

# Game On – Learning by Playing Marketing Simulation Game as a Learning Tool



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# Content

- Why simulation games?
- What do the students actually learn?
- How does the learning occur?
- Opportunities and challenges

# Why simulation games?



- Variety of methods
- Applying theory à Hands-on experience
- Simulating real-life (decision making, handling complex problems, time pressure, team work etc.) à developing work-life skills



# Marketing course and the simulation game

# Course:



## Key processes of marketing

- Focus on **marketing strategy**
- Bachelor level, 2nd. year, 6 study points)
- Simulation game a central part of the course
- Lectures
- Game-related assignments
  - Business plan
  - Intermediate presentations
  - Individual reflection report
- Exam

# Cesim Simbrand

Fast developing,  
dynamic mobilephone  
market

Six rounds (years) were  
played,

Managing their  
business


The screenshot displays the Cesim Simbrand simulation interface. At the top, there are two scatter plots: 'European Market' and 'Asian Market', both plotting Battery life (h) on the y-axis (0 to 220) against Compactness on the x-axis (-20 to 120). A central panel titled 'Information about other teams' products' shows a table with columns for Product name and Team Name, and a small mobile phone icon. Below this, a status bar shows 'Administration', 'European Market' (10000 k €), and 'Asian Market' (6000 k €). The main section is a 'Products' table with the following data:

Product name	BlueDomus	BlueConatus	BlueUchl	BlueKalsha	BlueDaohl	BlueAmlcum
Click to Select Markets	Europe Asia	Europe Asia	Europe Asia	Europe Asia	Europe Asia	Europe Asia
Click to Activate Upgrade	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW
Click to Choose Design	Avant garde	Sport	Classic	Classic	Classic	Sport
Click to Choose Features	[Icons]	[Icons]	[Icons]	[Icons]	[Icons]	[Icons]
Compactness	110	110	65	100	50	60
Battery life	180	160	105	150	70	100
Review Unit Cost, €	239.7	228.1	186.3	207.0	138.9	161.9
Review Warranty Cost, €	3	3	2	3	1	2
Review Production Line Cost, k €	2000	2000	2000	2000	0	0
Review Capability Usage	55%	51%	50%	59%	29%	41%


Students make decisions on e.g.

- Target markets
- Segments
- Products
- Product portfolio
- Pricing
- Sales channels
- Advertising budget
- After sales services
- R&D investments


### Product 1, Europe




BlueDomus



BlueConatus



BlueAmicum



**Target market area**

Europe

**Design**

Avant garde

**Compactness**

110

**Battery life**

180

**Variable Unit Cost Estimate**

240

**Channels**

**Size of Market**

**Products**

**Sales by Distribution Channel in Europe, %**

Channel	Households	High-End Households	Companies	High-End Companies
Department Stores	15	30	70	80
Household Appliance Stores	50	25	20	10
Specialty Stores	35	45	10	10

Price		This Round	Δ %	Last Round	
Sales Price		429.0	-14	499.0	€
Variable Unit Cost		239.7	-8	260.9	€
Unit Margin Before Advertising		189.3	-20	238.1	€

	Households			High-End Households		
	This Round	Δ %	Last Round	This Round	Δ %	Last Round
Sales Forecast	300.0	1274	21.8	300.0	309	73.3 k units
* Unit Margin	189	-20	238	189	-20	238 €
Gross profit	56794	992	5199	56794	226	17442 k €
- Advertising	3000	n/a	0	4000	-33	6000 k €
Margin After Advertising	53794	935	5199	52794	361	11442 k €

