

## LINKS Services Marketing Simulation

*"I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I understand." - Confucius*

The LINKS Services Marketing Simulation is a sophisticated, competitive, team-based services management simulation. LINKS firms market and deliver “support services” (e.g., computing/IT support, financial management, health care, repair, or maintenance services) to households (consumers) and major accounts (businesses) in multiple market regions. Each simulation round is approximately equivalent to a large Harvard-style case study in terms of analysis, individual preparation, team meeting and discussion, and student-time requirements. LINKS industries may have as many as eight teams (four to six firms per industry are typical), with simultaneous parallel industries accommodating larger class sizes. Within-simulation performance is evaluated with a balanced scorecard of financial, operational, and customer-facing metrics.



LINKS engages participants in all aspects and challenges of services marketing:	<b>Human Resources:</b> hiring, firing, retaining, and compensating service personnel
<b>Marketing:</b> segmentation, market selection, differential advantage, marketing mix decisions, service design, and portfolio management	<b>Service Operations:</b> technology, productivity, capacity management, forecasting, and service quality management

A range of research study resources are available to LINKS firms, including service quality metrics, employee and customer satisfaction surveys, competitive benchmarking studies, and retention statistics.

LINKS firms are challenged to effectively integrate business processes to create value for customers and shareholders. LINKS highlights the interrelationships among marketing activities, organizational capabilities, and service operations (human resource management and technology), while enhancing and challenging participants’ management, analysis, planning, and strategy skills. Management teams also encounter challenges and opportunities arising in organizational and group settings. These management considerations are as important as analysis and decision making skills in achieving success in LINKS.

Learning Emphases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing and executing a value-creating strategy for customers</li> <li>• Crafting an effective marketing program to communicate value to customers</li> <li>• Matching demand and supply (capacity) in a competitive environment</li> <li>• Managing service quality and technology</li> <li>• Managing service personnel (staffing and compensation)</li> <li>• Interpreting business performance metrics (e.g., employee job satisfaction and customer satisfaction survey data)</li> <li>• Enhancing and encouraging fact-based analysis and decision making</li> <li>• Experiencing competitive dynamics in an evolving marketplace</li> </ul>
Target Courses	Services marketing courses and marketing principles courses where a simulation with a service marketing focus is desired.
Simulation Administration	Chapman and Associates provides web-based remote administration of LINKS. There’s no software to download/install. Participants use their favorite web browser to access the LINKS Simulation Database to input decisions and retrieve results (a Word doc file) after simulation rounds.
Instructor Support	Ruth Bolton and Randy Chapman (Chapman@LINKS-simulations.com), the LINKS authors, support instructors throughout LINKS events, including pre-course counseling and course design.

LINKS resources, including the participant’s manual and extensive instructor resources, are conveniently accessible via the LINKS website (<http://www.LINKS-simulations.com>).