

## Autobiography

# Phil Anderson—A “Gamer” in Many Areas

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I am Professor and Chair of the Management Department at the University of St. Thomas, my professional home for the past 30 years. My primary teaching interest has always been strategic planning. I discovered business simulations over 30 years ago, and have been a user and advocate of them throughout my professional life. In 1992, I was awarded a Fulbright Scholars Fellowship to teach at the National University of Ireland in Cork, Ireland, and I ended up spending 4 years there over a 6-year period. I have led a study abroad program to England and Ireland, teaching an undergraduate strategy course there annually since 1997.

**Keywords:** *business simulation developer; simulations & learning; study abroad; teaching ethics*

## Simulation Developer

I am coauthor of the following computer-based business simulations: THRESHOLD COMPETITOR: A Management Simulation (4th ed.); THRESHOLD ENTREPRENEUR: A New Business Venture Simulation; MERLIN: A Marketing Simulation; and MICROMATIC: A Strategic Management Simulation (2nd ed.). All four simulations are now Web-based products designed for use as educational and training tools. The earlier disk-based versions of Competitor and Entrepreneur were published by Prentice Hall, and Merlin was published by McGraw-Hill, Irwin. As these games transitioned to the Web, the relationships with the publishers ended. The games are now hosted at [www.greatsims.com](http://www.greatsims.com). The Web-based version of MICROMATIC is published in partnership with Oak Tree Simulations and Houghton Mifflin (now Cengage Learning) and is hosted at [www.Oaktreesim.com](http://www.Oaktreesim.com).

There are two versions of all four of the simulations: a team version and a solo version. The team version follows the customary design in which the students play in direct competition with the other students in a course. In the solo version, the students play against computer-managed companies. Students can play the solo game in either a practice mode or an exam mode. The practice mode allows unlimited restarts from

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**Author's Note:** I would like to acknowledge the significant contributions that Leigh Lawton (University of St. Thomas) and Paul Schumann (Minnesota State University, Mankato) made to this biography. Their recommendations greatly improved this bio and are greatly appreciated.

Quarter 1. The exam mode does not allow restarts. It can be used as an end-of-term exam to identify the students who have been riding the coattails of their teammates in the Team game.

## Writer

I have published over 40 articles, with most of my writing falling into three areas: the educational benefits of using business simulations as a core component of a course, the use of ethical dilemmas in the classroom to teach business ethics, and the relationship between study abroad and intercultural development. Also, while living in Ireland, I wrote a case study of Waterford Crystal, of Waterford, Ireland, which was published by the European Case Clearing House and was included in two U.S. case textbooks.

For over 20 years, Leigh Lawton and I have researched the relationships between business simulations and student learning outcomes. The literature in this discipline is now quite extensive, with writers such as Joe Wolfe, Tony Faria, Jim Gentry, Jerry Gosen, and John Washbush being major contributors. Leigh and I have sought to add insights to this body of knowledge by evaluating simulations as an assessment instrument; assessing a simulation's efficacy for learning at all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy; exploring the value of using simulations in a Problem-Based Learning pedagogical format; and most recently, by investigating the role goal orientation plays in students' performance and attitudes regarding business simulations. Leigh and I just completed an article for the 40th anniversary issue of *Simulation & Gaming* titled "Business Simulations and Cognitive Learning: Developments, Desires, and Future Directions." We hope that it serves to clarify the current state of knowledge of the educational impact of simulations and to serve as a springboard for further research. While we acknowledge the difficulties in determining the learning that students gain from working with business simulations, these difficulties do not diminish the need to continue this effort to demonstrate how simulations enhance learning. As the pressures of assessment increase, as the consequence of more business programs pursuing Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation, we believe the capacity that simulations offer for providing insights into student learning at the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy make them an attractive pedagogical alternative for further research.

With coauthors Paul Schumann and Tim Scott, I have published articles on incorporating ethical dilemmas into business simulations to put students into a position of having to live with the consequences of their ethical choices. Too often, research on business ethics yields superficial, socially desirable responses, because students face no real negatives when selecting the "ethically proper" option. Embedding the dilemmas into a business simulation forces the students to confront the implications of

their choices in a more realistic setting. Our most recent article was “Designing and Introducing Ethical Dilemmas into Computer-Based Simulations,” *Journal of Management Education*, February 2006, Volume 30, No. 1, pp. 195-219. It discusses issues to consider when developing ethical dilemmas and presents two dilemmas as examples: whether submit a “padded” insurance claim following storm damage and responding to an Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspector’s offer to overlook a safety violation that would be expensive to fix.

My strong commitment to study abroad programs has led me to partner with Leigh and two other colleagues (Rich Rexeisen and Ann Hubbard) to research whether these programs achieve their desired goal of improving the students’ intercultural awareness and sensitivity. We have been gratified to find support for the positive impact of study abroad programs on its participants. We recently published an article titled “Study Abroad and Intercultural Development: A Longitudinal Study” *Frontiers: the Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad* (in press). We found evidence that study abroad programs have a positive impact on the cross-cultural development of students, but that some of the gains found immediately after completion of a study abroad experience diminish after the students return to the United States. I am planning an expanded study next year to advance this research stream.

## **Administrator**

In July 2009, I will step down as department chair, ending my 14-year journey as an administrator. It has been an eventful experience. In August 2001, our undergraduate and graduate business programs were merged into the College of Business, which was later to become the Opus College of Business. Prior to the merger, the two business programs were autonomous units reporting to different deans. The merger prepared us for our pursuit of AACSB accreditation and resulted in my department changing from 10 to 29 full-time faculty. The disciplines that suddenly fell into my domain included strategy, operations management, organizational behavior, human resources, business ethics, business statistics, and health care. Friends kidded me that I was in charge of a mini college of business. While managing change always brings challenges, ours were magnified, since we were “dean-less” for the first 2 years following the merger. Our new dean arrived in September 2003 and, after settling in, led a reorganization in 2005 that resulted in the Management Department responsibilities returning to the disciplines of management, strategy, human resources, and organizational behavior. It also signaled a return to sanity for me, although the ramp-up for AACSB accreditation has added its share of craziness. I am looking forward to having more time to focus on my research agenda and to travel once my department chair responsibilities end.

## The Fun Stuff

My avocations include running, skydiving, sailing, and international travel. I recently completed my 10th marathon and last year passed the 2,000 jump mark in skydiving. I think my marathon days are behind me, but I have no plans to stop skydiving. My sailing got pushed aside by marathon training, so I plan to see many more boat launchings next summer.

During Fall Semester 1995, I served as the first director of St. Thomas' Business Semester in London Program. The program involves leading groups of students in their studies, field trips to U.K. businesses, and community service activities while living in London. Every summer since 1997, I have led month-long study abroad programs to England and Ireland that focus on strategic planning.

Apart from leading study abroad programs, I have traveled extensively in Western and Central Europe (pre- and post-1989, when "the Wall" came down), as well as in North Africa, the Middle East, Australia (many times), and southeast Asia (China, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Philippines, Malaysia, and Japan). I have yet to visit South America, a major failing; I need to get that on my travel schedule. The University of St. Thomas does not hold classes in January, so I am free to indulge in my wanderlust. I have a personal goal of spending no more Januarys in Minnesota and have been successful at that endeavor for the past 17 years. Wish me continued success.

## Education

I received my Bachelor of Science in business, MBA, and PhD in management from the University of Minnesota. I have been active in several professional associations, including the Association for Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, where I have served on the board of directors.

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