



# The Business Strategy Game: A Global Industry Simulation

*Arthur A. Thompson, Gregory J. Stappenbeck*

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"The Business Strategy Game" is the No. 1 selling computer simulation in the strategic management market. Simulation games are the single best exercise available for helping students understand how the functional pieces of a business fit together and giving them an integrated, capstone experience. First and foremost, the exercise of running a simulated company over a number of decision periods helps develop students' business judgement. Simulation games provide a live case situation where events unfold and circumstances change as the game progresses; students become personally involved in the subject matter. "The Business Strategy Game" is very typical in this respect. Students learn about risk-taking by plotting their competitive strategies each decision period. They respond to changing market conditions, react to the moves of competitors, and choose among alternative courses of action. They get valuable practice in reading the signs of industry change, spotting market opportunities, evaluating threats to their company's competitive position, weighing the trade-offs between profits now and profits later, and assessing the long-term consequences of short-term decisions. They chart a long-term direction, set strategic and financial objectives, and try out different strategies in pursuit of competitive advantage. They become active strategic thinkers, planners, analysts, and decision-makers. And by having to live with the decisions they make, they experience what it means to be accountable for decisions and responsible for achieving satisfactory results. All this serves to drill students in responsible decision-making and improve their business acumen and managerial judgement. In addition, students learn an enormous amount from working with the numbers, exploring options, and trying to unite production, marketing, finance, and human resource decisions into a coherent strategy. They begin to see ways to apply knowledge from prior courses and figure out what really makes a business tick. The effect is to help students integrate a lot of material, look at decisions from the standpoint of the company as a whole, and see the importance of thinking strategically about a company's competitive position and future prospects. Since a simulation game is, by its very nature, a hands-on exercise, the lessons learned are forcefully planted in students' minds - the impact is far more lasting than what is remembered from lectures. Third, students' entrepreneurial instincts blossom as they get caught up in the competitive spirit of the game. The resulting entertainment value helps maintain an unusually high level of student motivation and emotional involvement in the course throughout the term. New features of version 6.0 include programming changes to improve functionality, an enhanced stock option in the executive compensation model, and a conversion to Eurodollars. Version 6.0 is not compatible with any earlier version of the Game.

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