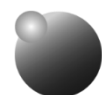


SimVenture evolution



User Manual v10



Venture
Simulations

Welcome to SimVenture Evolution, an on-line platform that provides an interactive, realistic business experience, enabling you to apply and understand key theories, whilst enjoying the challenge of competition and risk.

Throughout this manual, and within the simulation, please note that you will be referred to as the User, and your tutor / trainer / instructor as the Coordinator.

Key purposes of this document:

To provide information about the simulation from sign up and logging in, to running your first simulated business.

To provide a reference point for:

- essential information to support new Users
- understanding and accessing the full functionality of the simulation
- troubleshooting and dealing with error messages encountered in the simulation

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Introduction

Overview

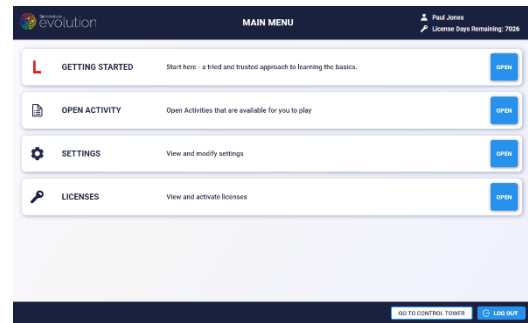
The simulation enables you to experience the key decisions involved in starting and running a bicycle manufacturing business. Operating in a complex market, with a range of potential customers and competitors, you will make the decisions that shape the company's progress.

The platform is accessed via a web browser using a unique User Name and Password.

Introductory videos and activities help you to familiarise yourself with the simulation interface and basic functions.

We strongly recommend that once you have viewed all 4 videos, you complete the introductory activities to reinforce your familiarity with the interface and its functionality.

From then on, depending on your situation, you will have access to activities which present a variety of challenges at different levels of difficulty.



Access to activities is typically managed by your coordinator who will set up activities for you to explore different aspects of running a business. You may be conducting an activity as an individual, or as part of a team, in facilitated sessions or remotely.

Activities run in quarters for up to 10 years, so your starting point could be anywhere along that timeline. From a fledgling business with modest resources, to a well established market leader, or anything in between.

Depending on the activity's settings, you may be able to rewind and repeat activities. This will allow you to learn actively in a risk-free environment that helps you understand both your successes and your mistakes.



As well as understanding key business concepts, you will learn about decision making, problem solving, and the evaluation of risk, when determining business strategy.

If you are working in teams, you will experience the importance of leadership, negotiation, and communication.

However you engage with SimVenture Evolution, we hope you enjoy the experience.

Introduction

Accessing the Platform

Logging in

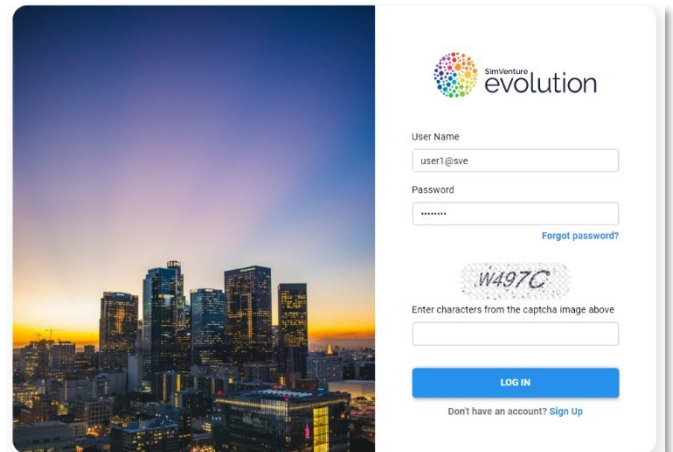
Use the link below to access Evolution via a browser window.
(Please note that Internet Explorer is NOT recommended for accessing the platform.)

<https://server.simventure.co.uk/SimVenture/>

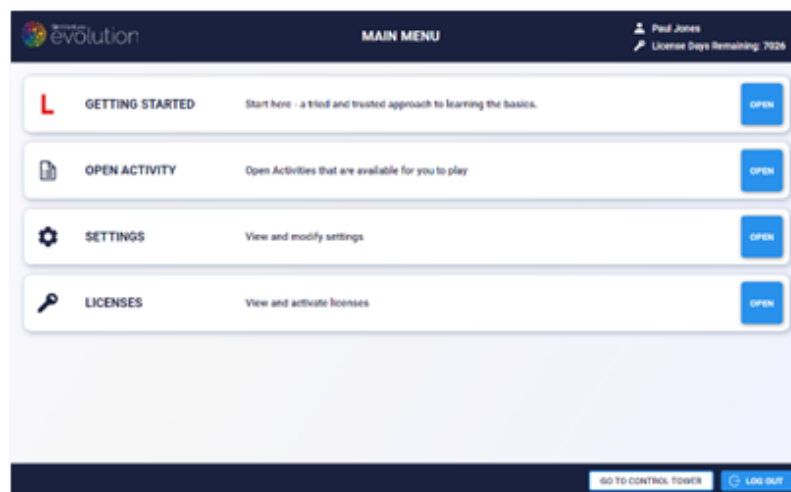
This will take you to the Login screen.

