

DEVELOPING MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS USING SIMULATED ENTERPRISES AND FACILITATING THE TRANSITION FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

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Abstract: The need for practical training of future graduates in conditions that are identical to those of their future jobs, with minimal costs, imposed the establishment of simulated enterprises in which they conduct similar activities to those of real companies, using the same procedures and the same equipment. A training simulated enterprise is an interactive learning method for developing entrepreneurship, a modern concept of interdisciplinary integration and application of knowledge, an approach to the process of teaching and learning that provides circumstances for the proof and further practice of the skills acquired by students in professional training. The power of SE resides in the relationship determined by carrying out transactions on training firms and economic realities in the sense that it seeks out the development, operation and earning of a place in the market.

Key words: educational project, simulated enterprise.

Introduction

A simulated firm is a virtual company and a vocational learning center at the same time, working as a real business, using business procedures, products and services of real companies. Each simulated firm works with other simulated firms (Achim, 2010). A simulated firm is known as a simulated enterprise, a training firm, a virtual enterprise, a virtual business. A simulated firm resembles a real company in form, organization and operation (Barjis, 2011).

A training firm/simulated enterprise is an interactive learning method for developing entrepreneurship, a modern concept of interdisciplinary integration and application of knowledge, an approach to the process of teaching and learning that provides circumstances for the proof and further practice of the skills acquired by pupils / students in professional training (Condurache, 2000). A simulated enterprise can be defined as a practical training tool in the information process that uses procedures and means identical to those of the actual companies, except products and money which are simulated. The simulated enterprise, before being a well equipped laboratory, is a state of mind, a living organism, a concept - learning by doing - that changes the traditional system of training (Condurache et al., 2002).

The school training company is a simulated copy, a virtual mock of a real company, in which the participants (students, teachers, consultants) can achieve and perform by themselves all the activities of a real company, except running the

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money, making the actual products or performing the actual services (Condurache et al., 2002).

EUROPEN - PEN INTERNATIONAL is the global network of simulated firms with over 5500 practice firms in 42 countries. EUROPEN - PEN INTERNATIONAL was a European project which started in November 1993. It used funding from the European Social Fund and the Land of North-Rhine Westphalia.

The origin of practical companies (formerly called "fictitious companies") may be dated back in the 17th century with the help of literature. In the year of 1660 Mr. Leric (a citizen of Danzig, Germany) described the transactions of the mock businessman called Peter Winst in his book "Commission and Factory". There are also other books that explain the philosophy of simulated firms, such as Mr. Karl F. Barth who wrote the following in 1776: "The teacher lets them choose the sort of action and the trading location ..., each one receives fictitious capital, goods or securities ... "

The instructors or the trainers who are selected from among specialists of real companies or of universities carry out both the theoretical training of students and their supervision during simulated processes and evaluation. Each simulated company focuses on real situations or on the basis of an entrepreneurial setting, in a well-defined area, that cannot be changed without the approval of the panel to which it is affiliated.

The participants work in a real production environment and learn to fulfill the given tasks. Following the end of the training in a simulated firm, the participants will know the way various departments work, such as: production, trade, finance and accounting, human resources, public relations etc. They will have a comprehensive picture of the work carried out in a real firm.

Table 1. The number of simulated firms in EUROPEN-PEN INTERNATIONAL, JULY 2011

Name	No. SI	Name	No. SI
Argentina	68	France	120
Finland	60	Austria	1170
Romania	970	Germany	572
Australia	160	Belgium	233
Slovak Rep.	760	Slovenia	194
Great Britain	20	Italy	152
Spain	309	Sweden	48
Brazil	210	Bulgaria	73
Lithuania	46	Luxembourg	22
Switzerland	47	U.S.A.	304
Czech Rep.	701	Netherlands	342
Canada	42	China	114
Denmark	27	Malaysia	26

In Romania simulated enterprises are integrated in the National network of training firms / simulated enterprises network center coordinated by ROCT - The central network of training firms / simulated enterprises in Romania (Romanian Coordination Centre of Training Firms), which operates in accordance with the provisions of OMECT no. 5109 of 25.08.2008 (Condurache, 2002). ROCT ensures all activities that simulate the actual external environment of a real company.

The advantages of using simulated enterprises (SE)

It facilitates learning and development of economic and legal knowledge required in a real company, creating skills and competences that can be applied in all economic fields and in all the positions within a company by applying the concept of "LEARNING BY DOING".

It contributes to a faster integration of employees into an actual business enterprise; Regarding the benefits of SE, it is important to understand that not only the students who participate in these activities but also the commercial agents supporting them benefit of advantages. The most important aspect of SE is that it allows students to implement the theoretical concepts they have learned, and also getting used to taking responsibility for actions or decisions they take regarding SE. They learn to solve problems arising during the activity in the company, problems they have not encountered in textbooks.

