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## Ruth Bolton's Book

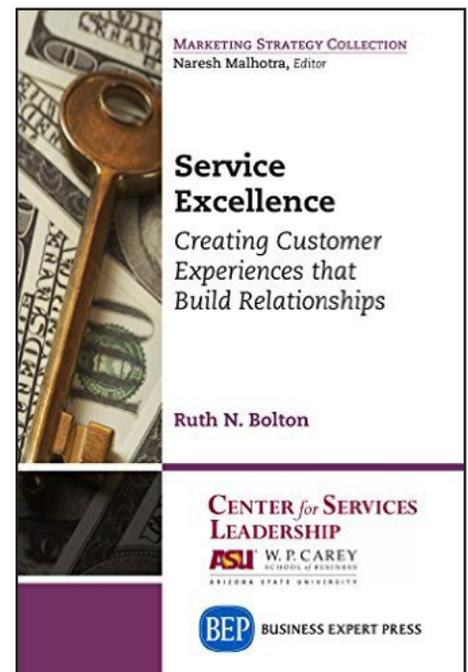
**R**uth Bolton, LINKS services simulations co-author, has just had her book

*Service Excellence: Creating Customer Experiences That Build Relationships*

published by Business Expert Press.

Ruth N. Bolton PhD is Professor of Marketing at the W.P. Carey School of Business, Arizona State University. She previously served as Editor, Journal of Marketing (2002-2005) and Executive Director of the Marketing Science Institute (2009-2011). She studies how organizations can improve business performance over time by creating, maintaining and enhancing relationships with customers. Her recent research has focused on high

technology, interactive services sold in global business-to-business markets.



# LINKS Global SCM Competition

The 2016 LINKS Global SCM Competition is scheduled for October-November 2016. The LINKS Supply Chain Management Simulation is used in the LINKS Global SCM Competition.

## Highlights of the LINKS Global SCM Competition:

- Cross-Institution 8-Round Supply Chain Management Simulation Competition
- 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

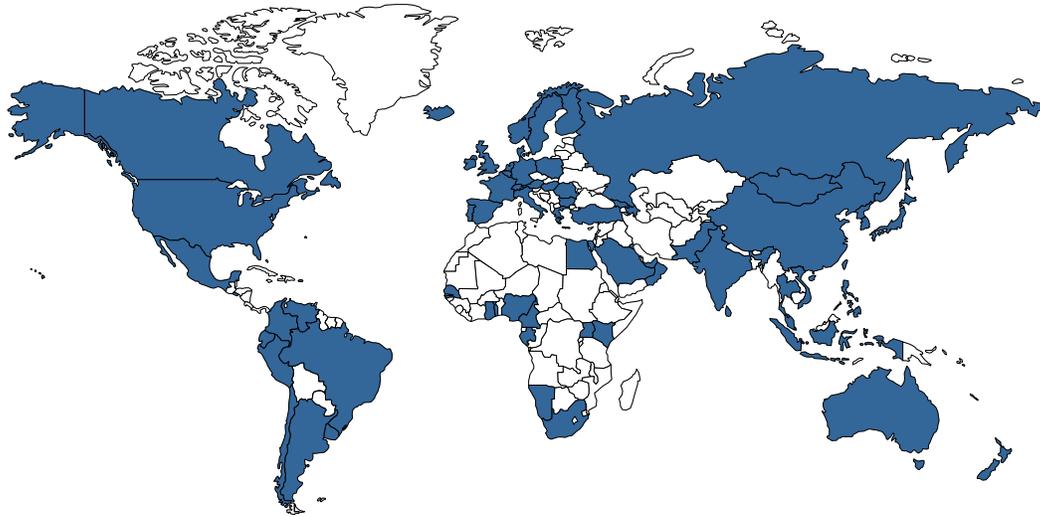


Further details about the October-November 2016 LINKS Global SCM Competition (scheduling, student eligibility, costs, and registration procedure) are accessible via the LINKS Global Competition link on the LINKS website.

Registration signup and payment deadline for the 2016 LINKS Global SCM Competition is September 26, 2016.

