



## ComSIM© Business Management Simulation

### 1. BACKGROUND

The ComSIM® Business Management Simulation is an advanced business skills intervention that uniquely integrates hard business skills with inter-personal and leadership skills.

Using **experiential learning** as learning methodology, ComSIM was designed to provide participants with a practical, hands-on experience to manage a business unit.

Key functional business areas are comprehensively dealt from a **systems approach**:

- **Business Strategy (overall strategy & operational strategies and tactics, organisational growth)**
- **Operations/capacity management**
- **Human Resources**
- **Marketing and Sales / Revenue generation**
- **Business Finance**
- **Inter-Personal Skills and Leadership**

The **instructional design principles** underscoring the ComSIM® process identifies clearly defined learning objectives in each module, the flow of which are linked in a progressive manner to the overall programme objectives, work experience of participants and organisational requirements.

Business issues can often not be resolved by knowledge only – they require insight and the ability to translate knowledge into solutions and solutions into operational tactics and actions. The **transfer of learning to the work-environment** is therefore crucial and ComSIM allows for this to happen before the participant returns to his/her normal activities.

ComSIM® also allows participants to **discover in a practical manner how decisions** in all functional areas of an organisation influence each other and impact on the overall profitability of the organisation. This reinforces understanding of the key drivers for business success.

Integrated into the simulation is the **Herrmann Whole Brain Thinking Technology® (HBDI)** toolset. The HBDI® is the world's original and leading thinking styles assessment process that identifies one's instinctive and preferred modes of thinking and learning. This knowledge is translated into an unthreatening and pragmatic understanding of the power of diversity and the utilisation of this knowledge in creating high performing teams as part of the business management process.

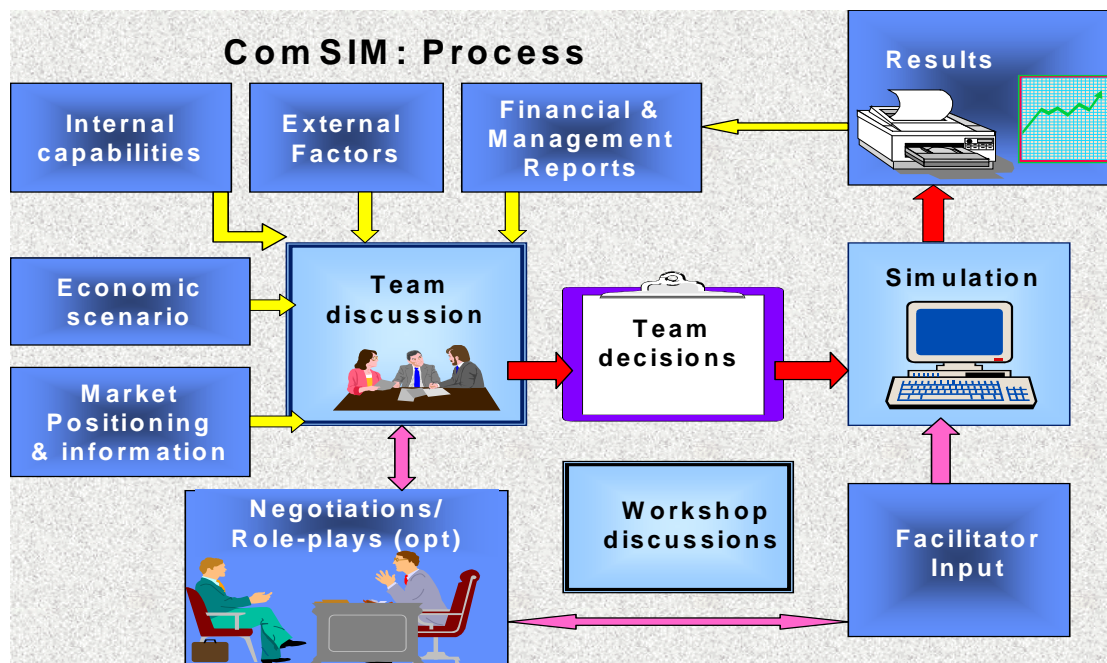
*ComSIM is ideal as a high impact introduction to **practical business management and leadership**. The ComSIM process emphasises the importance of linking **business knowledge** to sound **decision-making, inter-personal skills and leadership** skills.*

## 2. THE ComSIM<sup>®</sup> SIMULATION PROCESS

The ComSIM<sup>®</sup> business management simulation process follows a well researched, logical flow in the decision-making process of managing a business - this not only resembles real-life situations, but allows for participants to draw on their own personal experience as well as learning interventions undertaken earlier.