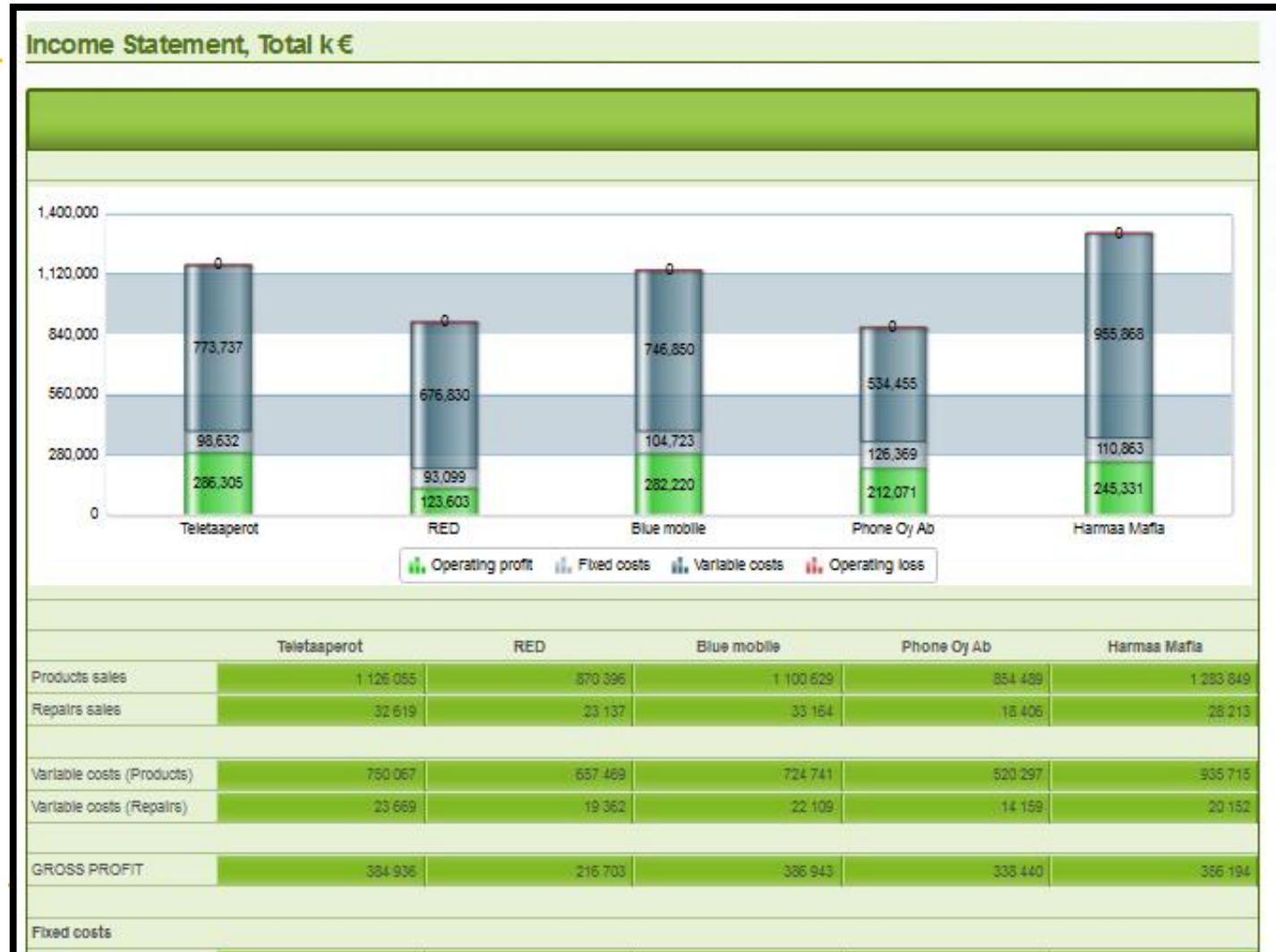
	Companies			High-End Companies		
	This Round	Δ %	Last Round	This Round	Δ %	Last Round
Sales Forecast	0.0	n/a	32.5	0.0	n/a	65.0 k units
* Unit Margin	189	-20	238	189	-20	238 €
Gross profit	0	n/a	7735	0	n/a	15467 k €
- Advertising	0	n/a	0	0	n/a	0 k €
Margin After Advertising	0	n/a	7735	0	n/a	15467 k €

Channel Investments		This Round	Δ %	Last Round	
Total Margin After Advertising		106588	168	39843	k €
- Specialty Stores		600	-50	1200	k €
- Household Appliance Stores		1225	-23	1000	k €
- Department Stores		1350	-25	1800	k €
Margin After Marketing Communication		103413	189	36843	k €

After each round:

A range of reports that help to analyze and benchmark performance against their competitors and make new decisions





The winning criteria is the share price



# Questions – Does it work?



- What do students actually learn?
- How does the learning occur?

# Students' reflections on their learning



What knowledge and skills do students learn?

# Marketing knowledge and skills

**Marketing concepts**

Segmentation, differentiation, product portfolio etc.

**Structural frameworks**

Combination of concepts that help

**Strategic principles**

“We had met the most...  
segmentation. One product is not good for everybody”

**Holistic and relativistic understanding**

“...  
the significance of marketing on the success of the entire company.”

**Analytical skills**

“I especially learnt how important it is all the time to analyze and also forecast the market situation and competitors’ actions.”