Participating in a LINKS Global SCM 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).

Faculty members with questions about the LINKS Global SCM Competition are invited to contact Randy Chapman, the LINKS author (Chapman@LINKS-simulations.com).



## Where In The World Is LINKS Simulations?

LINKS Simulations exhibits at 10-12 conferences annually to reach out to prospective LINKS instructors and to interact with existing LINKS users.

We'll be exhibiting at these conferences in the near future:

August 5-7, 2016

September 14-16, 2016

September 24-25, 2016

November 2-4, 2016

November 19-22, 2016

AMA Summer Educators' Conference @ Atlanta

MMA Fall Educators' Conference @ Providence

SCMEC Conference @ Kissimmee (Orlando)

Society of Marketing Advances Conference @ Atlanta

DSI Conference @ Austin

If you're attending any of these conferences, please do visit our exhibit to chat.



## LINKS Train-The-Trainer Seminars

August 15-19 and October 3-7, 2016

### 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.)

# Questions About LINKS: Intensive LINKS Event

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“I am considering having an intensive session with the LINKS Supply Chain Management Simulation with our students. They would come and stay the whole days working with LINKS, participating in discussion sessions, etc. for as long as it would be advisable. Do you have any hints and ideas about how to organize this and about the number of days would we need? Suggestions for a possible schedule?”

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A “four-day” course syllabus, shown below, from the Instructor Resources on the LINKS Simulations website includes a scheduling template. You might prefer a 5-day event, with team presentations on day 5 and to provide time for additional class sessions. You could also have an evening LINKS decision round, perhaps one evening only. And, LINKS Simulations requires at least two hours between the end of each round and the start of the next round to process a LINKS game run.

## **Four-Day Supply Chain Management Strategy Seminar** Including a Six-Round Supply Chain Simulation Event With the LINKS Supply Chain Management Simulation

### **First Day**

830a-945a	Seminar Introduction
945a-1000a	Refreshment Break
1000a-1145a	SCM Strategy Class #1
1145a-100p	Lunch Break
100p-145p	SCM Strategy Class #2
145p-245p	LINKS Introduction
245p-300p	Refreshment Break
300p-500p	LINKS Decision Session #1 (Month #4)

### **Second Day**

830a-1000a	SCM Strategy Class #3
1030a-1015a	Refreshment Break
1015a-1215p	LINKS Decision Session #2 (Month #5)
1215p-115p	Lunch Break
115p-245p	SCM Strategy Class #4
245p-300p	Refreshment Break
300p-500p	LINKS Decision Session #3 (Month #6)

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**Third Day**

830a-1000a	SCM Strategy Class #5
1030a-1015a	Refreshment Break
1015a-1215p	LINKS Decision Session #4 (Month #7)
1215p-115p	Lunch Break
115p-245p	SCM Strategy Class #6
245p-300p	Refreshment Break
300p-500p	LINKS Decision Session #5 (Month #8)

**Fourth Day**

830a-1030a	LINKS Decision Session #6 (Month #9)
1030a-1045a	Refreshment Break
1045a-1100a	LINKS Final Presentation Briefing
1100a-130p	Working Lunch and LINKS Final Presentation Preparation
130p-300p	LINKS Final Presentations and Simulation Debriefing

## Notes About This LINKS Event:

- The participant's manual for the LINKS Supply Chain Management Simulation is the required seminar pre-reading. This would be distributed as an e-mail message attachment (a pdf file) to participants about one week before the event.
- Workshop facilities requirements include a classroom plus private break-out space for each simulation team.
- Fast laser printer access (at least 12-pages per minute printing speed) is required for the instructor's (or an assistant's) use to print the results for all participants each simulation round.
- Each simulation team requires dedicated access to one PC (laptop or desktop) with a reliable internet connection.

# Questions About LINKS: LINKS in a Transportation Class

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*“Which LINKS simulation would be most appropriate to use in a Transportation class?”*

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A 5- or 6-round event with the LINKS Supply Chain Management Fundamentals Simulation is a good choice for a Transportation class. Transportation decisions (inbound sub-assembly supplier surface/air shipments, regional distribution center management, and shipper and surface/air shipments for plant-to-DC finished goods shipments) must be managed within the broader supply chain management context within the LINKS Supply Chain Management Fundamentals Simulation.

