



Pre-Business LINKS

I have been successfully using the supply chain version of LINKS for over six years and this past summer decided to try another version of LINKS—the LINKS Enterprise Management Simulation. I used this simulation in a summer institute for college seniors and recent graduates who are in a non-business academic field (education, communications, psychology, engineering, history, and nutritional science are some of the majors).



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The program is a four-week , 9:00am-4:00pm intensive “basics in business” where the students are exposed to accounting, finance, economics, marketing, strategy, business law, supply chain management and other career-building skills. Having been the academic program director for this program for five years and having tried other types of simulations and projects to culminate the variety of skills the students were learning, I decided to try the LINKS Enterprise Management Simulation. The simulation was a success!

The simulation began at the end of week two after the accounting professor had addressed the LINKS Corporate P&L Statement and the strategy professor had discussed multiple strategies for success. These professors did not learn the ins and outs of LINKS, but since it mirrors what they currently teach it was a simple addition to their curriculum. I led the students through the simulation and it did not take long for me to understand the simulation well enough to lead the class. This LINKS version has similar financial statements, the performance evaluation is still a multi-factor balanced score card, and of course the students still enter their decisions on-line and have to decide whether or not to invest in research studies and, if so, which ones.

This simulation marks the transition of time by quarters instead of months, but the industry is still the set-top box industry. As is the hallmark of the LINKS simulations, the students became very involved in the competitive aspects of the game. The end deliverable was a final presentation where the team presented their strategies and how they leveraged the basic business concepts they had learned to succeed (or not) in the simulation.

The LINKS Enterprise Management Simulation was an excellent addition to the four-week Summer Institute and I plan to use it again next summer!