

THRESHOLD (v 2.0)

A WINDOWS-BASED, BEHAVIORALLY-ORIENTED,
COMPETITIVE, TOTAL ENTERPRISE SIMULATION

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INTRODUCTION

Threshold: A Competitive Management Simulation, 2nd Edition, is a PC Windows-based computer simulation exercise. *Threshold* simulates the workings of a small, two product manufacturing business. An instructor can set up a competitive environment for 2 to 16 company teams. These teams manage separate companies that compete with each other in the same marketplace. Each decision period represents 3 months (i.e., one quarter) of the company's operations. Participants make approximately 30 decisions per decision period. This exercise has been designed for use in Introduction to Business, or Introductory Management courses. It has also been used successfully in senior-level policy and strategy courses, in MBA short courses, capstone courses in community colleges, and in corporate training programs. Materials include installation disks, participant's manual, and an administrator's manual.

Participants operate as senior managers in charge of a small manufacturing company. They use a personal computer to enter their decisions on a disk that contains all their company files. They can forecast "what if?" scenarios. They can review previous quarters' decisions and results either on the screen or on printouts as they work. When their decisions for a quarter of *Threshold* operations are final the disks are handed into the administrator. The administrator then processes the decisions, using the *Threshold* Administrator program. The *Threshold* program determines the number of products each company sold and also produces a series of operations, marketing, and financial reports for each company. The program also rates the companies and ranks them according

to criteria determined by the administrator. *Threshold* is unique in its ability to offer an instructor the use of managerial and ethical dilemmas. While each team faces the same behaviorally-oriented or ethical situation, the response to the dilemma decision made by a company can vary among companies -- even if the companies choose the same course of action in their attempt to manage the problem.

Threshold is very user friendly, for both the administrator and the participants. The software runs in a Windows 3.1, Windows 95 or Windows NT environment. The company disk also works in DOS, for those rare occasions where Windows software is not available, or if network constraints preclude use of the Windows version. The software is up-to date, fast, and fun.

COMPUTER SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS?

Participants will need to have access to a personal computer with the following characteristics. A printer is optional (but extremely useful).

If you are using the DOS version of *Threshold*, your computer must have:

- 640K of memory (1 Meg is preferred).
- at least 1 disk drive.
- monochrome or color monitor.

If you are using the Windows version of *Threshold*, your computer must have:

- 4 Meg of memory with Windows 3.1 (8 Meg is preferred for Windows 95 or NT).
- 1 Meg of space on your hard disk.
- at least 1 disk drive.
- monochrome or color monitor.

THRESHOLD SOLO

Threshold Solo is a play-alone version of *Threshold*. Whereas *Threshold* places participants in competition with other participant-run companies. *Threshold Solo* uses “expert logic” to create a competitive environment that places participants in competition with “semi-intelligent” companies managed by the computer. While the competitors will act rationally, they are not all-seeing and all-knowing “perfect competitors”. *Threshold Solo* allows participants to play *Threshold* by themselves, at their own pace. Participants can reinitialize *Threshold Solo* as often as they like. Reinitializing g erases all the companies’ previous performance records, if any, and allows the participant to start replaying *Threshold Solo* when the company first began operations in Quarter 1. Each time you reinitialize, the computer will automatically setup a new competitive environment. The computer will determine what the level of demand will be for the products, the importance of the marketing variables (e.g., price, magazine advertisements) for determining the sales level of each of the companies and the costs of operating in the industry (e.g., the cost of 1’V advertising, raw materials, etc.). *Threshold Solo* participants compete against 15 computer-managed companies that operate in their industry.

Threshold Solo can generate hundreds of different competitive environments. Alternatively, an instructor can set up a competitive environment of his/her choosing and allow no restarts. This allows an instructor to use *Threshold Solo* as an assessment tool to measure the individual’s learning without the team effect. The combination of these options allows an instructor to use *Threshold Solo* for an introductory trial and practice before beginning the use of *Threshold*, for exams after completing their use of *Threshold*, or as a stand-alone pedagogical tool.

Threshold Solo offers many advantages. The play-alone participant can run the simulation in the most convenient way, not tied to anyone else’s

schedule. If participants perform poorly against the computer competitors, they can stop playing the current setup and start a new competition quickly and easily. Given enough time, every participant can eventually achieve “success” in the exercise.

The two versions should provide complimentary learning experiences. The *Threshold Solo* version provides a self-paced problem. The competitive version provides the fun of beating your friends. The *Threshold Solo* version allows participants to play against the authors’ logic. Both versions of the game provide a challenging environment to practice and to learn management skills.

AVAILABILITY

Threshold 2nd Edition products will be published by Prentice Hall and will be available for Fall 1997 adoptions. This new Windows version of *Threshold* has been class tested for over one year and has received universal acclaim from students for both its educational value and its user-friendliness.

Threshold Solo is in the beta testing stage. It will also be published by Prentice Hall. Expected release date is early 1998.

Come to our presentation and see for yourselves. If you cannot attend our presentation and are interested in these products, contact one of us. Our e-mail addresses are:

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