



Olympus

Olympus is an interactive, competitive, computer-based business simulation designed to illustrate the process of implementing a strategy in a changing, technology-driven environment. Olympus simulates primarily the management of processes, relationships, and capabilities. Successful teams must scan the environment, develop operating plans, implement and manage change, develop key strategic alliances and relationships, and maximize the contribution of the members of the management team.

How It Works

Participants are initially divided into a maximum of six teams. Each team takes control of a unique company in the simulated marketplace with slightly differing sizes, capabilities, profitability, and strategic direction. One "human" team of 9-12 participants will manage each company. If insufficient participants are available to make six teams, the simulation will manage the remaining teams based on automated strategy guidelines.

The Olympus teams have access to three personal computers. Each computer will have identical software. No computer is keyed or preset for any specific decisions. One machine is designated as the Consolidator to which the other two computers must physically bring their decisions on disk for the final scenario. The Consolidator machine has a configuration screen that describes which decision is coming from which computer. The teams are completely free to organize in any logical or illogical way they choose. Regardless of what decisions they place on each machine, it is their responsibility to provide information for decision support, should the orientation of their decisions be sub-optimal. At the end of the simulation period, each of the two subordinate machines save to disk and then physically carry the disks to the Consolidator. The decisions are then read in for a complete financial scenario.

Olympus simulates a diverse industry of six competitors providing a variety of technology-based products to industrial customers. The products and services all in some way contribute to automated control of a variety of manufacturing processes. The products and services fall into several broad categories that include computers for the control of milling machines, imaging peripherals for design, communications equipment, consulting, maintenance, and software. Each line of products is based on several technologies that are loosely referred to as "components." Components are the basic technology building blocks that are assembled to make products. Global Markets in Olympus have political and economic uncertainty. Beyond the simple notions of number of consumers, preferences, and growth in markets, teams will have a variety of inbox items that indicate or suggest changes in the overall political and economic balance in various regions. These items are mostly informational, with actions only required by teams' understanding of the ramifications. The three regional markets each have specific size and the preference characteristics. The markets are broadly defined as Asia Pacific, Europe, and Americas. Within each region are four distinct buying segments. These segments do not overlap or cannibalize from each other.

Simulation Benefits

The simulation exercise encourages teams to scan their environment. Some of the information needed to anticipate change is delivered via inbox items, market research, and numeric indices that illustrate changing customer preferences. However, some of the information is hidden in a "trolling" function; specifically, each team receives only pieces of the information by design, and must rely on their ability to network throughout the industry to uncover the entire scenario. Further, significant leads/lags in decision implementation provide an advantage to those that anticipate and prepare for change. Those teams that are late adopters are at a disadvantage unless they have significant competencies to overcome their late-mover status.

Key Simulation Issues

- Business ecosystems
- Value creation
- Cross-organizational processes
- Strategy development
- Organizational alignment
- Group dynamics
- Change management
- Risk management
- Partnering
- Resource and asset management

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