



"THE DOCTOR IS IN ..."

In recent years, soon-to-be graduates of the Communication Systems Program have been able to put two years of lessons into practice. Through a life-like simulation model called "StratSim," separate teams are assigned fictitious companies to manage. Integrating nearly two years of material from the program, students must set strategy and execute decisions surrounding finance, technology, and human resources. This involves analyzing the marketplace, evaluating each company's competitive landscape, and conducting thorough SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analyses.

Under the direction of Professor Jeff Lefebvre, groups within this Business Laboratory course compete with each other and are evaluated on the effectiveness of their business decisions. In just 5 short weeks, they must demonstrate that the plans they set and the decisions they make lend to thriving, sustainable companies.

"I teach in two professional programs at Northwestern: the MEM [Master's of Engineering Management] and Communication Systems," says Jeff. "I really enjoy the Comm Systems groups. They have a passion for learning the material and are eager to put it into action," he adds.

Jeff is uniquely qualified to teach the course in the program. He makes a living assisting clients in formulating and implementing actionable visions and strategies to capitalize on changing environments. Jeff founded PriSim Business War Games as a management education and consulting firm that is dedicated to empowering organizations through the evolution and advancement of their one sustainable competitive advantage: the knowledge capital of their employees.

PriSim conducts management-level courses for corporations either at their location or offsite. These 2-, 3-, or 4-day intense seminars cater to senior managers looking to hone their strategic planning, team building, and group dynamics skills. "PriSim works with many international companies, typically with a thousand or more people," explains Jeff. "The companies who call PriSim are those with management committed enough to make the investment in training their people."

Programs that PriSim delivers to their clients vary depending on need. PriSim recently customized training for Harley-Davidson. "We worked with 30 dealerships, not just 'talk and chalk' but hands-on training for how to run a dealership," explains Jeff.

Jeff's background is diverse, having spent a great deal of time in both academia and industry. He holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan, and a Master's and Ph.D., from Northwestern. Early in his career, he worked for Andersen Consulting for about eight years. "While consulting, I developed a passion for teaching," explains Jeff. "I enjoyed working with clients, coaching them on things like best practices," he adds.

Jeff makes his home in Grayslake with wife, Julie and their three children: James (7), Katie (4), and Megan (2).

The 524 Business Laboratory class, taught in the winter quarter, second year, continues to be a favorite of students. The program wishes Jeff continued success.

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