

⊗ 2014 LINKS Global SCM Competition Results	1
⊗ Professor's Column: Eliminating Patent Royalties in LINKS?	2
⊗ LINKS Global Services Competition 2015	3
⊗ LINKS Adventures: Conference Chat	4
⊗ LINKS Evolves: We're iPad Friendly	6
⊗ Reminder: Game Run Schedules With Embargoes	7
⊗ LINKS Simulations Test Bank	8
⊗ Presidential Review Meetings	10
⊗ LINKS Train-The-Trainer Seminars	12

2014 LINKS Global SCM Competition Results

18 teams with a total of 71 participants competed in the October-November 2014 LINKS Global SCM Competition with the LINKS Supply Chain Management Simulation. The 18 teams were grouped into three LINKS industries in this competition.

Co-winners ('Gold Medalists') of this LINKS Global SCM Competition are (listed in numerical firm-number order, not ranking order, so these firms should be viewed as equal and unranked 'co-winners' in their respective LINKS Global SCM Competition industries):

Industry SC1: firms 1 and 6

Industry SC2: firms 4 and 6

Industry SC3: firms 3 and 4

These co-winning firms are from the University of Houston (multiple co-winners), the University of South Florida, and the University of Houston (multiple co-winners).

Performance evaluation was based on the multi-factor balanced scorecard performance evaluation system described in the LINKS Supply Chain Management Simulation participant's manual.

Congratulations to all!





Eliminating Patent Royalties in LINKS?



Brent Moritz is a long-time LINKS user at the Smeal College of Business, Pennsylvania State University.

At Penn State, I have been using the LINKS Supply Chain Management Simulation [Extended Edition] for four years in the undergraduate capstone course for supply chain majors. I use the extended version because I want students to have the experience of planning for production of a new or reconfigured product lacking specific sales history. I have them launch or reconfigure about two-thirds of the way through the LINKS exercise. There tends to be a big “Aha!” moment when students have to enter those forecasts, as their prior approaches are not well-suited to these new products. Such an experience is fairly typical in most real-world applications involving major new product launches.

This year, I had LINKS set up to turn off all patent royalties. I did this because it seemed as teams launched or reconfigured products, every year some team(s) either launched a product very similar to what had been done before or else were reluctant to launch or reconfigure. I turned off royalties because it seemed that the teams that were conservative in their new configurations often were penalized twice — once because the similar new products did not differ much in sales and again in paying the royalties to their very closely configured competitors. On the flip side, some of the teams who waited to reconfigure got an unexpected and unnecessary windfall in patent royalties paid to them, really for doing nothing. Naturally, I told the students that I had turned off patent royalties so everyone was on equal footing.

I am going to keep patent royalties turned off for future LINKS engagements. Doing so took away one barrier to reconfiguring, and did not reward the teams that did nothing in a given round. This did have one side effect, which actually improved the experience for the class: one team launched a new product that was fairly well-received, and one other team quickly copied it. While in a real-world “patent-protected” environment this might not have happened so quickly, it was interesting for both of these firms to try and estimate how much demand would be as they competed on this specific product. In the compressed time of LINKS, this was a more fruitful discussion rather than why there should be cash flowing firm to firm on a weekly basis. We also see evidence of this in the real world, as for example Apple and Samsung seem to be in constant litigation over similar intellectual property as they compete for any advantage in the marketplace. While such lawsuits take their time to get resolved, the supply chain professionals still have to forecast and deliver right away.

LINKS Global Services Competition 2015

The 2015 LINKS Global Services Competition is scheduled for March-April 2015.

Student teams participate in either of two separate services competitions ... either with the LINKS Services Marketing Simulation **or** with the LINKS Services Operations Management Simulation.

These mid-sized simulations are appropriate for students in **introductory or elective courses** in marketing, services, or operations management.

Highlights of the LINKS Global Services Competition:

- Cross-Institution 6-Round Services Simulation Competitions
- Your Student Teams Compete Against Student Teams From Other Institutions
- Challenges Students in an Intense Team-Based Cross-Institution Competition
- For Students in Academic Degree-Granting Programs Worldwide
- Targeted at Upper-Level Undergraduates and All MBAs



Two separate LINKS Global Services Competitions are offered, with the LINKS Services Marketing Simulation **and** with the LINKS Services Operations Management Simulation. These are integrative, team-based, competitive simulations suitable for upper-level undergraduates and all MBAs.

