



From LINKS SCM To LINKS SOM



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The LINKS Supply Chain Management Simulation has been integrated into both the undergraduate and graduate courses in Supply Chain Strategy at TCU for over six years.

The simulation has consistently received tremendous accolades so I decided to venture into another simulation offered through LINKS: the LINKS Services Operations Management Simulation. As part of the Professional MBA program, TCU offers mini courses during the inter-mester break and professors are encouraged to design an interactive course as the contact hours are delivered in an abbreviated time period. Service Operations is not currently listed in the regular repertoire of courses and, having taught operations in the past, I thought this would be a great course to offer. The course was a success! First of all, the course was capped at 12 students, but as demand grew the cap was lifted and a total of 17 students participated in the simulation.

Having used the LINKS Supply Chain Management Simulation [Extended Edition], I was already familiar with the basics as to how the simulation would run, the comprehensiveness of the manual, the resources available online, the plethora of research reports, and the outstanding support offered by Randy and his team. I was not disappointed. The LINKS Services Operations Management Simulation contains all of the excellent resources offered to instructors as the supply chain management version does.

I admit it did take some concentrated effort on my part to get “up to speed” with the nuances of the LINKS Services Operations Management Simulation. The financial statements are similar. However, the KPIs driving the event are different and the students must focus on decisions relevant in the service industry such as service design, service operations, marketing, forecasting, and IT. Similar to hyperware and metaware in the supply chain management simulation, the service design configuration consists of a seven-character code. Service design elements include service category (household or major accounts), CSR (customer service representative) technical training and service skills training, appointment scheduling, scheduling style, service call duration, and format. Of course, the students also have to decide which research reports they want to purchase to assist them in their decision making.

During an intense three-day session, we completed six runs. As usual, the students were markedly impressed that the simulation could not be “gamed” and how closely it mirrored real life. “The LINKS Services Operations Management Simulation is a very enjoyable learning tool for MBA students” and “In the big picture, you must focus on what the customer wants and provide it” were some statements given by students.

If you are looking for something new to offer, try the LINKS Services Operations Management Simulation. As with all LINKS experiences, the students walk away knowing they met the challenge and learned something of value!