

# Effective project training through simulation

Good project managers need a blend of technical and people skills. How do you train for this in a project environment? **David Loveless** of Transformis Consulting explains how SimulTrain® brings the excitement of real world project execution to the classroom.

Simulation has long been used to bring realism into training. SimulTrain® from STS achieves this for project management training. The simulator runs one of four business project scenarios. Delegates are provided with a scenario description, organisation chart and supporting documentation. The project has been pre-planned and a core team identified but not assigned to specific activities. The project manager has then resigned and you are tasked with securing additional resource, completing the plan and executing the project. Real life from the outset then!

The simulation is run in two or three sessions. The first part of each is used for planning before the simulation itself is run. Once the simulation starts things begin to hot up! Interacting through a multimedia environment delegates are faced with e-mails and voice-mails from the project team, the management and third parties besides being presented with a series of decisions to be made. These decisions relate to typical issues faced during the execution of a project and delegates have to choose one of three options. The issues and answers come from the distillation of a survey of around 800 experienced project managers. The simulator responds in different ways depending on the actions and decisions taken. Failure to take a deci-



sion will result in the director taking the worst option for you. More reality!

At the end of each stage of the simulation the delegates will report on progress against key measures and the experienced facilitator will draw out learning points from a combination of the simulation itself and from the observed behaviour of the delegates as they execute the project.

Delegates work in groups of four around a standalone PC with each team member given special responsibility for either cost, schedule, quality or motivation. This builds a natural tension into the team as they deal with issues and decisions. All interaction is through the 'project office' screen which provides access to an activity Gantt, resource Gantt, activity network and project calendar.

Parameters within the system can be set to choose the scenario, language, degree of difficulty and speed at which the simulation runs. Thus, even the most experienced delegates can be challenged and put under time pressure.

Delegates typically find the simulation exercise demanding, instructive and fun. They are faced with most of the issues that can befall any project and have to make decisions in a pressurised but risk-free environment. As part of a team they have to learn to work together with the facilitator positioned to identify team working lessons.

This experiential approach results in key messages staying at the forefront of delegates minds when they return to the work environment.

SimulTrain® is easy to set up, intuitive to use and cost effective at £110 per delegate per seminar. To date, over 60,000 people from more than 30 countries using 11 languages have been trained on SimulTrain®.

For more information on SimulTrain® contact:

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## Building project management capabilities through....

### Innovative training:

- Effective Project Boards
- Effective Project Management
- Effective Business Change
- Effective Project Risk



Practitioner led using leading tools such as the SimulTrain® project management simulator.

### Consulting based on experience:

- Business Change
- Project & Programme Management
- Project Assurance
- Governance & methodologies

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