INTRODUCTION

Case studies have traditionally taken a key role as a learning tool in many business and marketing courses. But studies have shown that real-life experience more effectively teaches concepts than any other method. This is a very common challenge that educators face: how do you give your students real-life experience in the classroom?

Business simulations have become an effective solution to this challenge. They develop new skills for students, who learn from doing, and are therefore interesting additions to traditional learning. But what exactly does simulation-based learning entail? How can you choose the right simulation for your course needs?

LEARNING BY DOING: HOW SIMULATIONS STAND OUT

Simulation-based learning carried out in the form of business games or business simulations, has a primary function: it places learners in various market situations to help them learn essential concepts. The simulations allow them to study a market and its players, and allow them to take strategic or operational actions, and observe the results. Indeed, the most important lessons are learned from experience.

A way to mimic on-the-job learning

Over the years, researchers have formalized the 70/20/10 model, well known in the corporate training world. According to this paradigm, 70% of what people learn comes from experience, 20% from social interactions, and 10% purely from traditional learning such as readings and case studies.

How concepts are retained

- **70%** From on-the-job experiences
- **20%** From constructive peer interaction
- **10%** From traditional learning

Following this model, simulations are a learning tool that can replicate on-the-job, real-life experiences.
Risk-free risk taking

Business simulations allow students to learn as if they were positioned in a company, except that their potential mistakes won’t have any costly consequences to the business. They can be an effective way to educate. They alter the attitudes and behaviors of students facing a situation. A lot of simulation-based learning works similarly to training ‘on the job’ — even if it is not the only tool for learning this way.

Realism

As shown in the 70/20/10 model, business simulations are effective because, when done properly, they can replicate realistic market environments.

The essence of the process is to begin with a real and complex situation, glean the essentials from it, and recreate it in a simulation. The simulation is a success when testers are unable to detect whether a situation was created for the game or is from a real business.

Timing

Unlike in a real business environment, time is limited in most simulations. Students don’t have lots of time to make a decision. This can prove to be beneficial as it forces them to react under pressure, and the decision-making processes become engrained in their minds. It also teaches them how to think on their feet and can make quick decisions.

Teamwork

Simulations have the advantage of creating a common culture among the participants. It pushes them to think together, make decisions together, and resolve conflicts together.

After having played, the students share the same competitive values, and spend less time on the details, allowing them to work more quickly. Simulations can be an excellent antidote against “business theatrics”, the non-essential debates and politics than can commonly plague decision-making pro-

The Big Picture

With the broad range of challenges that students face within a simulation, they tend to be better apt at grasping big picture concepts. They get to play an actual job role, and not just read and analyze. They make their own decisions and then see the results of their decisions as well as the response of other players.
WHO CAN BENEFIT?

Business simulations are geared towards a wide range of participants.

**University Students**

Business simulations work quite well at the university level, either in undergraduate or graduate courses for students who have not yet entered the workforce.

MBA and Masters students in Marketing can benefit from a strategic marketing-focused simulation. Students taking core business and marketing courses at the academic level can take advantage of this type of learning to effectively prepare for entering the workforce.

**Executive Learners**

Simulations can also be used in executive education, targeting experienced marketers and other working professionals, executives and business leaders who have already entered the workforce.

Business simulations in this context can help strengthen and perfect already-developed skills in the working world. They also enable participants to develop their business literacy skills and test their business judgements. Business acumen is essential in improving the performance of leaders.
Ensure that key learning outcomes match your class objectives. There are many offerings available on the market ranging in subject matter. Some business simulations touch on basic concepts, whereas others can go in-depth into various subjects.

Get to know the simulation before using it in real time. An instructor should always play the simulation game before hand and carefully examine the material that comes with it. This will help in having a better overall view of the simulation and if it is a good fit for the class.

Computer-based or board game? Computer-based sims will drive learning through detailed modeling and can be team-based, or stand alone. Board games can drive learning through simplicity of modeling.

Estimate how much time you want to dedicate with your class for the simulation. Formats can range from a couple of hours to several days.

Pricing. Simulation costs can vary. It can be cost-effective to become certified in teaching certain simulations. Having an all-inclusive program with instructor package may cost more but can facilitate the process.

Consider your class size. Many simulations are better suited to be divided up into teams of four. Others can be more flexible. Be sure to choose one that is right for the number of your students. There is an option for almost any number.

Regarding simulations, there are many possibilities to choose from. They can be as simple as a replicated single basic concept, or they can encompass an entire marketspace and embed multiple concepts.
Depending on your course objectives and your time constraints, a business simulation can integrate easily into most curriculums.