Input the User Name and Password that you used when signing up and click 'Login'.

If you forget your User Name or Password, please refer to your Coordinator for assistance.



The Main Menu will display, from which you can access the support information, activities and your account settings.



Note that you will not be able to open activities within the system until your Coordinator has assigned you a license.

However, even without a license you can view Walkthrough Videos to familiarise yourself with the simulation.

If you are using SimVenture Evolution as a personal learning tool and are not linked to an institution or organisation, you will need to purchase a license before you can open any activities.

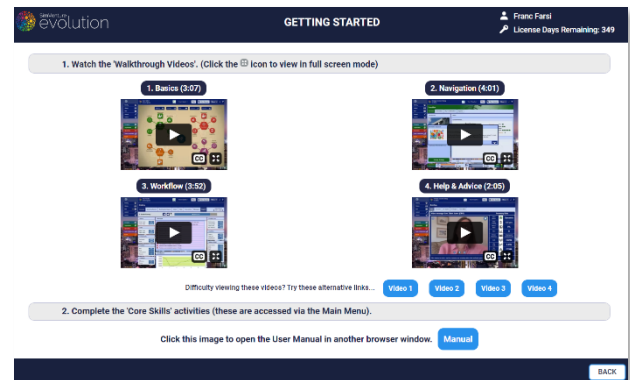
Getting Started

1. View the introductory Videos

These display automatically when you first log on to the platform.

Unchecking the 'Show on startup' box within the window will hide it for subsequent logins but these videos can still be accessed by clicking 'Getting Started' in the Main Menu, or by clicking Menu and selecting 'Getting Started' within an open activity.

1. Introduction
2. Workflow
3. Navigation
4. Simulation Support



2. Complete the induction Activities

The induction Activities are designed as an experiential way to build up your knowledge and understanding of how the simulation operates.

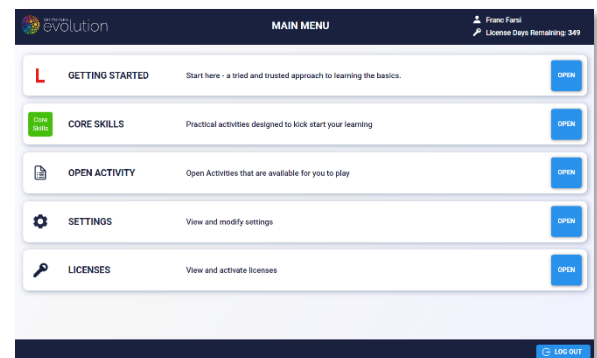
Working through these short activities is a tried and tested way to learn the basics.

Once you have been assigned a license you will be able to access the introduction activities from the Main Menu.

Click **Core Skills** and then **Open** to start the first activity. The activity will load and open the *Briefing*, displaying the *Video* tab.

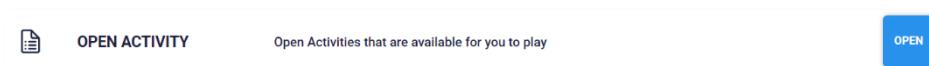
The 'Video Run Through' explains the details of the activity and the 'Process' column summarises the actions you need to take to complete it.

Complete all the induction activities in the same way, watching the appropriate video and using the rewind function to explore alternative strategies.



3. Moving on...

Once you have viewed the introductory videos and completed the induction activities you will be ready to engage with further activities to extend your knowledge and skills in a wide range of business subjects.



The *Open Activity* option within the *Main Menu* provides access to the Activities that have been assigned to you.

Workflow

For every activity you undertake within the simulation, the workflow follows the common *Plan-Do-Check* cycle.

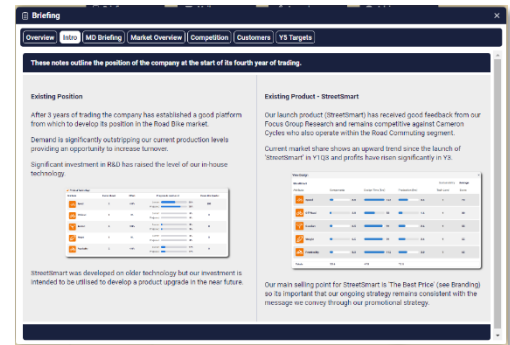
Plan

It's important to take time to assess the current situation in every activity. Whilst you know that your company is manufacturing bicycles, your trading context, history and available resources may vary significantly from activity to activity. This analysis will help you decide on a strategy to achieve your objectives.