Further details about the March-April 2015 LINKS Global Services Competition (scheduling, student eligibility, costs, and registration procedure) are accessible via the **LINKS Global Competition** link on the LINKS Simulations website:

<http://www.LINKS-simulations.com>

Participating in a LINKS Global Services Competition is an alternative instructional/learning opportunity to the traditional usage of LINKS within a single instructor's course (i.e., an event with students from a single course conducted according to the course instructor's preferred scheduling).

Questions? Faculty members with questions about the LINKS Global Services Competition are invited to contact Randall G Chapman PhD, the LINKS author (Chapman@LINKS-simulations.com).



Conference Chat



Kris Smith
LINKS Operations Manager



When exhibiting at academic conferences, we often discuss with prospective instructor-users how easy it is to customize LINKS. This ease of customizing LINKS is a huge part of our value proposition! LINKS simulations can be customized in a multitude of ways to suit an individual instructor's particular educational application.

Instructor-optional switches embedded into the LINKS scenario files allow for a large range of optional capabilities to be enabled. These switches can add greatly to the richness and complexity of a LINKS event. Switches can be enabled at initialization, or at any time throughout the LINKS event per the instructor's request. The LINKS Administrator manages these switches on the instructor's behalf, so there is no additional work required by the instructors.

There are many possible switch settings available in LINKS to achieve the following goals:

SERVICES VERSIONS <i>Instructional Goal</i>
Increase Simulation Complexity
Increase Service Design Complexity
Increase Marketing Complexity
Decrease Forecasting Complexity
Increase Research Studies Resources

PRODUCTS VERSIONS <i>Instructional Goal</i>
Increase Simulation Complexity
Increase Product Development Complexity
Increase Procurement Complexity
Decrease Manufacturing Complexity
Increase Manufacturing Complexity
Increase Transportation Complexity
Increase Service Complexity
Increase Generate Demand Complexity
Add Financial Engineering Complexity
Increase Research Studies Resources
Increase Cost-Structure Complexity

LINKS can be customized in other ways to meet the instructor's needs as well. For example, there is flexibility in scheduling game runs, both in the time of day and number of game runs per week. While most instructors chose a one game run per week format, it is possible to do multiple game runs in a single week. For example, some instructors chose to do one game run per week for the first few weeks, and then they increase it to twice a week later on in their LINKS event. It is also possible to substitute a practice round for a regular round at the beginning of a LINKS event.

Classic mid-event LINKS customization options ("disruptions") include adding a region, adding another brand, cost changes, a pre-announced one-round demand surge (in a particular market region), and some restrictions on particular decision variable changes.

The bottom line is that customizing LINKS is as easy as flipping a switch! Whether you are a new or existing LINKS user, or you are in the middle of your LINKS event and you want to "shake things up", we are here to help you customize LINKS to your specific needs. The links below provide more details on customizations that are available in LINKS. If you have any other questions about customizing LINKS, don't hesitate to contact us.

For further information about customizing a products version of LINKS go to:
<http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/Switches/Products.php>

For further information about customizing a services version of LINKS go to:
<http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/Switches/Services.php>

Many experienced LINKS instructors have developed new ways to challenge their students using LINKS. Some of these extreme customization ideas are discussed in this white paper:
<http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/PAPERS/Extreme.pdf>

LINKS Evolves: We're iPad Friendly

iPad Friendly



As part of our continuing efforts to improve the look and functionality of the LINKS website, we have made great strides in making the website iPad friendly.

Any suggestions regarding website improvements would be welcomed!

Reminder: Game Run Schedules With Embargos

In processing LINKS game runs, our normal administrative protocol is that the results are “publicized” immediately after the game run is executed. “Publicized” includes uploading the new results to the LINKS web-server and sending e-mail to everyone in a LINKS industry (students and the instructor) to announce the availability of the new game run results. For most LINKS instructors, immediate game run processing and turnaround after the input submission deadline is desirable.

It is possible to “embargo” the availability of LINKS results until an instructor-specified time after the input submission deadline and subsequent game run. With an embargo, LINKS is run in the normal fashion (normally within two hours of the input submission deadline) and the LINKS results are uploaded to the web server so that the LINKS instructor has immediate access to the results. However, embargoed results are not available to students until the instructor-specified embargo time.

