



CASE study



Team-Based Business Training Over Zoom

Drexel University

An Interview with Damian Salas
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"Far beyond my expectations," is how Damian Salas summarizes the results of his experience with using a GoVenture business simulation.

Salas delivered a course called *Early-Stage Venture Funding* at Drexel University for the first time.

While designing the course curriculum, Salas wanted to implement an experiential-learning activity to give students a more realistic sense of the mindset of an entrepreneur. This included the logistics of starting and growing a business with minimal financing (bootstrapped), and how the pressures of doing so could affect an entrepreneur's mental health.

In addition, a key component of Drexel University's *Charles D. Close School of Entrepreneurship* is emphasizing and reinforcing mindfulness and well-being. Salas reviewed a variety of education research and concluded that gamification would be the ideal method for accomplishing this goal.

A Google search helped Salas discover **GoVenture Entrepreneur** — a business simulation game that provides a highly-realistic small business startup and operations experience.

Salas only had two weeks to integrate the GoVenture program into the new curriculum, but felt confident he could make it work. He accomplished his goal on time, including having to navigate a last-minute change of the in-class course being switched to



online for the first few weeks, then to hybrid for the remainder of the semester. These changes were necessary to address the ongoing COVID pandemic.

“The transition from having all students online to a hybrid model with GoVenture was seamless,” said Salas.

Salas designed the student experience with the business simulation to be team-based from the beginning.

Teams of 4 or 5 students each operated one business together for 30 minutes. Teammates in class huddled together and used Zoom to connect live with teammates outside of class. Teammates navigated the GoVenture simulation together while sharing reports and advice.

Each student chose a specific role in the business: Shift Manager, Barista, Decision Maker, Bookkeeper, and Presenter.

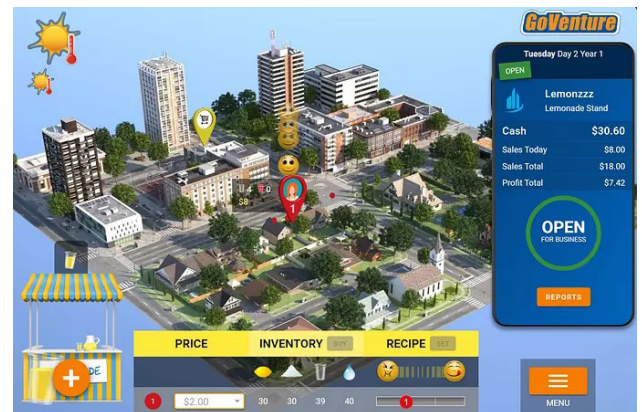
Salas provided slide decks and spreadsheet templates for teams to record their results.

At the beginning of each class session, Salas revealed a specific business objective for teams to achieve. Students then played GoVenture for 30 minutes, and then had 15 minutes to capture financial information in a spreadsheet and to organize their strategies in a slide deck.

The top performing team at the end of the session presented their strategy to the class.

Salas repeated this experience for several classes using the **Lemonade Stand** business, and then levelled up students to the **Kiosk** business for the last few classes of the 10-week course.

For the final weeks of the course, Salas was planning to have students prepare a final report, but the high level of engagement with GoVenture had him pivot to host an open competition with the top team earning a trophy. He used the GoVenture leaderboard feature to allow students to compare their results in real time.



Salas described, “The competition trophy further ramped up student engagement to the point where teams started to become more secretive about their plans and began to engage in friendly banter.”

Students were also given the option to earn extra credit by playing GoVenture on their own. Those that took advantage of this option stood out in the final competition.

“I was thrilled with how the student conversations and reports revealed deep thinking and evidence-based decision making. It’s exactly what we wanted to achieve and more.”



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