Briefing

The Briefing should be your first reference point as it contains narrative information and summary data about the specific scenario upon which the activity is based.

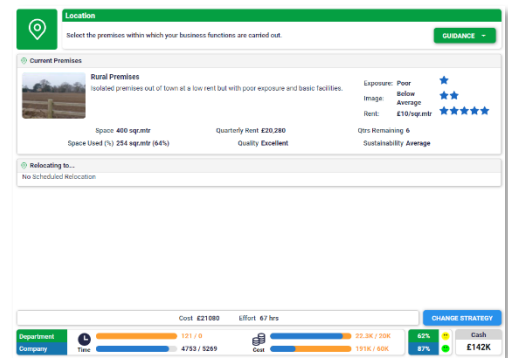
Further information may also be provided to support you in engaging with the activity, such as targets or concepts to explore.



Current Status

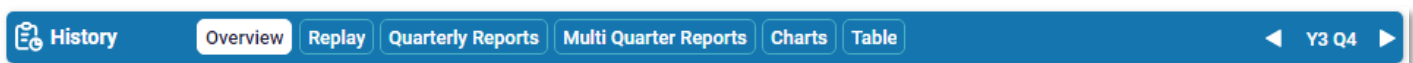
Each Business Area page contains an overview screen showing its current status within the area.

This will give you a more specific picture of the company's situation, further informing your strategic and tactical decision making.



History

The History section updates as each quarter is run and provides an extensive range of information presented in a variety of formats. It allows you to build up a detailed picture of the development of the company to its current status and should also help you decide how you want to move the company forward.



Details of the key information accessed by each tab is as follows:-

Overview – this is your first source of information and provides a comprehensive view of the company's current trading position. The left-hand side provides crucial operating data, such as orders received and sales made. The right-hand side provides a summary of key financial data. The central messages advise you of key events that have occurred during the quarter, and the Bank Balance chart provides a clear indication of the movement of cash within your bank account during the quarter.

Quarterly Reports – this section provides a number of reports for the quarter, covering the standard financial reports and also details of Activities, Sales and an Operations Analysis. The Quarter to be reported may be changed by using the 'Select Period' spinner at the top right of the screen.

Workflow

Multi-Quarter Reports – provides a detailed view of Profit and Cash Flow trends across quarters. The number and dates of the periods reported may be adjusted using the spinners at the top right of the screen.

Charts – this enables useful charts to be created to facilitate discussion and decision-making, and also to provide material for final reports, if required. Standard charts may be selected, and the parameters may be changed using the drop-down choices to meet your reporting requirements. Custom charts can also be set for data items that you wish to monitor regularly.

Table – the data available may be viewed in tabular format, but by selecting **Overview** again, the option to **Export** the data can also be used (see below) to view the data in a .csv format.

Forecasting – you can use this facility to enter your forecast data for Profit and Cashflow, which you can then compare with the actual performance of your business.

Messages – this facility allows you to review messages received during the running of each Quarter. The Quarter to be reported may be changed by using the spinner at the top right of the screen.

Export - This enables the whole History data file to be downloaded in a CSV format, which can then be manipulated in spreadsheet format to produce any required custom reports.

Select Period spinner – use the arrows to move backwards and forwards to select the period for which you wish the History data to be reported.

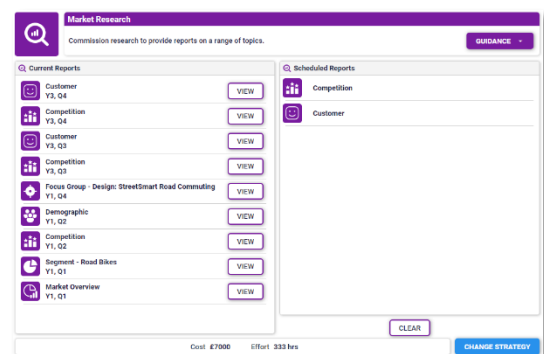
Market Research Reports

As well as understanding the virtual company you are about to run, you should also take some time to analyse the simulated market within which your company is operating.

You'll find some useful market information in existing reports within the Market Research area.

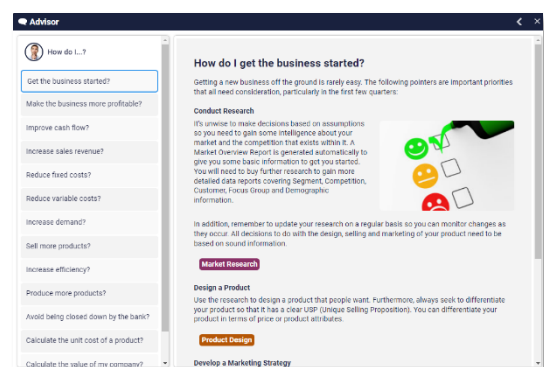
The reports are shown in chronological order so you can view historical reports.

You can also commission new reports to keep your market intelligence up to date.