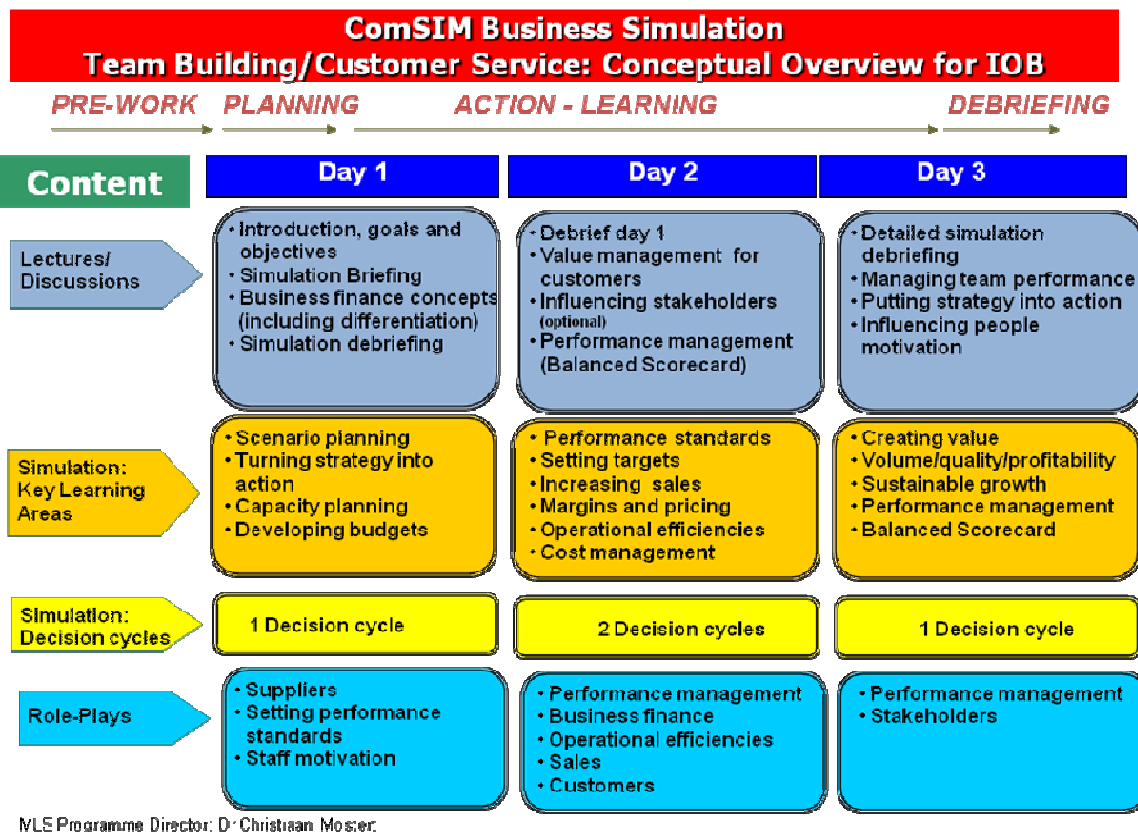
Note that participants work in small groups reflecting a management team (with specific responsibilities) as well as interaction with facilitators through role-plays. This ensures a serious learning environment rather than “just playing a game”.

**The ComSIM<sup>®</sup> experiential learning process takes participants beyond knowledge and into performance** — it allows them to interact with the problems, investigate options, consider



possible outcomes and, of course, to implement solutions and evaluate the actual outcomes. This process includes the practical utilisation of appropriate inter-personal and leadership skills that will typically be required (i.e. negotiating budgets, setting and contracting performance standards, optimising team performance, motivation and leadership).

The programme structure is such that it leads from one learning area to another, always building on previous learning experiences. The ComSIM process was designed around a careful planned set of inter-active sub-processes that vary between balancing "hard" business issues, performance requirements and the inter-personal and leadership requirements for successful achievement of the Company philosophy.



### 3. KEY LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Developing business strategy and active implementation
- Assessing decisions in respect of being customer and market driven
- Understanding demanding market environments (adaptable to major markets and customer requirements)
- Importance of decision-making and dealing with organisational diversity
- Understanding organisational inter-relationships and dynamics
- Cultivating a cross-functional approach to optimising results
- Understanding what builds value in an organisation and the key drivers for business success
- Understanding financial measurement, performance and management
- Utilising performance management (including the Balanced Scorecard) as management tool rather than just 'performance measurement'
- Linking "hard" business skills with "soft" issues, i.e. inter-personal skills and leadership
- Developing an entrepreneurship orientation and taking ownership of business units.
- Motivating people – a key requirement for business success in the simulation

### 4. ComSIM® Learning Outcomes

The flexibility of the ComSIM® simulation allows for a combination of the following competencies to be addressed. Although all categories of competencies are always used within the simulation, the flexibility of the process allows for up- or downscaling of individual items within the following categories.

