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Articles

A serious game in logistics

A serious game, modelling a 6 month logistic supply chain, saw 150 participants together at the Sports Hall, Jan. 5, 2017. This was a marked exercise that enabled an operational assessment of 28 students registered in the UTC Mechanical Engineering course (UTC-GM), elective specialty Integrated Production & Logistics (GM-PIL).

13 Feb 2017

A serious game in logistics

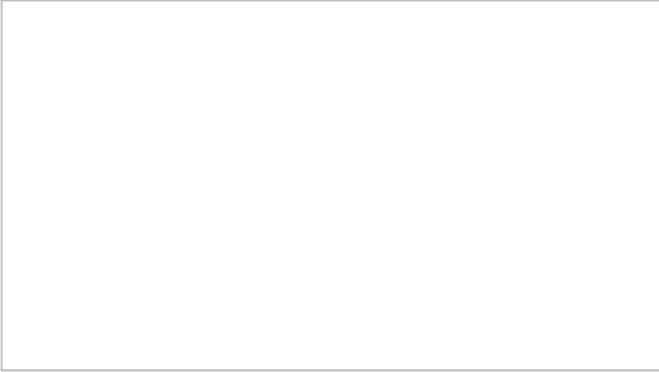
“With my lectures at UTC, I use several serious games in the course of the year, but this is the first one that took a semester to prepare and a full day to play out”, explains Joanna Daaboul, lecturer at the UTC Roberval Laboratory, and whose initiative this game was. Three written exercises in the semester were devoted to preparing the game. With a printed market description, including sales records over 3 fiscal years, the students were required to predict the demand over the coming 6 months and elaborate a contract policy strategy with the suppliers, also including with stock management, production lines, distribution networks, price setting, transportation and human resources needs, number of production sites and store outlets. The location of the factories and storehouses was determined on a floor map of the sports hall, reproducing transportation issues, to scale. *“Normally the resolution of these kinds of problem call for algorithmic work and calculations often seen as tedious and even difficult, but in this game environment, the students showed astonishing motivation and and interest despite the vast amount of work needed”,* adds our lecturer, a specialist in industrial engineering.

From the suppliers to the customers

All the steps, running from raw material procurement through to sales of the finished products to end customers are represented. The product here is simple – a flower set in a candle, where each team tries to lower costs and delivery dates while proposing a range of colours for potential customers’ product choices. Moving baskets represents the transportation phases. The role of the suppliers is occupied by the ‘opposite team’, which tends to make the negotiations harder. Then, a total 90 UTC students, academic, ‘admin’ and support staff came in to act as clients (for free). They each picked a card from a deck, indicating various levels of expectation in terms of aspect, speed or order handling ... to reproduce the variety and evolution of demand side. At regular intervals the students’ performances were assessed leading to a real-time evaluation of a month’s activities. To finish, we concluded that the first edition of this game was a friendly and pedagogically successful event. The ‘winners’ were awarded the mark of 18/20, well in excess of the professor’s expectations. *“We definitely want to do this again, in December 2017, with a serious game on Xmas decorations, thus combining the seriousness of the work with a seasonal pleasure”,* adds Joanna Daaboul.

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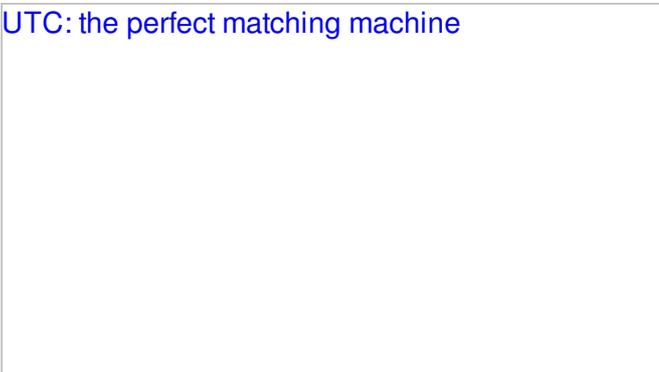
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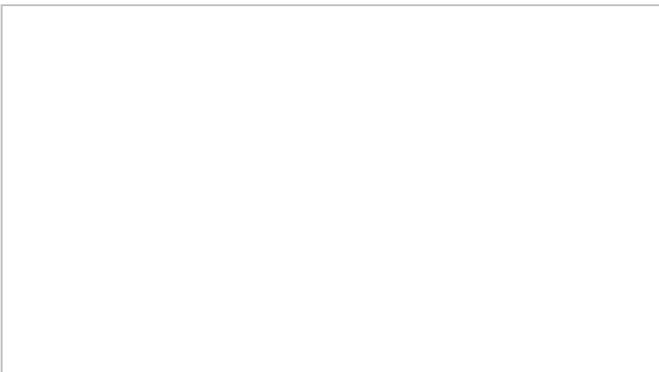
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