

Mini Simulation / Role-Play Exercises

(For MBA, executive education, and advanced undergraduate courses)

Crisis Simulation: Supply-Chain Labour Scandal in Southeast Asia

(Chapters 1, 3, 6, 9: human rights, supply chains, regulation)

Setup

A multinational company discovers that a Tier-2 supplier in Southeast Asia has been linked to labour rights violations. Media inquiries are escalating. Investors and NGOs are asking for immediate responses.

The company must decide its response within 48 hours.

Roles

- Chief Operating Officer
- Head of Procurement
- General Counsel
- Head of Communications
- External NGO Representative / Investor Observer

Script Cues

- “Do we suspend the supplier immediately?”
- “What is legally required vs reputationally expected?”
- “How transparent should we be before facts are confirmed?”

Tension Points

- Speed vs accuracy
- Zero-tolerance policies vs local realities
- Legal risk vs trust preservation

Debrief Questions

- Which decisions were reversible—and which were not?
- How did stakeholder expectations differ?
- What would have reduced the likelihood of this crisis?

ROLE CARD: Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Your position

You oversee the supply chain and operational continuity.

Your objectives

- Maintain production
- Limit disruption
- Address risk pragmatically

Key concerns

- Immediate supplier suspension
- Knock-on impacts

ROLE CARD: General Counsel

Your position

You manage legal and regulatory exposure.

Your objectives

- Limit liability
- Ensure accurate statements
- Protect privilege

Key concerns

- Premature admissions
- Inconsistent messaging

ROLE CARD: Head of Communications

Your position

You manage external narrative and media response.

Your objectives

- Maintain trust
- Show responsiveness
- Avoid reputational escalation

Key concerns

- Silence being interpreted as indifference
- Over-disclosure without facts

ROLE CARD: NGO / Investor Observer

Your position

You monitor the company's response and credibility.

Your objectives

- Ensure accountability
- Push for systemic change

Key concerns

- Cosmetic responses
- Lack of remediation