Advisor

The Advisor section enables you to find the answers to a wide range of strategic business issues that you could encounter when using the simulation.



Do

Once you have analysed the situation, you can make decisions to affect the progress of your virtual company. Decisions are made within each of the sections displayed in the map screen.



This screen is accessed by clicking the Map button.

Each Business Area follows a common format which is described below using the Organisation department as an example.

Section Layout

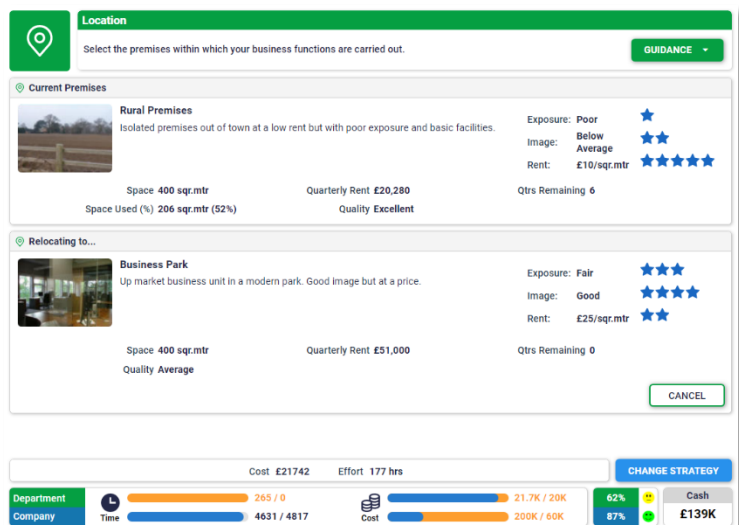


Clicking the departmental symbol on the map or on the Nav Bar will display an overall description of the department and its business areas.

On selecting any of the business areas, you will access an Overview screen displaying the current status of the company within the area.

Tabs display further details covering the key issues involved in making strategic decisions within the business area.

Each Overview page also includes a Change Strategy button. When clicked, this button displays a window enabling you to execute decisions within the business area.



The screenshot shows the 'Location' overview screen. It features a 'GUIDANCE' button and a 'Select the premises within which your business functions are carried out.' instruction. The screen is divided into two main sections:

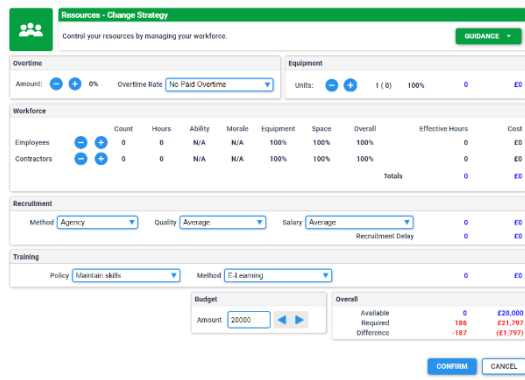
- Current Premises:**
 - Rural Premises:** Isolated premises out of town at a low rent but with poor exposure and basic facilities.
 - Space: 400 sq.mtr
 - Space Used (%): 206 sq.mtr (52%)
 - Quarterly Rent: £20,280
 - Quality: Excellent
 - Exposure: Poor (1 star)
 - Image: Below Average (2 stars)
 - Rent: £10/sq.mtr (5 stars)
 - Qtrs Remaining: 6
- Relocating to...:**
 - Business Park:** Up market business unit in a modern park. Good Image but at a price.
 - Space: 400 sq.mtr
 - Quality: Average
 - Quarterly Rent: £51,000
 - Exposure: Fair (3 stars)
 - Image: Good (4 stars)
 - Rent: £25/sq.mtr (2 stars)
 - Qtrs Remaining: 0

At the bottom, there is a 'CHANGE STRATEGY' button and a summary bar showing:

- Cost: £21742
- Effort: 177 hrs
- Department: Company
- Time: 265 / 0
- Cost: 4631 / 4817
- 21.7K / 20K
- 62%
- Cash: £139K

Workflow

Enacting decisions within the simulation is handled by 'Change Strategy' windows which are accessed from within each business area overview page (the examples below are taken from the Organisation Department).



Resources - Change Strategy
Control your resources by managing your workforce.