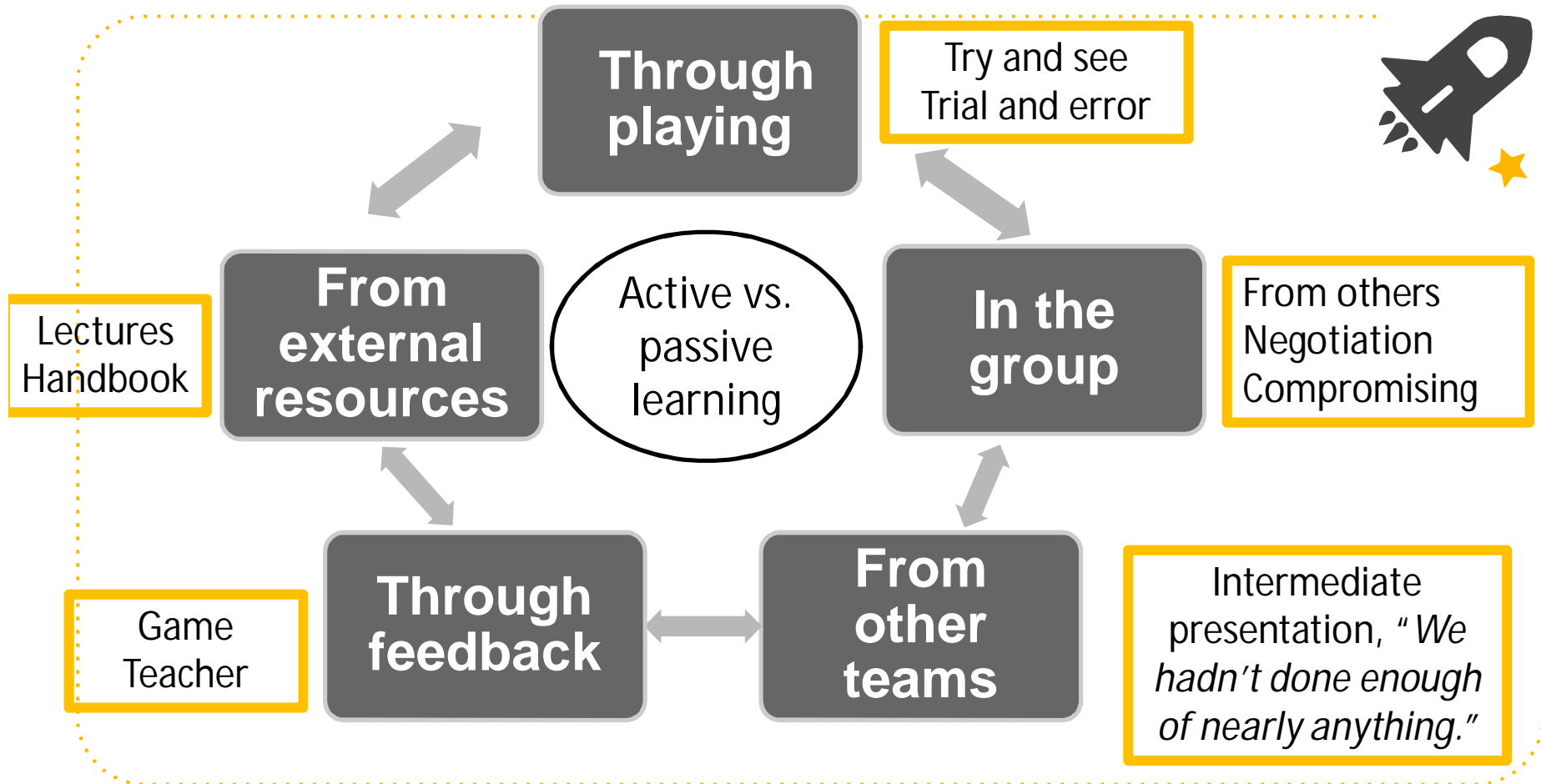
**Does everybody learn?**

*pricing-  
competition-  
profitability*

Students' reflections on  
their learning



Different ways of learning?





Conclusions

Opportunities and  
challenges?

# Opportunities - Challenges



- For most, a motivating, inspiring and fun way to learn
- Competition increases motivation. Usually.
- Learning through trial and error in a safe environment
- Possibilities for deep and holistic learning

**Important!**

Learning process design, assignments and reflection  
à the game is just a tool



# Opportunities - Challenges



- How to motivate and encourage students?
- Coaching? For certain or every team or none?
- One right way to play or different routes for success?
- Evaluation?



# Thanks!

Questions or comments?

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