

**STUDENT EXPERIENCES IN THE
WORLD INTERCOLLEGIATE BUSINESS GAME COMPETITION**

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ABSTRACT

This condensed paper provides comments from three of the four students who represented Beaver College in the 1998 World Intercollegiate Business Game Competition (WIBGC). The full paper, available from the first author, provides the references, information about the competition and the simulation to provide a context for the students' remarks, as well as biographical data for the students and more of their comments.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to present comments from a team of students concerning their experiences from participating in the WIGBC. The students finished first in the undergraduate competition which was hosted by Georgia Southern University and used The Multinational Management Game (Keys and Wells, 1997).

THE STUDENTS' COMMENTS

The students were all full-time and enrolled in the senior-level business policy course. They had all spent time overseas. They finished in first place.

Kevin Marks - CEO and VP for Planning

The simulation required the team to organize into roles, splitting primary functional leadership to each individual and then to synergize each area into a coherent whole. As a team we analyzed the history of the company, developed a strategic plan and made decisions to carry out our plans in the areas of marketing, production and finance.

We learned how to work in a team environment. The four members of the management team had little or no prior working experience with each other. Not only did this force us to analyze our relative functional strengths to assume roles, but we had to learn quickly how each member worked, communicated, interacted etc., in the team setting.

This simulation was an enriching and positive experience. I was able to acquire knowledge in a number of business areas, gain experience writing reports, practice presentation skills and most important learn how to work in a team environment. Traveling to Georgia and discussing strategies with the competitors were very exciting events. I enjoyed the simulation and consider the game to be a great success.

Mike Schafer - VP for Manufacturing

The decision process for our team was somewhat disorganized in our first trial run. We were not too sure how the process should take place and how the simulation would react to our decisions. We were in a simulated environment in which the administrators can shape the economy and other factors as they see fit. Thus, while we had some knowledge of the industry and general conditions we were aware that we were looking at the world through an imperfect glass. After the trial run we gained a wealth of knowledge and understanding of the game. We began to realize how the game worked and how we could influence outcome by making certain decisions. Strategies were developed and goals were set.

The writing of reports was one of the most difficult processes involved in the simulation. I prefer working with numbers so when we had to create all these

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reports I became frustrated and discouraged. As I reflect on our business plan, I am very pleased that we did such a good job constructing it and following it. This was hard at times but it helped pave the way to our success.

The majority of our time together was pleasant but there were definitely times when tempers flared. The interacting and working together prepared me for the working world. I understand that things will not always go my way and group work tends to bring about more ideas.

The main high for the group was our trip to Georgia. We boarded the plane with a destination to Georgia Southern University and a goal of winning first place. We felt we followed our business plan and were successful by doing so. Once we received our last set of results we got down to business and worked on our presentation for almost 12 hours. We crunched numbers and performed an intense analysis on each team, the industry, and ourselves. The amount of time spent preparing was extreme but very invigorating. It was such a rush to be competing against teams from around the globe and now actually getting to meet them. This was awesome!

All in all, however, I was impressed with the simulation. It was one of the best overall experiences I had in my college career. The game took full advantage of nearly all business concepts and made use of email and Internet technology.

Manisha Sharma - VP for Marketing

Participating in the WIBG was indeed a thorough learning experience for me. Not only did the game cover academic material, but involved dealing with real life situations. In particular working as a team towards a common goal and not as individuals was an important facet of the simulation.

I think what made this simulation different from others was the fact that it imitated and followed a real industry: the computer industry. The computer industry is relatively new and by analyzing trends of the real industry we, as teams, were able to make decisions

more accurately, than say simulations where products were made up and from different industries. Since all firms were manufacturing and selling the same type of product, the competition was more precise.

Perhaps the most important lesson was working together under pressure to make decisions. Mimicking the real world, the team had to learn to listen to one another and compromise for the success of the firm.

Yet, as we would discover in Statesboro, we were not the only firm facing such internal and external problems. This realization and other interactions with the other teams made participation in WIBG even more interesting. Not only did we learn that other groups were facing similar hardships, we also learned how they tackled these problems. In addition, just the opportunity to meet people from other countries and schools was another excellent advantage of participating in the WIBG.

Overall, it was an exciting and memorable experience that taught us more than just how to manufacture and sell a product. It taught how to analyze complex situation; how to integrate across functional areas; how to write reports; and, how to work with others to accomplish common goal.

CONCLUSION

A number of themes are evident from the students' comments. First, they had observations about group work. Second, they noted that the simulation activity forced them to integrate material. Third, they reported a range of emotions from aggression and aggravation to unbridled joy and euphoria. Fourth, they talked about the value of the writing activities and the presentations. Fifth, they alluded to the international nature of the competition. Finally, they all claim to have found the experience to be valuable.