Hello,

This Friday is set aside for you to take the Customized Online Objective Assessment. This assessment counts for 5% of your final grade. As stated in the syllabus, it is designed to test your

1. Knowledge of your business in terms of marketing, distribution, manufacturing, human resource, financial, and accounting information.
2. Ability to use the tools of management to understand your current position in the market.
3. Ability to develop an integrative perspective of your business.

Here are the mechanics of how the assessment will work:

* + There will be about 100 questions. *[depends on simulation level – see Preview of Assessment questions]*
  + It will take 40 to 50 minutes to complete the assessment. *[depends on simulation level, could take a little longer for most advanced simulation levels]*
  + You need to bring a computer to take the assessment.
  + You will need to calculate a few numbers. You may wish to bring a calculator or use the one that is in your computer.
  + The assessment will be delivered online via the Marketplace student login.
  + It is not permissible to be looking at the team’s information or decisions while the assessment is underway. You will be locked out of the Marketplace information and decisions until you have completed the assessment. It will be considered cheating to review the data during the time of the test.
  + If for any reason, you get bumped out of the assessment, just begin again. The software will take you to the point at which you stopped. You may have to re-answer a few questions in a section, but you will not have to redo any sections that you had previously completed.
  + Results will be made available after the decisions for the current quarter are processed. In terms of specifics, you will be tested on your:
  + Knowledge of your firm’s operations, market, and competition
  + Integration skills – knowledge of all functions
  + Ability to use of the tools of management to draw important conclusions
  + Awareness of your firm’s strengths and weaknesses
  + Ability to anticipate competitor moves and one’s own position in the future
  + Agreement on firm’s strategy

Most of the questions will deal with the major conclusions that you can draw from analyzing the market, distribution, manufacturing, HR, accounting, and financial data and applying the tools of management. Several questions will ask for specific information on your current business.

Here is a list of the tools of management that you should be using on a normal basis in running your company. These same tools will help you to prepare for the assessment.

* + Market feedback
  + Competitor analysis
  + Employee productivity data
  + Manufacturing reports
  + Accounting reports (financial statements)
  + Industry financial benchmarks (industry financial ratios)
  + Profitability analyses
* Brand
* Channel
* Region
  + Strategic management charts
  + Balanced Scorecard, especially the Drill Down capability

The Strategic Graphs section can be found in the simulation under Performance Management or under Strategic Planning. It contains many charts that you will find helpful for Friday’s assessment.

Good luck!

Here is some background on the assessment if you are interested.

**Situational Awareness**

This assessment is designed to test your situational awareness. The concept originated in the aviation industry and has been used in the military with great success. With this assessment, it has been expanded to business. Endsley’s (1987; 1988) work in flight training defines situational awareness as the perception of the elements in the environment within a volume of time and space, the comprehension of their meaning, and the projection of their status in the near future.

To help you think about this concept, imagine that you are training to be a jet pilot. An important part of your training is to enter a flight simulator in order to “fly” a plane under all kinds of conditions, including bad weather, crowded airspace, and busy airports. When you are in the cockpit, you are faced with dozens of dials and indicators telling you about approaching weather, ground and air speed, proximity of other planes, etc. As your training progresses, you can expect the unexpected. You will have to deal with anything that is thrown at you. For example, your engine(s) might stop working and you might need to land your plane on an expressway, a farmer’s field or in a river.

From time to time, your trainers will stop the simulator and have you take an assessment of your situational awareness. Given all of the information available to you and the normal demands of taking off, flying, and landing a plane, what do you know about your current situation? What can you accurately project about your future situation? Good situational awareness is important to safely flying a plane.

As you might imagine, there are space shuttle simulators and combat simulators. All of them use assessments of situational awareness to evaluate the trainee’s ability to absorb and successfully use information about their environment. We are doing the same thing with this marketplace assessment. Building off of Endsley’s (1988) work, situational awareness in business is defined as the management team’s ability to perceive, comprehend, and predict elements in the marketplace.

Whether one is flying a plane, a space shuttle, going into battle, or managing a firm, the more that you are aware of your situation, the more likely you will have a successful outcome. What is your situational awareness in the Marketplace? This assessment will help to answer that question.