

What Do Students Say About LINKS?

"The journey is the reward." - Steve Jobs, Apple Computer Founder

- *"Far and away the most useful, effective, grueling, and fun educational experience I've ever encountered."*
- *"Fabulous course! I found the job interviewers were fascinated with the kinds of problems we were asked to solve. Especially organizational problems. What do you do with a free-loader? How do you handle the friend who tries hard but really doesn't perform? The study group is the most 'real world' thing you will do here."*
- *"I really enjoyed and learned a lot from working through LINKS and how it reflects business decisions, challenges, and trade-offs that we encounter every day in our real life."*
- *"It's a lot of fun, almost infectious when things are going well, and it is a complete nightmare (and equally infectious) when things are going badly."*
- *"I thought the game was very good. It wasn't just a simulation, though, because it certainly stimulated emotions of anger, resentment, frustrations, and pride and sense of achievement."*
- *"This is the real world ... with real world workloads, satisfactions, and frustrations."*
- *"This is, beyond a doubt, the most exciting course I've ever taken. It brought everything I've ever been exposed to into play, and gave me a lot of insight into my own temperament."*
- *"LINKS breathes life into the course material and provides students with a view of the real life challenges and decisions that business leaders are faced with. The hands-on training allows the next generation of business leaders to gain experience in making decisions and to recognize how decisions impact other areas of a business."*
- *"The amount you could get out of it was a direct function of what was put into it."*
- *"This course requires long hours, and much perseverance. It is addictive and emotionally straining. It is all consuming. Little time is left for all other aspects of one's life. The pace is extremely hectic. Nonetheless, this rates among the very best experiences available here. I learned more in this one course than I typically do in a whole term. This included a sense for real-world applications of theories, how the various marketing mix variables affect sales results, and the usefulness of marketing research information. For a person who, like me, has relatively little work experience, this simulation provides a more useful experience than a case-study course, because one has to live with his own decisions and their consequences. This is extremely beneficial. I recommend this course wholeheartedly to anyone who is willing to work to learn a lot."*
- *"While focused on supply chain management, LINKS covered every step from product development to distribution and marketing. I really enjoyed it and learned much about the interaction of business model components and the importance of strategic planning."*
- *"Thorough, demanding, realistic, and 'real-life' simulation."*
- *"The best part of LINKS was the closeness to real-world situations. The real-world business environment is impartial; it doesn't forgive errors and it rewards success handsomely. The simulation replicated this effectively."*
- *"The full interaction of the supply chain was an eye-opener and, as a buyer, I have a new appreciation for my suppliers' challenges."*
- *"The course was extremely worthwhile. In particular, it teaches humility and how to bear up under pressure."*

Student Feedback From Greg Kivenzor's Fall 2012 Course



The LINKS system is a wonderful tool in which to learn the intricacies, challenges, rewards and even pitfalls of running a business. Although LINKS is a simulation, you and your team will quickly realize that the world within the software is amazingly real and lifelike. In the end, we learned a tremendous amount about the challenges and excitement of running a company. The LINKS system has been incredibly well-designed and thought-out and truly does allow you to fully understand the intricacies involved in running your own business. You may end up not "winning" the simulation but you will be a winner in business if you are able to apply the techniques and skills learned in LINKS to your future endeavors.

This was one of the best classes I've been in. Working with LINKS gave me an opportunity to use the knowledge that I acquired in the past few years to run a business and face real problems.

It's a great tool to develop critical thinking skills towards business and marketing. It's an opportunity for you to run such a huge business on your own, you can explore your options, take some risks, and in the end you are happy to know that it's just a game, and all the rewards or punishments are just the part of the game.

I am certain that my team and I will remember and refer to our LINKS experience for years to come.

LINKS is an excellent simulation to learn how a business runs and how different areas of the business are affected by what is done in another. LINKS gives you a great understanding of the logic used to run a business and gives a great judgment of financial strategies and difficulties companies have.

Ultimately, LINKS is competitive, stressful, and insightful. It mimics the real business world and you will find it does an excellent job in recreating every aspect of running a large company.

LINKS is an invaluable learning tool and teaches things that could never be taught in a textbook.

And, from a Spring 2014 student at Rivier University:

"My Definition of LINKS initially was (L)ost (IN) (K)nowing the (S)oftware as that was exactly what I felt when I started off with it. It was frustrating and hard. But the more time you spent, the more you read and learnt about it, the more interesting and enjoyable it became which later on led me to change my definition to (L)earning with (IN)telligence & (K)nowledge leads to (S)uccess!"

What Do Instructors Say About LINKS?

"LINKS provides students with an opportunity to analyze customers and competitors across distinct regions/segments in a dynamic, realistic, competitive marketing environment. This simulation gives students experience in a competitive marketing environment and can be used in a number of ways to assess their ability to implement various strategic marketing concepts and frameworks. There are no other tools available to faculty that accomplish these objectives. Exams, assignments, and cases are all deficient in this regard because they do not hold students accountable for the consequences of their decisions in a dynamic, longitudinal, and competitive environment. Similar to real life experience, students may learn in an iterative process of research, analysis, decision-making, and feedback across multiple events."

Jeff Thieme, University of Memphis

"My MBAs love the LINKS Supply Chain Management Simulation. More importantly, it gave them an opportunity to apply different business and operations management strategies to drive firm performance and get feedback almost in real time. Having firm #6 (an inert, unmanaged firm with no decision changes throughout the LINKS event) was also a great benchmarking tool to demonstrate that these strategies would result in better performance over the longer term."

Eric Jack, University of Alabama at Birmingham

"I picked LINKS because it was the closest thing to reality that was out there. Participants are faced with making decisions that have interaction effects and one of the keys to doing well is to understand how one decision interacts with others and impacts the other processes that are being managed. LINKS gives you a sense of the overall complexity of managing an entire supply chain from the perspective of one firm in the chain."

Brooke Saladin, Wake Forest University

"LINKS is over. For me, it was a great experience. The success was enormous. Students love it and their involvement was fantastic."

Eduardo Leite, EGP (Portugal)

"LINKS is going very well and the format (five weeks for people to get used to the tool and then six weekly rounds) was also very successful. Students are enjoying the exercise (although some of them get a bit stressed out sometimes - well, welcome to the reality of SCM!) and I think they are learning a lot. LINKS is 100% plausible and excellent as a supplement to the instructional sessions, readings, and international case analyses in my course."

Henrique Correa, Rollins College

"Thanks for the LINKS experience last term. Students had a great learning experience. The online immediate-access research, instructor support, and results delivery made operations a much more relaxed experience for me as a faculty user and I could concentrate on the teaching of the course and linkages with the simulation."

G. Shainesh, Indian Institute of Management Bangalore

"I think my students enjoyed LINKS more this past semester than they have in the past. Perhaps I am learning to better use it as a teaching tool. The LINKS Services Management Simulation is an excellent simulation and appears to me to be the only one that takes into account all aspects of service design and management."

Eileen Bridges, Kent State University