SimVenture has proved itself to be an invaluable resource for staging business competitions. With relatively little planning and organisational input, you can run very successful events that will engage large numbers of people.

A wide variety of schools, FE Colleges, universities and even commercial organisations have used the software for competitions (up to 120 people at a time!) and the feedback from events has always been very positive. However, to help you organise and manage an event of your own here are top tips from the SimVenture Team.

Top Tips

- Allow all participants time before any competition to familiarise themselves with SimVenture. The Driving Lesson Scenario is an ideal environment to do this.
- Teams of between 2 & 4 people work best. If the team is any larger some people will not be able to contribute as much as others.
- Competition rules should only be minimal but need to include the following issues: Team structure; Starting Point; Duration; Bankruptcy; External Support; Cheating; Winning Criteria; and Judging Process. More information about each of these points is provided below.
- Communicate your competition rules in writing before the event and ensure every team has a copy of the rules during the competition.
- To be completely fair ensure every team starts from the same position. To do this we recommend you use a Scenario or a game which you have saved and shared with all teams. Particularly critical issues include 'Level of Play', 'Start Date' and 'Start-Up capital'. If you are using V.4 the 'Performance Report' in the menu's 'Game' tab captures all this data (and more) and you can ask teams to print this document out at the end if you want to check whether any parameters were changed mid competition.
- A competition should last for a minimum of 1 hour so people have a chance to really get their business going. Be clear about competition start and end times and if you wish you can use the Save function to allow the competition to be staged over a period of days/weeks.
- Make clear in your rules what happens if a team should go bankrupt. You can either tell them they are out of the competition or allow them to start again from scratch.
- You may wish to offer support to teams if they need help but be clear at the outset what advice is available. You could charge for questions that you answer and deduct amounts from final scores.
- Communicate to teams what will happen in the event of cheating. Cheating, whilst rare, typically involves people repeatedly saving and loading games. It is best to say that saving and loading games during competition time is not allowed because the process allows people to learn by trial and error.
- Make clear how you will judge the winner. The simple way is to use the overall net profit figure (which is available in the Performance Report of V.4 or Profit & Loss Report in V.3). More robust assessments can be made by examining other issues involving: current cashflow; current profitability; stress and tiredness levels.
- Advise all participants that the judge's decision is final and let them know you will need at least 30 minutes after the competition to communicate the results because time is needed to collect and analyse results. A good idea is to ask all teams to save their game at the end of the competition so a permanent record is always available.
- If time allows, ask teams to make presentations about how they ran their business and allocate scores to this part of the process. You can also ask other competitors to listen to the presentations and award marks for the quality of questioning from the floor.