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## Business Simulation MARGA Industry – how we won the competition

In the first days of March 2013 we received a mail which gave us the possibility to participate in MARGA. Because we had heard about this contest from other trainees, we signed up. Unfortunately many others were faster and all groups were already complete. So we were more or less put into a team “out of necessity“, which was supposed to improve itself over the time. We, that`s Jan-Marius Beilke (Production), Torsten Spreer (Logistics), Martin Schwald (Production), Thomas Woestmann (Sales/Marketing), Mathias Jud (Controlling & Logistics) and Denise Heber (Research and Development). Since our backgrounds went from engineering onto industrial engineering to business degrees, we had different levels of knowledge when it came to corporate management.



Teamwork Team Robert Bosch GmbH



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Obviously, the starting position for our cooperation was not good. The majority of the team did not know each other and it was clear that our time as MARGA boards had to be completely virtual. The time shift made things even more complicated, because some team members were in China. But also the members from Germany were placed in different locations all over the country. The first task was to form a team and to define our organizational structure. We decided on a matrix system, in which we had departmental managers and product managers. This means that there was always one team of two people in charge of marketing and product 1, production and product 2 and finance and product 3. This division also had the advantage that we made it through the holiday time well. Which does not mean that we did not do our MARGA planning, or at least followed the numbers, in many places all over the world (e.g. in France, Spain, New York, Guatemala etc.).

### Now to the course of the competition:

We had a strong start in the first qualification round (Q1). Instead of competing in our group, we competed with the ranked Top 16 and finished as the top team in Q1. Because of this, the enthusiasm and our motivation reached unexpected heights. In the second qualification round (Q2) we had very tough competitors and had to experience how much the decisions of our competitors influenced our own strategies.



The awareness that we had invested too late and too little to overtake our competitors was an important lesson for our team. Nevertheless, we reached the semi-finals without any bigger problems, because the accumulated “MARGA Value Added“ was very crucial and in this regard we had already been successful in Q1. The importance of this experience will play an important role in the final later on.



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With the start of the semi-final the pressure of winning started to rise. We had to win in our group to get to the final. We chose, just like in the previous rounds, the strategy with a high-priced quality leader and tried to keep the costs low for the whole time. From Q2 we had learned that it is important to invest in the first period and could expect the pay-off at the end of the semi-final. And this is exactly how it came. Due to our high level of investment we were on a promising second place after the first period and we were able to use the momentum to make the first place in our group at the end of the semi-final. Then it was done: We made it to the MARGA finals! Together with MTU Aero Engines GmbH, Continental Reifen Deutschland GmbH and RWE Service GmbH we played for the win.

For the final we decided to continue with our previous strategy, since it had been so successful in the former rounds. But we were also aware of the fact that we were going to play against the strongest competitors. The final had, unlike Q2 and the semi-final, one period more, means we had to adjust our long-term planning. Moreover, we started this round from yet another starting point. The first three periods were played online as usual. Then we were invited by MARGA to play the last two periods at the Live final at Schloss Gracht in Erfstadt.



Thanks to a lot of investing and solid long-term planning we were placed on a good second place like in the semi final and we were in first place for the first time in the second period. But still nothing was decided yet, the competitors were strong and our advantage was not worth mentioning at all. With this advantage we travelled to Erfstadt and on Sunday night, September 29th 2013 at 11:00 p.m. we had our first real “team meeting“.

At the start of the final we were all quite relaxed, although most likely everyone had a little bit of tension. We had prepared ourselves well and had composed a timetable for the Live final. Then the readout of the results of the third period started. From this point, we had one and a half hours to make our decisions. Because the MARGA management team came up with the severe “Top News“, we were forced to adjust our strategy for this period. This led to heated discussions, that got intensified by the ticking clock. But at the end we came to a decision and we were satisfied with it. The initial excitement had calmed down.





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After a short break we received the results and this also meant the start of the last period. We were still ahead and had also gained a bigger advantage. With a lot of motivation we started planning the final decision. But this time not with a lot of discussion, because our strategy was already set. We just concentrated in order to intercept any “extreme decisions“ of the competitors. After the deadline had passed, the tension had vanished and we were all a little bit more relaxed. Afterwards we were able to see the strategies of our competitors. Every team had a similar strategy like we had and it was clear that MTU would be our hardest competitor.



Team 225 Robert Bosch GmbH

Full of excitement for the result we went to the gala dinner. The food was fantastic, but the tension was extremely high. Then, after many courses, the MARGA managers started to present the results. The managers really did a good job in keeping the tension high. It was an incredible feeling, as the bar of MTU stopped and our bar went on for a long time. We had won the competition!

At this point it can only be said that for all of us the six months as MARGA boards have been a great experience with many challenges in the personal and professional area. We are left behind with new knowledge and impressions and can recommend not skipping this experience, no matter how far you may come in this contest. It may sound trite, but it still is not one little bit less true: "It's the taking part that counts!"



Winning team spring competition 2013 Robert Bosch GmbH (from the left: Mathias Jud, Martin Schwald, Thomas Woestmann, Denise Heber, Torsten Spreer, Jan-Marius Beilke)

Finally, we would like to thank all those who gave us this opportunity and have supported us in any way. The Robert Bosch GmbH, who let us make this experience, MARGA for the provision of the simulation, the support and the technical advice, Hr. Dr. Loh for the local support in Erfstadt, the Human Resources Department for organizational support and the Continental Reifen Deutschland GmbH for the provision of gummy bears, without which we would have surely not been able to keep our concentration levels high continuously during the live final.