Overtime
Amount: 0% Overtime Rate: No Paid Overtime

Equipment
Units: 1 (0) 100% 0 £0

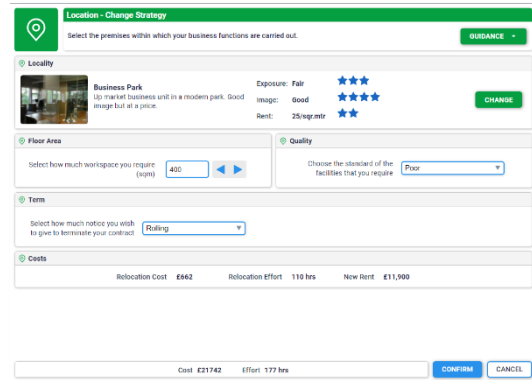
| Workforce | Count | Hours | Ability | Morale | Equipment | Space | Overall | Effective Hours | Cost |
|---------------|-------|-------|---------|--------|-----------|-------|---------|-----------------|------|
| Employees | 0 | 0 | N/A | N/A | 100% | 100% | 100% | 0 | £0 |
| Contractors | 0 | 0 | N/A | N/A | 100% | 100% | 100% | 0 | £0 |
| Totals | | | | | | | | | £0 |

Recruitment
Method: Agency Quality: Average Salary: Average Recruitment Delay: 0 £0

Training
Policy: Maintain skills Method: E-Learning 0 £0

Budget
Amount: 20000 Overall Available: 0 Required: 186 Difference: -187 £20,000 £21,797 (£1,797)

CONFIRM CANCEL



Location - Change Strategy
Select the premises within which your business functions are carried out.

Locality
Business Park Up market business unit in a modern park. Good image but at a price. Exposure: Fair Image: Good Rent: 25/eqmtr

Floor Area
Select how much workspace you require (sqm): 400

Quality
Choose the standard of the facilities that you require: Poor

Term
Select how much notice you wish to give to terminate your contract: Rating

Costs
Relocation Cost: £962 Relocation Effort: 110 hrs New Rent: £11,500

CONFIRM CANCEL

The Change Strategy windows also include lightbulb icons which can be clicked to view the Business Area tabs for ease of access whilst making decisions.

GUIDANCE

Once the required amendments have been made, the 'Confirm Changes' button will secure the decisions, pending execution *when you run the quarter*.

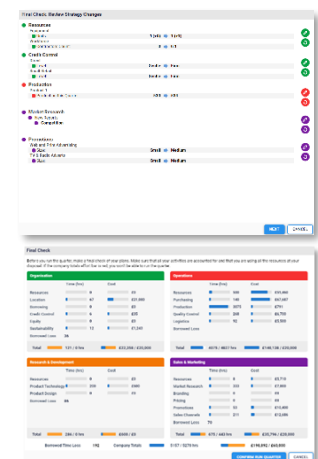
Multiple decisions can be made across all the departments, each having time and cost implications which vary depending on the options you choose each time. As more decisions are made you will see the Status Bar update to reflect the time and money required to execute all your decisions.

Running the Quarter

Once you have confirmed all the decisions that you wish to implement for the quarter, click the 'Run Quarter' button on the Tool Bar. The 'Review Strategy Changes' window lists all the decisions you have set up for the coming quarter. Undo and Edit buttons allow you to make amendments if you wish but if you are happy with the decision click 'NEXT' to move on.

A Final Check screen will then be displayed showing the usage of resources planned for the coming quarter.

Clicking 'Confirm Run Quarter' will then execute all the decisions pending for the quarter.



Review Strategy Changes
List of decisions for the coming quarter with status indicators (green for confirmed, red for pending).

Final Check
Summary of resource usage and costs for the quarter.

| Resource | Current | Required | Available | Cost |
|-------------|---------|----------|-----------|------|
| Employees | 0 | 0 | 0 | £0 |
| Contractors | 0 | 0 | 0 | £0 |
| Equipment | 0 | 0 | 0 | £0 |
| Space | 0 | 0 | 0 | £0 |
| Overall | 0 | 0 | 0 | £0 |

CONFIRM RUN QUARTER

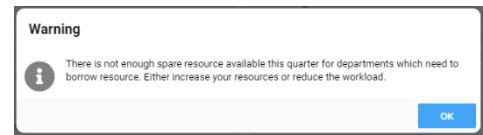
You may find (as in the example shown below), that you require more time to execute your decisions than is currently available (Company time required = 5497 hrs – Company time available = 5380 hrs).

In this situation you can return to the change strategy screens to modify your decisions and either reduce the number of hours required or increase the number available through various strategic choices.



The system will warn you of the situation if you try to run the quarter.

You can then return to the change strategy screens to modify your decisions and as long as the company time on the status bar isn't showing red, you'll be able to move on.



Workflow

Check

Having run a quarter, your situation will have changed (hopefully in a positive way!) and you will need to evaluate the impact of the decisions you have made.

Examining and Interpreting your results

There is a significant amount of information available to help you understand the results of the quarter and many ways in which this can be tackled. A good starting point is the History Overview page which provides a good summary of the outcomes of the decisions you have taken.

You can then investigate further using the various tabs, to examine the detailed Profit and Cash results, the trends in the data, and the differences from Forecast, if you have created one.