Embargoing is useful for instructors who wish to release results only after a class has concluded (for example, to retain students’ undivided attention throughout the class) or for instructors wishing to have early access to the results, before their students can access the results.

To embargo results, encode your embargo schedule within the game run schedule that you submit before your LINKS event begins. Here’s an example entry on a game run schedule for an embargoed game run:



November 7 @ 200pm: Round #7; results embargoed until 900pm.

Everyone in a LINKS industry always receives an e-mail announcement of the availability of new results immediately after a game run has been executed, regardless of whether embargoed results exist. And, embargoed results are “immediately” uploaded to the LINKS Simulation Database after a game run. However, students can’t access embargoed results until the specified embargo time limit has passed because the results’ links are inactive until that time.



LINKS Simulations Test Bank

- A** test bank of LINKS multiple-choice questions supports LINKS instructors in their LINKS events.
- This test bank includes 200+ multiple-choice questions covering all LINKS simulations variants. Each multiple-choice question includes the best answer as well as a brief explanation for that answer.
 - The questions are organized by topical categories and LINKS simulation variant.
 - The LINKS simulations test bank is included in the Instructor Resources section of the LINKS website.

These LINKS simulations test questions are provided to LINKS instructors in Word doc format to facilitate use throughout LINKS events. LINKS instructors may freely use these questions for testing or for in-class discussion purposes by appropriate cutting-and-pasting from this Word doc file.

These multiple-choice questions are categorized by LINKS simulation variant. Instructors should select multiple-choice questions for only the LINKS simulations variant being used. “All” variants questions are appropriate for use with any LINKS simulation.

These multiple-choice questions might be used for in-class discussion purposes, for testing/assessment usage, and for an instructor’s personal review and refreshment before a LINKS event.

In-Class Usage

When used for in-class discussion, selected questions might be drawn from this test bank and interspersed within the in-class activities ... as discussion points, “ice-breakers,” or just-in-time LINKS “moments.” For each selected question in in-class usage format, use two “slides”:

- First, show the question and solicit answers (with rationale) from the class.
- Second, show the complete question with the answer and explanation, and then entertain some class discussion.

Testing/Assessment Usage

When used for testing and assessment purposes, this test bank provides the basis for an element of individual student grading within LINKS events. Most traditional LINKS assessment elements (within-simulation performance, written reports, and final presentations) are team-based, not individual-based.

There's a need for some measure of individual-student grading within LINKS events, and this test bank of closed-ended questions (with answers provided) is one practical means for such individual student grading. Here are some within-event usage testing possibilities and timings:

1. As a pre-event, post-manual reading test of students' initial reading and understanding of the LINKS manual.
2. As a mid-event test of students' current level of understanding of LINKS.
3. As part of a final examination, to provide structured test questions about LINKS.

Instructor Personal LINKS Review Usage

Several LINKS instructors have noted an additional use for these test questions ... as an instructor review tool prior to beginning a new LINKS event or as an instructor review tool before a particular class session where LINKS will be referenced in some detail. This style of usage for the instructor may be especially useful when some time has passed since the instructor's last LINKS usage occasion.

Organization

These questions are organized by appropriate LINKS-related topics and are coded for the LINKS variants for which they are relevant. It is hoped that this organization will permit instructors to conveniently identify questions of interest for these own usage purposes.

Using These Questions In Examinations

Most of these multiple-choice questions are sufficiently interesting that they could be cast in the form of short-answer discussion questions. Students could be asked to choose the best answer and to briefly justify the choice of that answer.

When used on examinations, I have found it desirable to preface these multiple-choice questions with the phrasing: "For the following multiple-choice questions, choose the best answer from among those available." This helps to reduce the normal student complaining when examination results are returned. With this phrasing, dissatisfied students have to argue that their answer is demonstrably better than all available answers. They cannot just attempt to make the case that all of the available answers are poor or inappropriate.





Presidential Review Meetings

Best-Practice Presidential Review Meetings

What?

- o Private, pre-scheduled 30-minute meetings with each LINKS team permits the LINKS instructor to review a team's LINKS business, to answer team members' questions, and to sense the progress that teams are making in the simulation. This is one-with-a-few style of teaching/coaching, rather than the one-to-the-masses lecture-hall style of instruction.
- o "Private" due to the competitive nature of LINKS

Why?

- o Provides a different kind of powerful teaching/learning opportunity (instructor as coach) at key points during the simulation event.