Thus, students form their skills and abilities, acquire key competences such as the ability to work in a team, interdisciplinary thinking, communication skills and institutional relationships. Moreover, they gain professional skills, the flexibility required in the labor market and they are able to discover an affinity to a certain job. The acquired skills may reduce the period of adjustment to the work place, they get acquainted to the tasks included in the job description, which is beneficial for both employers and prospective employees.

While working in SE the students become familiar with the requirements of employers and their labor market insertion becomes easier.

The implementation of an innovative tool in the higher educational institutions.

The overall objective of learning through simulated enterprises is to develop entrepreneurship by:

- Familiarizing students with the specific activities of a real company;
- Simulating business processes specific to real business environment;
- Improving business language;
- Improving knowledge about the mechanisms of the economy market;
- Encouraging the competitive, quality and accountability spirit;
- Developing competences, skills, abilities necessary for a dynamic entrepreneur: creativity, competitiveness, critical thinking, analytical thinking, problem solving, decision making, accountability, teamwork, initiative, adaptability, perseverance;
- Self-organization and self-assessment of individual resources; flexibility In the field of marketing, the activities within SE are: market study, market

segmentation, behavior knowledge, product design, pricing strategy definition, product launch marketing, brand, definition of distribution arrangements, wider range of products, organization of advertising campaigns, organizing a stand in a showroom.

Conclusions

The SE method is characterized by two defining aspects: a virtual one - the fact that within a SE there is no money or property, and a real one - we comply with the commercial usage, flow of information, documents and their circuit just as within a company per se. The power of SE resides in the relationship determined by carrying out transactions on training firms (national and international) and economic realities in the sense that it seeks out the development, operation and earning of a place in the market, and most importantly, the communication with the external environment of the training firm, namely: the collaboration with the "mother" / mentor company.

Conversely, the SE is complex as a method, motivating as an effect, it is an attractive challenge for both students and teachers, but needs support from the business environment. It is time for business people to contribute to the early education of future employees, to actively participate in training firms, to assist the school in the training of the young people. Last but not least, the companies that want to support the SE should take into consideration the fact that they will earn reputation and image. It can become a method of promoting by the mere fact that the people involved in these activities will begin to mention the name of the company that helps and gets involved in SE. They will enjoy of a better image among consumers and clients by providing assistance to young people who are starting out. In this way, as guardians of the SE, the companies investing in students, actually invest in their long-term business.

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ROZWIJANIE UMIEJĘTNOŚCI MARKETINGU I ZARZĄDZANIA Z WYKORZYSTANIEM SYMULOWANYCH PRZEDSIĘBIORSTW I UŁATWIANIE PRZEJŚCIA OD TEORII DO PRAKTYKI

Streszczenie: Potrzeba praktycznego szkolenia przyszłych absolwentów w warunkach, które są identyczne do warunków panujących w ich przyszłych miejscach pracy, przy minimalnych kosztach, nałożyła utworzenie symulowanych przedsiębiorstw, w których wykonują oni działania podobne do tych w prawdziwych firmach, przy użyciu tych samych procedur i tego samego sprzętu. Szkoleniowe symulowane przedsiębiorstwo jest interaktywną metodą nauki dla rozwoju przedsiębiorczości, nowoczesną koncepcją interdyscyplinarnej integracji i stosowania wiedzy, podejściem do procesu nauczania i uczenia się, który stanowi okoliczności na dowód i dalszą praktykę umiejętności nabytych przez studentów podczas szkoleń zawodowych. Siła SP znajduje się w relacji określonej przez przeprowadzanie transakcji na firmach szkoleniowych i realiach gospodarczych w tym sensie, że dąży się do rozwoju, działań i zapracowania na miejsce na rynku.

Słowa kluczowe: projekt edukacyjny, symulowane przedsiębiorstwo.

发展中国的市场营销和管理技能，使用模拟企业和促进从理论的过渡实践

摘要：需要的条件下，完全相同的他们未来的工作，以最低的费用，今后毕业生的实际培训实行建立的它们进行类似的活动，对那些真正的公司，使用相同的程序和相同的设备的模拟企业。模拟培训企业发展创业、多学科融合的现代概念和应用知识的一种互动式的学习方法，方法的教学和学习的过程提供情况证明和进一步实践的专业培训的学生所获得的技能。SE的力量驻留在由开展培训公司的交易记录和在经济现实意义上讲，它寻求出来的开发、运作和在市场的一个地方的收入确定的关系

关键词: 教育项目、模拟的企业