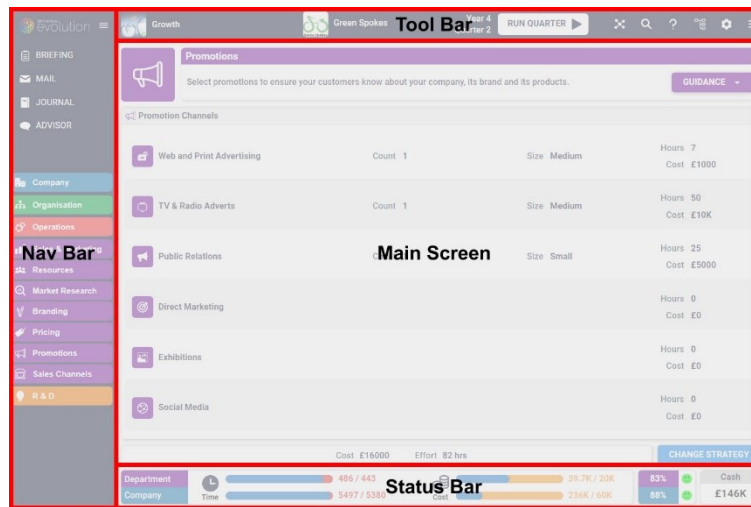


Once you have a clear understanding of the outcomes you will return to the start of the workflow cycle to review your Strategy before making your decisions for the next quarter.

If available within the Activity, you may also be able to perform a rewind (useful if the outcome has not been positive!). This functionality (when available) is accessed via the Menu button on the Tool Bar.

The User Interface

Navigation



The simulation interface contains a number of elements presented in 4 screen areas;

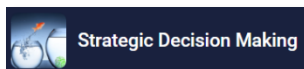
Each screen area is described in more detail in the following pages.

Tool Bar

The Tool Bar remains visible at all times within an open activity and contains the following elements:



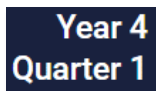
Logo – hover over the logo to view your Username.



Activity Title / Company name – The title of the Activity is predetermined, the Company Name is created by you on opening an Activity for the first time.



Company Logo – a default logo displays here unless you upload your own image within the 'Company' screen.



Current Quarter - the most recently run quarter.



Nav Map – click to display a screen with buttons to access all the business areas as well as the Briefing, History, Mail, Journal, and Advisor screen.



'Run Quarter' button – displays the Final Check screen and access to the 'Confirm Run Quarter' button.



Menu Button - provides access to a range of largely administrative functions.



Highlight Button - highlights key words and phrases which can be clicked to view definitions.



Help Button - shows help relating to the current page.



The Data Explorer button provides an expandable view of all the parameters within the business areas.



The Settings button allows you to amend settings relating to your user account.

The User Interface

Nav Bar

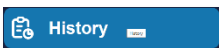
The Nav Bar contains buttons to access each of the areas displayed in the Map screen.



It can also be folded away to provide more screen space by clicking the 'Collapse/Expand Panel' button.



The **Briefing** section contains narrative information and data about the specific scenario upon which the activity is based. Note that different tabs are included in each scenario.



The **History** Page gathers together all the data you need to be able to monitor, analyse and forecast business performance. You'll refer to this section regularly to check the outcomes of your decisions as you progress with your simulated business.



The **Mail** section allows you to exchange messages with your coordinator within the system.



The **Journal** allows you to make notes to record your progress and reflections as you progress through the activity.



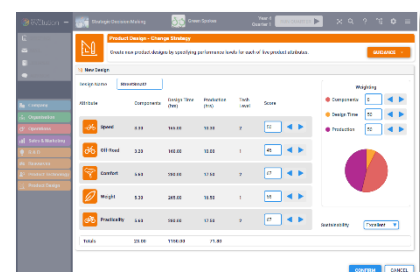
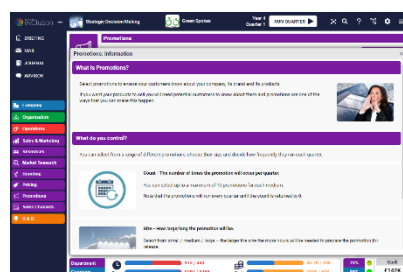
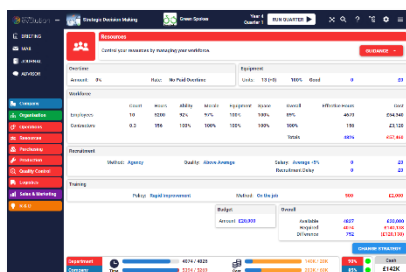
In the **Advisor** section, you'll find the answers to key strategic questions which relate to running your virtual business.



The **Company** page allows you to add a personal touch by creating your own company name, logo and strapline. When working as a team you can also see the name of your team members and assign roles to each of them should you wish. When available, the Leaderboard tab allows you to see how you are progressing compared to other teams within the same activity.

Main Screen

The Main Screen displays the content of pages you select within the interface. In most cases, tabs are used to organise the information, some areas may be scrollable if there is a lot of information to be displayed.



