



marga



The world presents us with ever new challenges...

One of the challenges which we set ourselves as part of this year's 'Führungskräfteentwicklungsprogramm' (FEP) was participation in the MARGA business simulation.

The business simulation kicked off on the evening of November 5, 2013, when many of our colleagues were already on their way home after the opening event of the FEP. At this event the teams were put together and the structure and application of the business simulation were presented. In the process we made good use of the time to get to know one another. Team 10 consisted of Steffen Gille, Tobias Kühn, Filippo Maniscalco, Benjamin Schicht, Volker Schmidt and Martin Schmidt-Dannert, and we found that we were a colourful mixture with very different organisational (Telekom, T-Systems, Vivento), geographical (Düsseldorf, Bonn, Magdeburg, Schwäbisch Hall, Berlin, Stuttgart) and professional backgrounds. Because we would be working in close cooperation during the coming months but were employed at different locations, we set up an organisational framework for a weekly telephone conference and web presentation. We also discussed our objectives, and we soon agreed that our main aim would be the experience which each of us would be able to acquire, followed in second place by achieving a good result. As a consequence it was decided that everyone would be involved in all decisions, and that there would be no rigid divisions in terms of HR, Finance and Production, for example.



Team 10, Deutsche Telekom, FEP 2013

Steffen Gille, Tobias Kühn, Benjamin Schicht, Volker Schmidt, Martin Schmidt-Dannert, Filippo Maniscalco (not at the picture)



The test round

In the course of the test round (two periods) we developed the organisational format which we maintained throughout the entire simulation. In each case two persons formed a product team and, at a further meeting, planned the production figures, prices and advertising budget for their product. In the course of Team 10's weekly management telephone conference the planning figures of the product teams were presented and adjusted in line with further planning values (e.g. sales, investment, HR, finance), before being finally decided on. It was also possible to query why a product team had decided on a specific planning parameter, after which it was either adjusted or adopted unanimously. Overall this led to a healthy mixture of our product strategy and overall strategy, which enabled us to achieve our first target – the acquisition of valuable experience by everyone of us.

The main round

Achieving the second objective, the highest possible placing, was more difficult. Initially we started third out of four, before working our way up to second place during the following periods. In the fifth and last period of the main round we managed to achieve first place, which was our ticket to the finals in Ismaning (near Munich). Looking back we realised that a number of points had been especially important. This included agreeing a long-term strategy together, and pursuing this from the very start. The basic factors for ensuring success involved checking on this strategy and the concrete planning parameters based on it across several (and possibly all) periods by means of the MARGA program, carefully analysing our competitors with regard to their strategy and success (or lack of it), and then basing our own options for action on this analysis. It also required the courage to implement the strategy consistently and to make optimum use of the available scope for action. In our case, at the end of the final round we had fully exhausted both our long-term and short-term credit line, a procedure which was entirely the correct approach for our situation.

Conclusion

In retrospect our conclusion is a highly positive one: we achieved both our objectives – gaining experience and achieving victory. We also had lots of fun. Thanks to the committed and constructive cooperation within the team it was a pleasant change to our everyday work, and even if it wasn't always easy to find enough time for the simulation game, this adventure was a worthwhile one for all of us, and the golden statue on our desks represents a fitting reward. We can now look back with pride on what we achieved, and feel confident that this success will go beyond the simulation itself and have a positive effect on our development in management terms, thus representing a step to further success. We would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank the organisational team of the FEP program and above all the MARGA team for the excellent learning opportunity we received and their support during the business simulation. On the basis of our own experience we will be sure to recommend the MARGA business simulation without restriction, and hope that it will also form a part of future development programs.

Martin, Volker, Benjamin, Filippo, Tobias und Steffen