Mini-simulations can be completed in as little as ½ of a day, whereas more elaborate 4 or 5-day intensive strategic marketing simulations can span over the course of a few months. Simulations can also be 100% on site or a used as blended approach with remote work. Here are a few examples:

### 4-Day Agenda (Simulation + Exercises + 8 Sessions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome &amp; Introduction</td>
<td>09:00 – 10:15 Introduction</td>
<td>09:00 – 10:15 Lecture</td>
<td>09:00 – 10:15 Lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture Understanding Marketing</td>
<td>Positioning and R&amp;D</td>
<td>Marketing Mix 1</td>
<td>Marketing Mix 2</td>
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<td>Break</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>Break</td>
<td>14:30-15:30 Debrief Introduction to Planning Break</td>
<td>15:00 – 15:45 Debrief</td>
<td>14:30 – 16:00 Prepare Team Presentation</td>
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<td>15:30 – 16:45 Lecture Segmentation &amp; Targeting Break</td>
<td>15:45 – 17:15 Exercise 3-Year Strategic Plan</td>
<td>15:45 – 17:30 Workgroup Decision Round 5</td>
<td>16:15-18:15 Presentation to Shareholders</td>
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<td>17:00 – 18:30 Identifying Key Target Segments</td>
<td>17:15 – 18:30 Workgroup Decision Round 3 3-Year Strategic Plan</td>
<td>17:45 – 18:30 Prepare Team Presentation</td>
<td>18:30 – 19:30 Final Debrief Program Conclusions</td>
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**Distance Learning:**
StratX Simulations can be done 100% remotely.

Learn more about how to implement a virtual course with our simulations.
2-Day Agenda with Remote work

**DAY 1**

09:00 - Conceptual Session (2h)
- Segmentation & Positioning Strategies

10:00 - Break (20’)

11:00 - Introduction I & Demo (1h10)

12:00 - Lunch (60’)

13:00 - Workgroup (1h40’)
- Decision Round 1

14:00 - Break (20’)

15:00 - Introduction II & Demo (1h)
- R&D and Positioning
- Workgroup (2h)
- Decision Round 2
  *(to be continued after dinner)*

**REMOTE WORK**

Remote Workgroup
- Decision Rounds 3 and 4
- Debrief document emailed before Round 3

For each Decision Round:
- 2 weeks turnaround time
- Hotline by email – 24 business hour response time
- 30’ coaching by telephone upon appointment for each team

**DAY 2**

09:00 - Conceptual Session
- Portfolio Management & Allocation of Resources
- Break (20’)
- Debrief & Q&A (20’)

10:00 - Workgroup (1h40’)
- Decision Round 5

11:00 - Working Lunch (30’)

12:00 - Workgroup: Final Decision Round 6

13:00 - Preparation of Team Presentation *(including break)*

14:00 - Team Presentations

15:00 - Final Debrief & Conclusions

**1/2 Day Agenda**

09:00 - Introduction

10:00 - Workgroup
- Decision Round

11:00 - Debrief & Conclusions

12:00 - Alignment with course concepts
TIPS FOR MAKING SIMULATIONS A SUCCESS

**Use the simulation to bring theory to life.** Linking theoretical information to the appropriate elements of the simulation can help students grasp the concepts being taught. Students can find it useful to be presented the theories, see real-life examples and then try it out themselves through the simulations.

**Assign pre-work for students to prepare** or let the students practice the simulation a few days before actually starting a real simulation scenario. It can help clear up confusion and provide students some time to develop their strategies.

**Push students to role play within their company teams.** They can choose to be the Marketing Director, CEO etc. This can bring another realistic element to the game. You can also have them change the roles from round to round to give them a different perspective of the process.

**Use peer review to avoid non-participation within a group.** In simulation-based courses, teamwork is essential and at times there are students who feel they are carrying more of the weight than others. Having peers review each other can help combat this issue.

**Align simulation use with clearly defined objectives.** A lot of the content found within simulation games corresponds well with global marketing, strategy and capstone experiences. Make sure that the simulation you choose fits the goals you want to accomplish for the curriculum.
WHY STRATX SIMULATIONS?

As industry pioneers, we have the trust of world-renowned institutions and organizations across the globe who have been using our simulations for over 35 years. Our team is here to help you turn your programs into an impactful learning experience.

What next?

• It’s no secret, but they really are the best on the market: discover our range of fully web-based business simulations that can be easily implemented into your learning programs.
• Contact one of our advisors to request a demo, discover how we can custom design a simulation for your specific needs or just have a conversion to get started.

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