Status Bar

The Status Bar provides a summary of time, costs, efficiency and cash for easy reference during decision making. It is only visible when Business Area pages are being displayed. (The 'Final Check' screen is also a useful way to monitor time and money allocations, accessed by clicking 'Run Quarter' on the Tool Bar.)



More details can be accessed using the highlight button.

The User Interface

Simulation Support

In addition to this manual and the videos that accompany it, a range of simulation support is provided in a variety of places within the interface:

Help is designed to explain the functionality of the interface.



The Help Button opens a window explaining the contents of the current page and any specific functionality that it contains.

Guidance outlines broad business principles and objectives as they relate to the simulation.

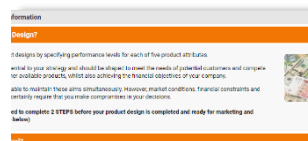


These buttons are displayed within each Change Business Area overview page. They provide access to the following:

Information describes the simulated business world in which SVE set.

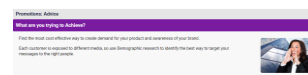


The Highlight button can be toggled to reveal words and phrases on the page that can be clicked to view explanations and definitions.



The Information tab within each Business Area helps you to understand the way the simulation is structured and how each area relates to the others.

Advice supports you in responding to issues within the specific context of your company within an activity.



Specific Advice, relating to issues within the current activity can be found in the Briefing tabs.

Key Considerations



Questions you should consider when making decisions within this business area.

Impacts



Outlines how this business area relates to a variety of outcomes within simulation.

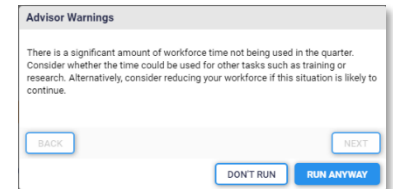
Advisor



The Advisor section explains strategic business concepts and how they apply to the context of the simulation.

Simulation Alerts

As you make decisions and progress your virtual company, the system will provide messages to alert you to a range of issues as they arise. These messages will not explain how to resolve an issue (that is for you to decide!) but reading them carefully and acting accordingly will help you to avoid potential problems.



Remember that the User Manual is always accessible from within Activities by clicking Menu / Getting Started.

Reference Information

User Essentials

This section outlines the core knowledge covered in the induction videos and activities.

To check and demonstrate your knowledge, you can also complete the test in the final 'Passport' activity.

The Simulation

- Manage a bicycle manufacturing company in a simulated market populated by virtual customers and competitors. The company comprises 4 'Departments' each with its own 'Resources' function.

| Organisation | Operations | Research & Development | Sales & Marketing |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Resources | Resources | Resources | Resources |
| Borrowing | Production | Pricing | Product Technology |
| Credit Control | Logistics | Promotions | Product Design |
| Equity | Quality Control | Branding | |
| Location | Purchasing | Market Research | |
| | | Sales Channels | |

- Decisions are made in 19 'Business Areas' on a quarterly basis.
- The simulation models the market's response to the decisions you make each quarter.
- Scenarios are used as the basis for Activities to focus learning and vary the level of challenge.
- Activities model startup (from Q1) or established companies (to 10yrs) in a variety of trading contexts.
- Market Research reports provide data to describe the makeup of the virtual market.
- Strategy and decisions directly influence the progress of the virtual business.
- As quarters progress, strategies need amending to suit the changing circumstances.
- 'Rewind' functions are available in specific activities to assist the learning process.

Navigation

- Know the functionality of the 4 main sections of the interface (Tool Bar, Nav Bar, Main Screen & Status Bar).

Workflow

- Access key data for analysis via the Briefing, History, Market Research & Status Bar.
- Use the 'Change Strategy' buttons to set up your decisions for the coming quarter.
- Make available enough resources to complete the planned tasks.
- Run the Quarter and evaluate the impact of your decisions on the business.

Principles

Bear these in mind as you manage your simulated business. These principles apply to all scenarios and activities that you encounter in Evolution.

- Decisions are inter-related – each 'Business Area' is affected by decisions made in other areas.
- There are no right or wrong answers – there is generally a compromise in every decision.
- Well informed decisions are more likely to be successful.

- Careful analysis and monitoring will support well informed decision making.
- Decisions are always made in the context of:
 - The goals of the business (these may be your own or externally determined).
 - Internal factors (e.g. access to finance, company age, production capacity).
 - External factors (e.g. market characteristics, competitor activity, economic climate).
- The simulation is designed to respond in a similar way to the real world. If you don't see the outcomes you expect, consider what a real company would do in the same circumstances.