How?

- o Meeting Scheduling
 - Pre-scheduled meetings, normally permitting students to pick their own times from a range of available meeting times.
 - Classroom-hours meeting times might be rotated around all teams, if multiple presidential review meetings waves are held. With a single set of presidential review meetings, classroom-hours meeting times might be randomly assigned.
- o Instructor Preparation: Bring current-round printed results output to the meeting, to reference during the discussion.

- o Simulates business review meetings with a "boss" or senior management official.

Who?

- o Instructor and all members of a single LINKS team.
- o Instructor plays multiple roles during a presidential review meeting: "firm president," instructor, coach, and encouraging/proud/supportive "parent."

When?

- o Re-assigned class time is recommended, with teams not meeting with the instructor using that time for their own private firm deliberations. In most cases, meetings will extend beyond class time, due

- o to the number of firms involved.
- o In shorter LINKS event, a single round of review meetings might be held, perhaps just before (or no later than just after) the second decision round. In longer LINKS events, several waves of presidential review meetings might be scheduled with the second round of presidential review meetings occurring at about the mid-point of the simulation event.

Where?

- o Private meeting space is required, possibly the regular course classroom for presidential meetings scheduled during class hours.

- o Meetings Format Options:
 - No Student Prep [Not recommended]: Just discussion and Q&A.
 - Some Student Prep [Recommended]: Team members collaborate and submit (via e-mail) questions/issues to be discussed. Submissions are due at least 12 hours before the scheduled presidential review meeting to permit the LINKS instructor time to review and prepare.
 - Substantial Student Prep [Optional]: SWOT Analysis. Submissions due at least 24 hours before the scheduled presidential review meeting to permit LINKS instructor review and prep.
- o Some Instructor Questions To Pose During the Meeting:
 - What are the largest problems that your firm faces?
 - What's been your best and worst team decision to date?
 - Who is the best performing competitor in your industry? Why?
 - To customers, what differential advantage does your firm offer compared to competitors?
 - How is your firm currently organized (e.g., by function, by region, as a committee of the whole)? Is this organization "best" for the current problems/challenges faced by your firm?

Likely Outcomes Arising From Presidential Review Meetings

For Students:

- o Greater emphasis on research study needs going forward.
- o More attention to prioritization of issues.
- o More focus on the really important issues.
- o More systematic attention to division of labor and responsibility assignments.

For Instructors:

- o Deep appreciation for team and individual-student progress.
- o Ideas for in-class discussion and in-class tutorials, based on common issues and concerns arising across teams.
- o Follow-up meeting scheduling for "lost"/"deeply troubled"/"unprepared" teams.



Variations on Private, Single-Team, Scheduled Presidential Review Meetings

- o With many industries in very large courses, schedule joint meetings with each firm 1 from all industries meeting with the LINKS instructor simultaneously. Repeat for firm 2, etc. Note that non-competing teams are jointly meeting with the LINKS instructor.
- o In distance learning, use teleconferences for meetings.
- o Automatic presidential review meetings must be scheduled immediately by any firm with two successive rounds of losses (negative net income).



LINKS Train-The-Trainer Seminars

January 5-9, and March 2-6, 2015

LINKS Simulations Immersion Experience Five Teleconferences and a Four-Round LINKS Simulation Event

Registration is available for the next five-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. These intensive-mode seminar formats includes 2-3 hours of work per day during each of the five days of the distance-learning seminars.

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 available 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.)

Reminders

LINKS Passcode Retrieval: 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 recorded in the LINKS Simulation Database.

Student Payment Timing: Student payment with a personal credit card is via the “Pay For LINKS” link on the LINKS webpage.

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 a LINKS 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.

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 a LINKS simulation event. As a practical matter, a final warning/reminder is e-mailed to those students who haven’t paid by the first game run, before implementing the non-discounted price.

E-Mail Address Management: Using their LINKS firm’s passcode, LINKS students may change their official LINKS e-mail address 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.

LINKS Instructor Resources: Instructors access LINKS Instructor Resources via the LINKS webpage. Contact Randy Chapman (Chapman@LINKS-simulations.com), the LINKS author, to obtain the username and passcode.



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



Editor: Cyndy Winkler

LINKS® is a registered trademark of Randall G Chapman.
All rights reserved. Copyright © 2015 by Randall G Chapman.