### A. Business Competencies

- i. Understanding business processes (including interdependence)
- ii. Interpreting financial statements
- iii. Utilising budgets as performance management tool
- iv. Managing sales demands vs financial/operational constraints
- v. Managing risk in organisational growth
- vi. Creating a multifunctional or systems orientation
- vii. Entrenching a customer orientation
- viii. Managing performance management
- ix. Apply project management
- x. Understanding quality management & customer satisfaction
- xi. Understanding inter-departmental co-operation

### B. Managing Competencies

- i. Initiate planning and organising
- ii. Performing information analysis and reduction
- iii. Understanding problem resolution and decision-making
- iv. Delegation and control
- v. Managing across borders
- vi. Dealing with time and stress management

### C. Strategic Competencies

- i. Strategic thinking and alignment
- ii. Instilling entrepreneurship
- iii. Planning for risk
- iv. Managing change
- v. Motivating colleagues and staff
- vi. Understanding societal responsibility

### D. Interactive Competencies

- i. Utilising effective communication
- ii. Performing coaching and facilitation
- iii. Relationship building and team dynamics
- iv. Managing conflict, and
- v. Managing across diversity and cultures

The achievement of these wide-ranging learning outcomes requires the involvement of **two high level facilitators**: one to manage the simulation and hard skills, the second to manage the inter-personal, teamwork and back-to-the workplace integration.

Apart from feedback through the simulation, they also provide feedback to the bigger group, small groups (teams) and individuals where necessary.

The following is an example of the relative importance of competency areas (indicated by a '+', or '-') for a specific role profile:

### EXAMPLE: SIMULATION COMPETENCY FOCUS AREAS FOR JOB PROFILE

1. AREA OF COMPETENCE: TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP	2. AREA OF COMPETENCE: TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP
<b>Sub-area 1: Business Competencies</b> Multifunctional orientation (++) Quality Management (+) Business Plans (-) Financial Analyses & Integration (+) Marketing and Sales (+) Operations, supply chain & capacity planning (++) Human Resources Management & Industrial Relations (+) HR: Performance Management (+) HR: Health and Safety (-) Given	<b>Sub-area 1: Leading Competencies</b> Strategic thinking and alignment (+) Team Motivation (+) Initiating and Managing Change (+) Problem Solving (+) Entrepreneurship (+)
<b>Sub-area 2: Managing competencies</b> Information processing, analysis and reduction (+) Problem solving and Decision Making (++) Planning and Organisation (++) Delegation and Control (+) Managing Change (+)	<b>Sub-area 2: Interactive competencies</b> Communication (++) Empowerment, coaching and facilitation (+) Relationship Building and Team Leadership (+) Conflict Management (+) Managing Diversity (+) Stakeholder Involvement (+)
3. AREA OF COMPETENCE: SELF MANAGEMENT	
Understanding oneself & Thinking Style (HBDI) (++) Personal Vision and Growth (+)	Stress Management and Taking Decisions Under Stress (+)

The relative importance of the various competence areas can easily be scaled for different participant profiles (role profiles) and experience.

## 5. KEY BENEFITS FOR PARTICIPANTS AND CUSTOMERS

ComSIM workshops are high level learning experiences that are not only practical, but deliver tangible results:

- **Focus on competency based, experiential learning.** All learning is focussed on achieving the required learning outcomes with continuous feedback loops by experienced faculty.
- **Highly flexible simulation software** that can be adjusted w.r.t. complexity and relevancy for target groups. (ComSIM's complexity level is fully scaleable – this ensures that the appropriate learning is delivered for whatever level of participants in question. This can range from middle managers to senior managers to executive managers, from MBA-level academic integration of the various MBA-modules to advanced business analysis concepts such as Balanced Scorecard, etc.)
- **Flexibility in presentation formats** to deal with specific issues. We can accommodate previous learning, current issues and strategic issues of clients.
- **Building powerful teams.** The “small team” concept of ComSIM® is not only powerful in team building but entrenches the principle of building small, powerful teams in the work place.

- **High level of customisation for clients** by integrating strategic issues (industry and internally) as well as company specific issues into the simulation. The flexibility of the software allows for most customisation to be normally done free of charge (except if software changes are required).
- **Excellent return on investment (ROI).** ComSIM<sup>®</sup> reduces out-of-office time and provide high levels of intensive learning. ComSIM<sup>®</sup> programs can also be designed to accommodate external material or programme reference – allowing customers to align and integrate the learning process with their suppliers of choice.
- **ComSIM is an accredited programme** with the Services Seta (Reg 0422/03) and therefore allowing companies to claim their respective Skills levies.

## 6. CLIENT BASE

ComSIM has been utilised on four continents, spanning thousands of participants from 19 countries. The ComSIM<sup>®</sup> Business Simulation sets the scene for effective experiential learning in integrated management and leadership programmes and is optimised when presented in conjunction with a leadership programme. Further, the simulation can be presented as either residential or non-residential workshops<sup>1</sup>, consisting of 3 to 5 day programme formats depending on learning outcomes to be achieved. ComSIM can be set up as a **division of a bigger company** or as an “**independent**” **business** in its own right. The programme has a strong focus on a “business-owner philosophy”, which works very well to support managers to take ownership of their SBU’s performance.

## 10. PROGRAMME DIRECTOR



**Dr. Christiaan Mostert**

A career in commercial banking has led to the formation of **Market Leadership Systems** and the development of the ComSIM business simulation. He holds a PHD in Economics and a Senior Management Programme Certificate from the University of Pretoria. He is also a Senior Consultant with Business Enterprises at the University of Pretoria, the Belgian Banker’s Academy (Brussels), TTM Associates (Middle East) and is a regional director of Market Leadership Systems Intl (SA), a training consulting firm based in Belgium.