "Practice Rounds in LINKS Events"  
[<http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/PAPERS/PracticeRounds.pdf>]
4. "Adding Ethical Dilemmas To LINKS Events"  
[<http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/PAPERS/EthicalDilemmas.pdf>]

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

# LINKS Train-The-Trainer Seminars

(Summer 2009)

May 26-28 ● June 23-25 ● July 28-30 ● August 18-20

LINKS Simulations Immersion Experience

Five Teleconferences and a Four-Round LINKS Simulation Event

Registration is available for the next three-day, intensive-mode Train-The-Trainer distance-learning seminars for the LINKS simulations. Randy Chapman, the LINKS author, leads these distance-learning events for academic faculty interested in learning more about teaching with LINKS. This intensive-mode seminar format includes 5-6 hours of work per day during the three days of the distance-learning seminar.

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.)

- <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]



## New Instructor FAQ: “Missing Inputs For a Scheduled Game Run”

*“One group of students said they missed the first round (i.e., forget to input the decisions). Can they still make some changes in their inputs after the game run has been executed?”*

Yes, this team can make inputs ... for the next round ... but not for the last round. This is a competitive simulation and all firms’ decisions influence other firms’ results. So, you can’t re-run the last quarter without affecting all other firms in the industry. And, those other firms will not respond well to a re-run situation, especially for one firm that missed the first round.

Everyone in a LINKS industry is operating on the same public game-run schedule. This schedule is in the instructor’s course syllabus. And, everyone receives a same-day reminder of a forthcoming game run. And and, the LINKS Simulation Database has game-run reminders at the top of each input web-screen. The bottom-line: there’s just no excuse for not making timely inputs.



The “missing” firm had its previous decisions remain in effect, so it wasn’t punished extremely. But, of course, it has no research studies, since it made no such inputs.

## New FAQ: “Excel Spreadsheet Results File”

*“Where can I find our past decision inputs? It’s inconvenient to look back through our printouts to find the status of our decisions in the past.”*

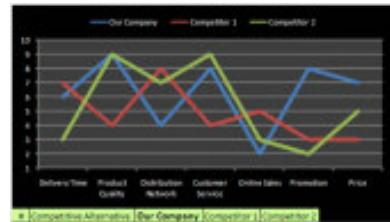
The standard reporting of LINKS financial, operations, and research results after each round is via a single Word document file.

LINKS participants may wish to create their own Excel spreadsheets for additional tracking, monitoring, and analysis of their financial and operating results. For example, particular elements in the financial and

operating reports might be tracked/charted/graphed over time.

An Excel spreadsheet results file for each LINKS firm supplements the standard LINKS Word doc file. You’ll still want to routinely access a printed copy of your firm’s standard Word doc results file. The Excel spreadsheet doesn’t replace the standard Word doc file that reports the LINKS results after each game run. Rather, the Excel spreadsheet is a supplementary reporting mechanism for the LINKS financial and operations results.

The Excel spreadsheet results file includes most of the data reported in the Word doc results file, so you don’t have to manually re-input data from the Word doc results file into an Excel spreadsheet. This supplemental Excel spreadsheet isn’t



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## FAQ: "Excel Spreadsheet Results File"

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designed to be particularly "pretty" ... it's strictly designed with functional considerations in mind. You'll need to reformat this Excel spreadsheet as you see fit by, for example, cutting-and-pasting rows and columns of data into an Excel spreadsheet of your own design.

The Excel spreadsheet includes supplemental data beyond that provided in each round's Word doc results file.

The KPI's (key performance indicators) from the first page of a firm's results file are provided for the each of the last six rounds for your firm. A following data table then provides the corresponding industry averages for each KPI for each of the last six rounds.

The Excel spreadsheet contains a second worksheet ("Decision History") which documents the last six rounds of inputs for each LINKS decision variable for your firm. This worksheet provides a convenient reference resource to access past LINKS decision inputs.

The Excel spreadsheet contains a third worksheet ("KPIcharts") with charts of each KPI vs.

the corresponding industry KPI average for each of the last six LINKS rounds. These KPI charts provide an appealing graphic rendition of the LINKS performance evaluation dimensions displayed in tabular form on the first page of each firm's financial and operating reports.

