

## Experiential Learning in Strategic Management

One of the best ways to learn the art and science of strategic management is through experience. Aristotle said "for the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them."<sup>1</sup> However, very few folks will be given the opportunity to run a multi-million dollar company as a way to learn the complexities of strategic management. As educators of professional adult learners, Webster faculty endeavors to bring their experiences into the classroom for their students' edification. The faculty accomplishes this in a multitude of ways; from sharing experiences, to active reflection, to board game simulators like the Beer Game. Sorry, no real beer here!

The Beer Game Simulator was developed by MIT. The students are immersed in a beer distribution system that provides a unique view of system dynamics. The utilization of Case Studies is another popular means for experiential learning. With case studies, the students are able to experience the inside of real organizations and explore their issues. They are then asked to apply what they have learned to those cases.

One of the best classroom experiential learning environments in university education today is conducted in Webster's BUSN 6200 course. This course uses a very robust computer simulator developed and hosted by CapSim®. The simulator permits learners to manage their own companies. The class is divided into management teams and they compete against each other as well as other computer teams to make their company successful. The teams focus on strategy, marketing, finance, production, human resources, quality improvement, and their competitors' strategies to grow their business and enhance their margins. All these elements interact in the simulator in a very realistic manner that represents the complexities that managers confront. Additionally, the student management teams can measure how they are doing compared to other teams at universities around the country and abroad.

Strategic Management is a very important aspect of any business or management curriculum, and for those who are looking for learning by doing, but don't have a connection with "The Donald", I highly recommend you give the BUSN 6200 course a try. It is a great learning experience and fun to boot.

Dr. Greg Howes

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<sup>1</sup> Bynum, W.F. and Porter, R. (eds) (2005) *Oxford Dictionary of Scientific Quotations*. Oxford University Press. 21:9.