

“It is only as we develop others that we permanently succeed.”

Harvey S. Firestone

Business Challenge Simulation

Approach

Enspire's Business Challenge™ program is an instructor-led, team-based simulation specifically designed as a core experiential learning component to a business acumen training program. In it, teams of participants jointly run virtual companies in a competitive marketplace, making decisions in the areas of sales and marketing, operations, research and development, and finance, in order to drive financial results and shareholder value.

One of Business Challenge's decisive advantages was its ground-up design as a virtual program. The simulation itself is a web application that can be accessed from anywhere in the world with a standard web browser equipped with the Adobe Flash plug-in. Teams can collaborate on decision-making simply by signing into the web application simultaneously and discussing their strategy by phone.

An excellent virtual simulation is clearly central to the programme – but skilled facilitation is required to help participants draw insights from their decisions, to relate those insights to the real situation in Unilever and to drive conversations on how apply them in their jobs.

Infernal Drinks Inferno Y5Q1					
	Y4Q4	Y5Q1	Y5Q2	Y5Q3	Y5Q4
Turnover	\$1,066,893	\$1,079,899	\$927,055	\$759,007	\$752,711
Cost of Goods Sold	\$453,449	\$460,773	\$427,351	\$398,925	\$414,282
SG&A	\$85,000	\$75,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
R&D	\$40,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Depreciation/Amortization	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500
Gain (Loss) on Sale of Assets	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Interest	\$2,748	\$9,747	\$9,747	\$7,998	\$0
Net Profit	\$483,692	\$546,373	\$441,951	\$300,580	\$270,929
Payment Terms	Net 90				
Credit Rating	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA
Cash at Beginning of Quarter	\$88,419	\$387,852	\$915,037	\$1,562,221	\$2,345,533
Net Cash Flow	\$299,433	\$527,185	\$647,183	\$783,312	\$205,270
Cash at End of Quarter	\$387,852	\$915,037	\$1,562,221	\$2,345,533	\$2,550,803



MTP | Partners in Business Learning

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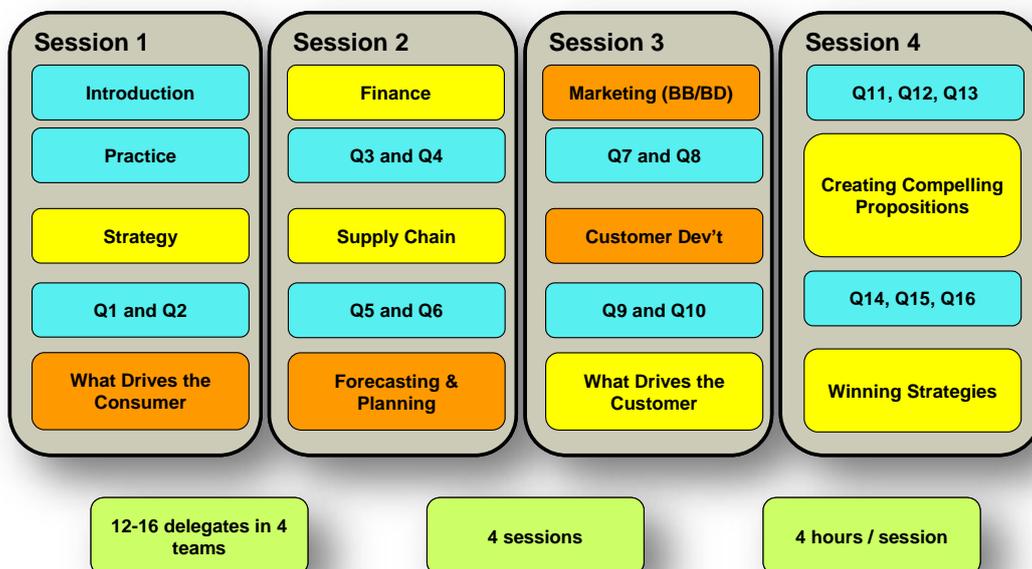
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MTP plc was engaged for the facilitation of the programme. Our experience in generating highly engaging and interactive materials was especially important with a virtual programme. The material that was created features short interactive sessions that link elements of the simulation to key issues that affect a Unilever sales manager's day-to-day role. The sessions were run on webinar software, and were designed to be as interactive as possible by making full use of quizzes, polls, group discussions and short industry-specific case studies.

The final result is a program that mixes sixteen rounds of competition in the simulation, with interactive sessions and discussions. It is delivered for four hours each day, for four days. This design allows participants to continue to schedule appointments during the days of the course – valuable for sales managers with busy diaries and demanding clients. Four hours may seem a long time to spend in a virtual programme – but the combination of competition in the simulation and high interaction during the discussion sessions drive engagement and focus throughout.



Outcomes

After an initial pilot run with participants joining from four different countries, the program was refined and has since been delivered to Unilever audiences across Europe, the Americas and Asia. The response from participants and their managers is overwhelmingly positive. In a recent deployment, 100% of the participants recommended the course, and it scored 4.52 on a Likert scale for the statement "the delivery method (virtual) was effective."

This program has shown that engaging, effective learning programs can be delivered virtually to a global audience. Final proof of the program's business value is the fact that Unilever has begun to roll-out a variation on it to a wider management audience within the organization.