To access your firm's Excel spreadsheet, click on the appropriate link on your firm's webpage on the LINKS Simulation Database.

- You'll presumably wish to save this Excel spreadsheet with a suitable name on your PC. Note that each round's Excel spreadsheet for your firm will have to same name, so you'll need to rename successive rounds' spreadsheets appropriately on your PC to distinguish the spreadsheets for various LINKS rounds.

- You may wish to change the font used throughout the Excel spreadsheet to either "8514oem" (if available) or "Courier New", 10-point size in both cases, to permit more convenient on-screen viewing.

- You'll need to widen the column widths to conveniently view all of the spreadsheet values and the row and column labels/titles.

## Did You Know?

### 20-Minute Telephone Briefings Are Available

If you would like to learn more about teaching with the LINKS Simulations, Randy Chapman, the LINKS author, is available for a 20-minute telephone/teleconference briefing. This is a convenient way for prospective LINKS instructors to learn more about teaching with the LINKS simulations with a minimal time investment.

No prior preparation is required to participate in a LINKS Briefing. An active internet connection during a LINKS Briefing facilitates a guided-tour of LINKS and the LINKS resources on the LINKS website.

Please contact Randy Chapman ([Chapman@LINKS-simulations.com](mailto:Chapman@LINKS-simulations.com)), the LINKS author, to schedule a LINKS Briefing.



## Follow The Roadmap: A Guide for Prospective New LINKS Instructors

Familiarization	<i>"How do I learn about the LINKS simulations in a few minutes?"</i>	<p>Access the LINKS website <a href="http://www.LINKS-simulations.com">http://www.LINKS-simulations.com</a> and look around.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Click on things that look interesting.</li> <li>• View the student and instructor introductory videos.</li> </ul>	
Exploration	<i>"OK, I have some questions about LINKS? What do I do?"</i>	<p>Schedule a 20-minute LINKS briefing with Randy Chapman, the LINKS author: <a href="http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/Briefings">http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/Briefings</a></p> <p>A LINKS Briefing is a convenient way to have a personally guided tour of the LINKS website and its resources to support instructors and their students.</p>	
	<i>"So, why should I use LINKS?"</i>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td> <p>Rich Content</p> <p>Customizable Simulation Portfolio</p> <p>High-Touch Instructor Support</p> <p>We Manage LINKS For Instructors</p> </td> <td> <p>Web-Based:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convenient 24x7 Access</li> <li>• No Software To Download/Install</li> <li>• Extensive Web Support Resources (IM, PPTs, Syllabi, FAQs, Tutorials)</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Rich Content</p> <p>Customizable Simulation Portfolio</p> <p>High-Touch Instructor Support</p> <p>We Manage LINKS For Instructors</p>
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Trial	<i>"How can I try out a LINKS simulation?"</i>	<p>Access the LINKS demo for your preferred LINKS simulation variant and explore.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">- - - and/or - - -</p> <p>Register for, and participate in, a LINKS Train-The-Trainer Seminar <a href="http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/TTT">http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/TTT</a></p> <p>Offered multiple times yearly, LINKS distance-learning TTT seminars include five one-hour teleconferences and a four-round simulation event.</p>	
Usage	<i>"What support do you provide for a new user?"</i>	<p>On-going telephone and e-mail support to new LINKS instructors is provided by Randy Chapman, the LINKS author, <a href="mailto:Chapman@LINKS-simulations.com">Chapman@LINKS-simulations.com</a>.</p> <p>Extensive instructor support resources are available via the Instructor Resources link on the LINKS website. Sample course syllabi, PPTs, and instructor FAQs provide comprehensive self-service support.</p> <p>Extensive customization options exist to support LINKS simulations applications in introductory and advanced/elective courses. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial deactivations of some decisions to ease students into the simulation.</li> <li>• Mid-event enrichments (e.g., additional products and regions).</li> <li>• Course-specific customization (e.g., immediate-access research studies, recycling/recovery decisions, and product technology extensions).</li> </ul>	

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](mailto: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.

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## 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](mailto:Chapman@LINKS-simulations.com)), to obtain the relevant access parameters (username and passcode).