Like all LINKS simulations, the LINKS Supply Chain Management Fundamentals Simulation has plentiful customization options. For example, for a Transportation class:

- To reduce complexity: the Generate Demand inputs web-screen might be deactivated so that generate demand decisions (price and marketing spending) are not required.
- To increase complexity: dynamic DC (distribution center) delivery reliability and costs might be enabled so that reliability of finished-goods surface deliveries from the plant to regional DCs and shipping costs vary through time. Within LINKS, such shipping costs will be influenced by demand patterns with low-demand shippers decreasing their costs and high-demand shippers increasing their costs over time, thus requiring student-teams to be ever watchful over time for performance (profitability) enhancing changes in transportation decisions.

Information about the LINKS Supply Chain Management Fundamentals Simulation (including the student manual as a freely accessible pdf file and access to a demo industry) is on the LINKS Simulations website:

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

# 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.



# LINKS Stats: Top-7 Webpage Hits

**D**uring 2016, our top-7 most-visited LINKS Simulations webpages (of the 39 tracked LINKS Simulations website webpages) through June 21, 2016 have been:

Ranking	Webpage
1	Pro-Forma Projections
2	Newsletter Bulletin Link
3	Decision Inputs Audit
4	Global Top-10 Rankings
5	LINKS FAQs Link
6	Tutorials
7	Retrieve LINKS Passcode Link

Why are these LINKS Simulations website webpages so popular?

## Pro-Forma Projections

This link is found on each firm's main page in the LINKS Simulation Database. These projections predict the firm's profitability for the next round given their current decisions in the LINKS Simulation Database. These projections are based on various assumptions, including the key assumption that current sales volume forecasts will be the actual sales volume realizations in the next round.

## Newsletter Bulletin Link

The Newsletter Bulletin, included in the standard Word doc results file, is a quick one-page summary of topical developments in the LINKS industry in the just-completed round.

## Decision Inputs Audit

This link is found on each firm's main page in the LINKS Simulation Database. This inputs audit checks the firm's current decision inputs for potential problems and inconsistencies. Possible issues are displayed in blue and errors are displayed in red. LINKS students find this page to be very useful in their decision making process.

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## Global Top-10 Rankings

The Global Top-10 Rankings are published weekly. The link can be found on the main page of the LINKS Simulations website. All teams that qualify for the Global Top-10 Rankings are notified via e-mail, along with their respective instructors. The top-performing firms in these two Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are reported in the Global Top-10 Rankings:

- Change in Net Income to Revenue
- Forecasting Accuracy

Across all LINKS Simulations variants, these two KPIs are the easiest to compare cross-industry performance since higher values are always unambiguously better.

## LINKS FAQs Link

This link is available throughout the LINKS Simulation Database. When students make their decision changes for the next round, they can access the relevant FAQs through a link at the top of each web page in the LINKS Simulation Database. While it is accessed most often by students, this same link has been provided at the top of the instructor firm-0 webpage as well for the instructor's convenience.

## Tutorials

The LINKS Tutorials are useful supporting 20-30 minute work-through tools built around a variety of useful LINKS topics for each LINKS Simulations variant.

## Retrieve LINKS Passcode Link

This link is in the top right-corner of the LINKS Simulations webpage. If a student or an instructor has misplaced their LINKS passcode, the passcode may be retrieved via this link. Input your three-character industry code along with your official LINKS e-mail address to have an automated e-mail containing the passcode sent to that LINKS e-mail address immediately after the request is submitted.



## Googling LINKS



If you Google the phrase "LINKS simulation" (without the quotes), more than 51,100,000 hits are listed. The phrase "LINKS simulations" (without the quotes) yields more than 47,300,000 hits. What is the first link that appears (in both cases)?

# 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](mailto: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](mailto:CWinkler@LINKS-simulations.com)



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