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Management #LikeABosch

In spring 2018, when we formed our team with six participants of the Junior Manager Program from three different functional areas (Technical Sales, Manufacturing and Research & Development), nobody had any idea that a request to our Bosch Training Center (BTC) would actually be justified later. We received the following answer:

Hello,

A stay abroad during the MARGA Online Competition is not a problem, since the business simulation phases all run online. The live final with its festive event is the program highlight. In case you make it to the final, it is recommended to attend this personally. However, participants who are prevented from taking part personally can also be connected via web conference i.e. Skype.

Since a stay at a foreign Bosch location of about 4-6 months is a mandatory part of our trainee program, at least one team member was always outside the MEZ time zone throughout the entire program. As a result, we were forced to organize our team meetings via Skype from the beginning on, but on the other hand that made a continuous processing of the simulation rounds "around the clock" possible. We clearly benefited from this skill during the short final rounds.

When the test phase eventually started in November, we were already very curious about what was lying ahead of us. In a first strategy workshop, we considered all kinds of tools and approaches on how we can best understand the system behind the MARGA business simulation. The first three periods were still quite bumpy. Sometimes we just tried out everything wildly without strategy, and sometimes we acted in a highly analytical manner and thereby tried to crack the algorithm behind the MARGA tool. However, with little success, which looking back is why we should have started to invest our time in the development of a gut feeling for the complex coherences. Anyway, like this we got to know each other very well and formed a team, so we started highly motivated into the main round.

In a second strategy workshop, we decided to split up into product and functional teams in a matrix-like manner. This meant that every product was always represented by one person in the functional teams. Gradually, a standard meeting cycle within a decision period crystallized. Nevertheless, several hundred e-mails were written. Some had subjects like "Boooooom! : D" after period 1 (6th place in the overall ranking) or "We are running a bit tight again" after period 5 (3rd place in the overall ranking). Some of them were also addressed to the MARGA tutoring team, which always gave us detailed information on many problems.



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After qualifying for the live final at the “Schlosshotel Walberberg” with only a comparatively small advantage compared to the fifth rank, we once again analyzed the competitive teams intensively, summarized the lessons learned from the main round and developed our final strategy. It became clear to us that as a basis for decision-making we needed not only the market research reports provided by the system, but also a comprehensive planning tool considering all products and all periods.

Due to the shortened decision-making periods in the final phase, we experienced some annoying "beginner mistakes" in the first three periods, which sometimes required strategy changes. However, it was exciting to see how the team still stuck together and never lost its humor. In retrospect, these situations certainly taught us how we should deal with mistakes in a team and how we can continue to motivate each other.





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The last two final periods were then played live at the Walberberg castle, which brought about some logistical challenges for our team: two team members were in the US with a time difference of -6 hours, another one was in China with a time difference of +6 hours. However, we were well prepared with defined roles and distributed tasks. The final day was excellent - just "#LikeABosch". We worked very well together on- and offline, were always able to set all parameters before our self-imposed deadline and had a lot of fun. Yet, due to the strong performance of our competitor teams from Develey and Lumileds, we were not sure until the end on how successful we would be. When the results - as announced by our BTC months in advance - were solemnly announced, the three attending members of our team used FaceTime, WhatsApp and WeChat video chats to broadcast the award ceremony live to the other three team members. The joy was immense when we were finally congratulated on winning the MARGA Online Competition!

The participation in the MARGA Online Competition was a great experience for all of us, which we can only recommend to everyone. Despite the time-consuming effort we have never lost motivation and now that we have completed the program, it feels almost strange to exchange only occasionally. For six months, we pulled together, laughed and learned and kept developing. We are delighted to celebrate our success as a team and our friendship on a common weekend in the mountains in December, when the last team member returns from his assignment abroad, before being honored by our Labor Director Mr Kübel with an invitation for lunch at the company headquarters.

Team 23 – Robert Bosch GmbH