

Why Teach With a Simulation?

"Learning is not a spectator sport." – D. Blocher

The Problem: *"Change does not come readily to adults. Lectures, training modules, and workshops may lay bare the mechanics of organizational change, but they are unlikely to revolutionize people's work practices. Most of the time, we learn only through experience. But everyday business is seldom conducive to such learning, since delays and the complexity of most companies tend to obscure the link between decisions and their consequences. Under normal conditions, managers are rarely able to see the full effects of their actions. To make things worse, most managers possess only a limited perspective of their organization as a whole. And since their performance is usually judged on near-term results, they have little incentive to contemplate the long-term outcome of their decisions."* - Dory Bertsche, Christopher Crawford, and Stephen E. Macadam, "Is Simulation Better Than Experience?" **The McKinsey Quarterly** (Number 1, 1996)

The Management Simulation Solution:

- Adults learn best by doing. "Doing" involves taking responsibility for one's actions, receiving feedback, and having an opportunity to improve through time. Management simulations support learning in a non-threatening but competitive environment of the kind that real managers face every day.
- Like an airline pilot flight simulator, a management simulator allows more rapid time compression, quick feedback to the learner, and is a low risk process (except possibly to one's ego and pride). A well-designed management simulator can provide students with a realistic education and training experience in the relative safety of the simulation's operating environment. And, perhaps most importantly, the lessons learned in the simulator occur within hours or days not months, quarters, or years.

The classic reasons to favor management simulations in adult-learning environments compared to traditional lecture/case/discussion educational events include:

- Simulations reflect active not passive participation, enhancing learning motivation. Simulation participants are responsible for their own actions and decisions, but there's an opportunity to learn and improve through time.
- Simulations apply key management concepts, especially coordination and planning.
- Simulations demand analysis and decisions in the context of market-based feedback in the presence of thoughtful vigilant competitors.
- Simulations provide rapid feedback, encouraging participants to learn from their successes and failures within a relatively low-risk competitive environment.
- Simulations are based on small-group decision-making under time pressure, generally reflecting the workplace environment in all organizations.
- Simulations provide learning variety since they're novel learning environments.



Jeff Thieme (University of Memphis) provides a thoughtful rationale for teaching with large-scale management simulations: *"Simulations force students to be accountable for the positive and negative consequences of their decisions. Exams, quizzes, and case studies just can't do this. In the classroom, students usually have (and often take) the opportunity to argue about their answers' correctness on exams and reports. In the real world, managers don't have the luxury of arguing whether or not their decisions deserve 'credit.' They either meet their projections or they don't."*

Why LINKS? (The Case For Choosing LINKS)

"I never try to teach my students anything. I only try to create an environment in which they can learn." – Albert Einstein

30,000+ past participants in 1,250+ LINKS events have enjoyed these benefits in their LINKS experience:

Rich Content

- Thoughtfully designed, state-of-the-art simulation platform crafted and supported by the author's 30+ years of academic research and consulting experience in designing, software engineering, instructor support, and teaching with management simulations.
- Originally designed for executive education and corporate seminars, LINKS has been well tested with, and reflects the feedback provided by, a wide range of business specialists, managers, and senior executives in companies such as Accenture, Bridgestone/Firestone, ConAgra Foods, ExxonMobil, IBM, Mars, Moet Hennessy, RSM McGladrey, Shell, Siemens, Tenaris, The Stanley Works, Unilever, and Whirlpool.
- Complex, rich simulation design with extensive interactions (interconnections) among the decision elements, requiring integrative and comprehensive strategies and tactics.
- Extensive web-based resources to support students and instructors.
- Product and service line management decisions are included within LINKS.
- Dynamic competition with firms competing directly against other firms within LINKS.
- Extensive financial/operating reports provided after each game run.
- Comprehensive research study resources to support fact-based decision making.

Web-Based Administration and Resources

- Instructors and students use web browsers to interact with LINKS. There's no software to download/install in the 24x7 web-based environment. Students and instructors only require an e-mail address and internet access to participate in LINKS.
- Convenient back-office, remote administration provided by Chapman and Associates. We run LINKS for you so that you can focus on teaching rather than on simulation administration logistics and details.
- The complete LINKS participant's manual is freely accessible/downloadable via the LINKS website (<http://www.LINKS-simulations.com>).
- Instructors have full access to all simulation results (including game administrator reports) via their own private LINKS industry-specific passcode.

Instructor Convenience

- Common, well-tested software platform and simulation portfolio family, with enterprise management, marketing, and services management, supply chain management simulation variants.
- Low switching costs among LINKS variants for instructors, permitting instructors to stay within the LINKS portfolio across varying teaching applications and environments.
- Common, well-tested software platform supporting all LINKS simulation variants.
- LINKS industries consist of 2-8 firms (with 4-6 firms being typical). Larger class sizes are accommodated with simultaneous, parallel LINKS industries. With LINKS, you're not forced to configure your class into a particular (fixed) number of teams/firms
- LINKS is highly customizable. Extensive instructor-optional switches provide plentiful customization possibilities for instructors' varying course requirements and emphases.
- The author's passionate, zealous commitment to direct instructor support, including pre-course design consultation and on-going, within-course instructional support.