

ERPSIM GAME AS A YOUNG THINKERS EVENT

Primary Advice:

An ERPSim Event is an exercise in project management. Time is both a friend and an enemy. Plan early, in good detail, and build in 'buffers' to address the hic-ups along the way. While explicit detailed activities may seem like overkill, they will illustrate the complexity of some tasks and help to better estimate the time needed.

ERPSim Events for 'novice participants' – Top 5 Critical Success Factors

1) EVENT PLANNING:

One needs to look at an ERPSIM event as an exercise in project management. The actual competition/event is analogous to the 'go-live' of an information system. Most of the effort will happen before anyone takes a seat. One must first scope out the project with the various stake holders, manage the technical infrastructure needs, establish documentation and training protocols, test the product, and then practice the go-live event to smooth out the rough spots. Logistics involving the venue must also be well planned. Lunch, snacks, drinks, parking, seating etc... require close attention.

2) SIMULATION COACHING:

Novice ERPSIM users need support to succeed. Nuances of the software, data, processes, people, and even the event 'procedures' may be overwhelming to the uninitiated. A dedicated coach for each team is essential. The bespoke mentor for each team helps to: adhere to event scheduling, facilitate student learning, and provide business and 'technical' support. For high school students, strategy and communication require a little more attention; while some non-ERP college students maybe little intimidated by the technology being used. These mentors can be upper division students, industry partners, or faculty. In our experience, the 'closer' the mentor is to the target student, the more relaxed the simulation environment is. For high school students, we used college students currently taking ERP coursework. Mentors receive targeted training in how the simulation works, business strategy and effective communication.

3) WELL DEFINED EVENT MATERIALS

The ERPSIM Job Aids are the foundation for event materials. Each Student/role needs documentation that reinforces their duties within the simulation. However, additional documentation focused on the event itself is also needed. Facility maps, chaperone/observer materials, as well as publicity materials are just a few examples.

4) CLEARLY DEFINED TEAM ROLES

In addition to the students, mentors, and the 'Master of Ceremonies', there are a wide range of roles needed to properly execute the event itself. For example, a VIP facilitator provides structure and communications for the chaperones and observers in attendance. This helps to prevent interruptions in the simulation activities. The facilitator can answer logistical questions, comment on the execution of the simulation, and discuss strategy separate from the student events. Timekeepers and runners help the MC in the execution of the simulation. Media coordinators, photographers, help promote and document the event while it happens. Facilities personnel help manage food/environment needs. This does not imply you need a small army, people can hold multiple roles; those roles however, just need to be explicitly identified.

5) NURTURING ENVIRONMENT

ERPSim, especially for novice participants, needs a nurturing environment that supports the student's questions and discovery. More attitude rather than a 'thing', this type of environment needs to provide students with the opportunity to discover, execute, and possibly fail. Learning from their success and controlled failure is what provides students with experience. Pre-round strategy discussions, post-round debriefing sessions (lead by the mentor) help teams/students identify what "works and doesn't work". Explicit goal setting before the first round (eg. what is the measure of success) provides the framework that students use to assess their progress.