

Commitment and strategy lead to MARGA victory!

Entrepreneurial thinking, developing teamplay, experiencing competition, learning from errors - and having fun at the same time!



The winning teams of the MARGA Online Competition

As part of the international Hettich 'Junior Action' network programme, the 'juniors' work on cross-departmental projects every year. In 2015 participation in the MARGA business simulation was offered as a special project.

We - Benjamin Bextermöller (Development), Johannes Heider (Sales), Peter Leist (Purchasing), Stella Nolte (Category Management), Sudeep Sebastian (IT) and Thomas Wäschebach (Measuring Technology) - were immediately interested and decided to participate in the business simulation as a team.

Until the start of the MARGA business simulation in April 2015, we used the time to read the tutorial notes and manuals we had received. In addition we asked the Hettich teams which had participated in the business simulation in the past about their experiences.

Everything then finally started on 22 April, 2015. To begin with a test round enabled us to check on the consequences which our decisions and the decisions of our opponents would have on the corporate value of our respective companies. These findings would then help us to take the right decisions in the qualification rounds.

During the entire business simulation we generally met at least once a week to discuss our strategy and take decisions. Although most of us lived within a radius of 30 km, because of Sudeep Sebastian, a member of our team from India, the communication was implemented in English by means of TeamViewer and telephone conferences.

In addition, when the business simulation competition started, at every meeting a package of tasks was distributed to the team members for completion by the next meeting. However, we quickly established that there was little point in assigning decision-making areas to individual persons, because all the parameters for the individual decisions were interconnected and as a result only team decisions were possible. In addition we worked on the various scenarios in the evenings and at weekends, followed by lively discussion of our newly-acquired insights at the team meetings.

Qualification round I

After what we believed were thorough preparations and newly-won findings in the test round, we believed that we were ready for the qualification rounds. However, the very first period of the initial qualification round was a sobering experience: we came 4th out of 4, which put us last in our group!

In response we radically revised our strategy once more and decided in favour of a more aggressive approach, in order to achieve our goal of becoming the company with the largest market share.

Our strategy was crowned with success. We gave our opponents such a surprise that we immediately took over first place in the group, and were able to defend this successfully. As a result we won the first qualification round as group winner.

Our decision making was based on the MARGA market research report and an analytical tool we developed ourselves which displayed and evaluated the decisions of all participants in the market. This enabled us to assess the markets on which there was still an optimisation requirement for specific products, as well as the areas where we had already taken the right decisions.

Qualification round II

In the second qualification round the participants in the groups were changed around. We quickly noticed that with our new competitors we would not be able to continue our strategy from the first qualification round without some modifications. We therefore had to think of a new strategy in order to progress further towards the finals. The requirements for participation in the MARGA business simulation also played a decisive role in this:

Simply coming first in your group was no longer enough. It soon became clear that five teams would probably win both qualification rounds. In order to get into the final, a team's

accumulated company value across all the rounds and periods would be taken into account. We therefore had to generate an especially high company value. For this purpose we gradually diverged from our radical tactics of trying to eliminate the competition, and instead analyzed in detail what parts of the market would produce the best return per individual product.

The final period of the second qualification round then proved successful: we managed to qualify for the finals at the Schloss Gracht castle!

The finals

The final round involved three simulation periods online and two periods spent at the Schloss Gracht castle in Erfstadt. We were up against serious competition in the form of other international teams from Continental Reifen Deutschland GmbH, Robert Bosch GmbH and Volkswagen AG.



The team of Hettich Holding during the finals at the Schloss Gracht castle

In the two periods at the Schloss Gracht castle the conditions of the simulation put us under greater pressure than before: instead of having the accustomed two weeks between individual periods to submit our results, on the day of the final we only had 1.5 hours' time to analyze the results of the previous period and take the necessary decisions for the upcoming period.

This was a tremendous challenge and required a lot of preparation. On the one hand we practiced a round under time pressure in advance, and at the same time we adapted our analytical tools. In addition we planned the last two periods of the final as carefully as possible in advance, so that on the actual day of the final we only had to make minor adjustments to the decision-making parameters.

On the final day everything went smoothly and we worked closely together as a team. However, until the very last minute we couldn't be sure of success because the competition was strong, we only had a slight lead after the penultimate period, and for the final period itself the prices for raw materials were changed by the organizers of the business simulation.



Teamwork during the live finals at the Schloss Gracht castle

After we had submitted the final decision-making parameters and participated in an animated discussion of the event with the other teams, we were invited to the Gala dinner.

Because we were not sure what the outcome would be, the time between handing in our last decision and the announcement of the winners seemed like an eternity to us. We couldn't wait to hear whether we had won or not.

The results of the final round were then gradually revealed in an atmosphere of increasing suspense. You can imagine how delighted we and all the Junior Action colleagues who had supported us throughout the competition were when Dr. Christoph Heinen (MARGA) finally ended the suspense and congratulated us on winning the MARGA Industry Final.



Benjamin Bextermöller, Peter Leist, Johannes Heider, Stella Nolte, Thomas Wäschebach, Sudeep Sebastian (f.l.t.r.)

For all of us participation in the MARGA business simulation was a wonderful experience and we can recommend it to anyone. For six months we worked closely together with great commitment, learning and improving our performance all the time. In the process we also grew close together as a team, which makes it all the more rewarding to come out on top as victors in the end.