Reference Information

Terminology

Throughout this manual, and within the simulation, please note that we use specific terminology to make the descriptions and explanations as clear as possible. Key terms used are as follows:

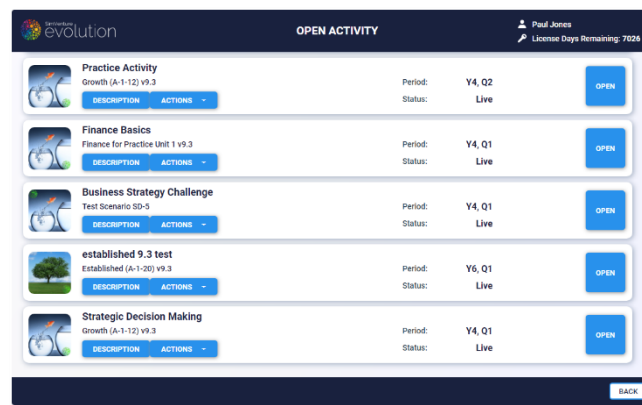
Coordinator - the tutor or instructor who is leading and/or managing your learning activities.

User - the student or learner who is using the simulation, either as an individual or as part of a team.

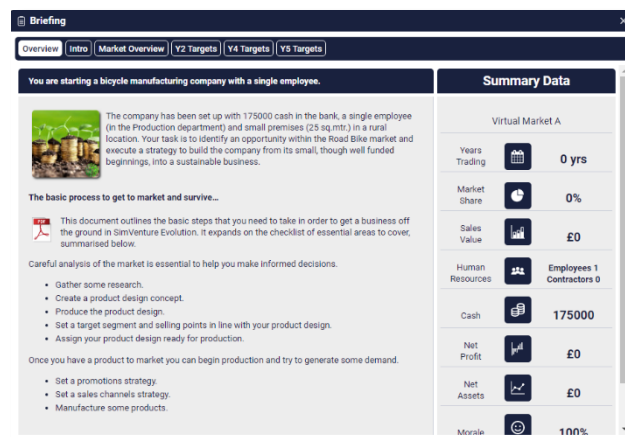
Team - a group of Users who are working together to run a company within an activity.

Scenario - Scenarios form the basis of activities in which Users run the simulated bicycle manufacturing company. They are starting points which vary in terms of the starting quarter, company resources/financial situation and the structure of the market within which the company operates.

Activity - the way in which a User engages with the simulation. Activities are set up by the Coordinator, based on a specific scenario. These are then assigned to Users/Teams who access them from within the Main Menu.



Briefing – a section within each activity providing an overview of the scenario on which an activity is based.



↑ Reference Information

Frequently Asked Questions

Most of the questions that you have should be answered in the text above, or by using the support available in the simulation interface, but our Users have raised a number of specific queries, which we are pleased to answer below.

Q - I have completed signup but cannot see any activities when I log in.

A - You should contact your Coordinator – you may not have been assigned a licence yet.

Q - How do I switch on/off the music which plays when the quarter runs?

A - Settings/Game Options – check/uncheck the ‘Sound On’ checkbox.

Q - What is the difference in Evolution between an Employee and a Contractor?

An Employee is a permanent member of staff who will need to be trained and developed, whereas a Contractor is assumed to be fully trained. Recruitment and induction of an Employee is not instant so a ‘Recruitment Delay’ reduces the number of hours an employee works in their first quarter. Contractors can be employed immediately. Dismissing employees

Reference Information

Troubleshooting

Please use the following procedure whenever you experience issues with the simulation.

Standard error correction procedures:

In most cases, issues can be resolved using the following methods:

1. Log out / Log back in
2. Refresh the browser window
3. Clear your browser cache and refresh (F5)

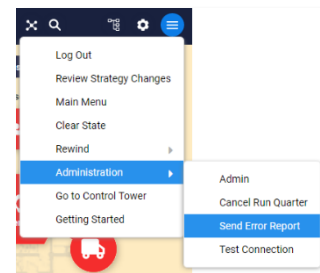
If the problem persists, please refer to the guidance below...

Activities cannot be seen in Main menu / Activities

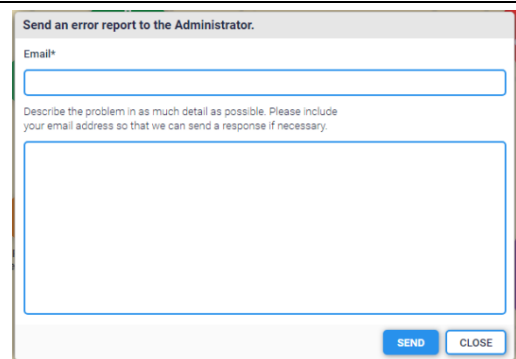
Check with your Coordinator to ensure that Activities have been assigned and are not marked as 'Disabled'.

If the suggested approaches fail to resolve the problem, please:

1. Access the 'Send Error Report' dialogue from within any Activity.



2. Complete the report in as much detail as possible.


 A screenshot of a dialog box titled 'Send an error report to the Administrator.' It contains a text input field for 'Email*' and a larger text area for describing the problem. Below the text area are 'SEND' and 'CLOSE' buttons.