System Dynamics Society

BUSINESS Special Interest Group:
Status and Current Activities

Frederick Kautz, Raafat Zaini, Seth Cordes, Matthew Bigman

Introduction

The inaugural meeting of Business SIG was held on July 24 during the 31st International System Dynamics Conference in Cambridge, MA. The agenda for this well-attended meeting addressed several proposed initiatives and areas for follow-up. We provide below a brief listing of current initiatives and related activities being carried out in collaboration with the Society and other organizations including iseeSystems and Leverage Networks.

Case Studies

One of the goals of the Business SIG is to support a significant expansion of the Case Repository and its accessibility through the Society web site (see http://cases.systemdynamics.org/). There are several efforts underway to advance this goal, including the following:

- Review the submission form structure, web interface, and other content and administrative aspects.

- Integrate Kim Warren's efforts from the UK Society site in support of case submission.

- Carefully review the submission process from the contributor's perspective to understand barriers to adoption and other contributing factors to low response.

- Support archiving and linking of models in the proposed System Dynamics Model/File Exchange (see discussion below).

- Develop synergy with the proposed Corporate/Organizational membership category.

- Fix links and correct contact information for the current group of submissions.

- Consider the addition of tags to submissions to identify region of origin so that all chapters can use the single common repository yet still identify work done locally.

- Allow authors to link cases to supporting models stored in the proposed System Dynamics File Exchange.

- Allow moderated comments on cases.

- Reach out to our network of practitioners to solicit additional content.
- Enlist corporate and organization partners to assist in the soliciting of contributions from a wider audience of practitioners, including those in their own companies/organizations.

Leadership from the Society for this area is provided by Etiënne Rouwette, VP Membership, and KimWarren, past president of the Society, with support from the Business SIG.

Success Stories

A related activity of the SIG will be the identification and promotion of success stories for applications of System Dynamics to business problems. The current proposal and preliminary efforts are aimed at producing a recurring series of articles featuring problems where System Dynamics has been used with significant demonstrated effect. These articles will be focused on the audience outside the System Dynamics community, written for problem owners and potential clients to reinforce the utility of the approach and serve as marketing material for practitioners to distribute to their clients, prospects and other interested parties.

This collection of success stories will be a consistent, professional, and easy-to-digest resource geared towards those who are performing due-diligence and are unfamiliar with System Dynamics. Content will be carefully produced by Business SIG authors and others among the Society membership in coordination with the original practitioner. The format will be standardized. Graphics will be produced professionally and used judiciously. Key numerical results will be summarized and presented.

Articles will be published on a rolling basis to keep the lead page content fresh and diversified. Prior articles will remain easily accessible and perma-linked. Leads for new articles will come from the Cases Repository, past award winning and nominated work, and networking efforts among Business SIG editorial staff.

We expect that a separate showcase of success stories will produce value at multiple levels, as in:

- Prospective clients, colleagues in allied fields, students, corporate strategists, risk managers, marketing professionals, and others will learn how System Dynamics is being actively used in corporations, policy making organizations, and elsewhere.
- Practitioners will be able to share articles that succinctly demonstrate the value of the approach.
- Practitioners will receive leads and expand their networking opportunities.
- Volunteer authors and editors, including students, will grow their professional networks and develop opportunities to demonstrate capabilities to the practitioners as each case is

made ready for publication

- Authors, editors, and translators will get byline attribution.

The Business SIG will use its web presence and collaborate with the Society and selected third parties such as Leverage Networks (led by Kris Wile and Rebecca Niles) to increase awareness of these success stories.

System Dynamics Model/File Exchange (SDX)

This is an initiative to implement a file sharing platform similar to the MATLAB File Exchange allowing practitioners to contribute models, archetypes, molecules, function libraries, and other modeling resources for use by other practitioners. Among the features being considered for functionality and site architecture are the following:

- Registered visitors would be able to download and comment on (or rate) content.

- Popular and highly rated materials would be promoted on the lead page of the exchange.

- XMILE enabled libraries/models would be included and featured in search results with a high-visibility badge. XMILE content on the exchange could leverage the library already begun by iseeSystems (www.iseeSystems.com/XMILE).

- Content would be licensed under established creative commons type guidelines.

- Practitioners would be able to provide links to written cases where the model was successfully used.

- Existing libraries of models could be mirrored or linked initially.

- A supporting message board/forum could be included and linked to related forum and SIG group sites, e.g. SDS Forum, LinkedIn, etc.

- User group areas on the exchange (e.g., rooms for users of iThink/STELLA, Vensim, Powersim, Sysdea, AnyLogic, etc.).

The System Dynamics File Exchange (SDX) could be hosted on the Society web site or through a third party. The architecture and user requirements are in early stages of discussion.

It is hoped that a well-executed and well-maintained platform of this type would
- promote development of high-quality, innovative resources for System Dynamics modelling;
- allow practitioners to showcase their work;
- create and sustain collaborative communications among practitioners;

- improve the collective knowledge base by lowering the barriers to contribution and consumption;
- reinforce and extend prior learning;
- reduce time to deliver meaningful results;
- facilitate collaboration with practitioners in allied fields.

Corporate/Organization Membership

This recently proposed membership category, which was discussed briefly in the Business SIG 2013 annual report, would be distinct from the corporate sponsor role, but it is expected that corporate sponsors would also be corporate members. Among the various features being considered for this membership category are some form of tiered discount structure to incentivize new member enrollments and renewals among employees, expanded networking opportunities for corporate members, professional growth resources facilitated through the Society, policy advisory/commentary and publication opportunities, as well as other Society benefits. A preliminary investigation of corporate membership benefits and practices in other professional societies has been completed, and a draft proposal for this new member category has been circulated for review and comment.

Recent research on corporate/organization member categories in other professional societies has revealed numerous examples, including those of SPIE (http://spie.org/x1724.xml), the international society for optics and photonics, AIAA (http://www.aiaa.org/Secondary.aspx?id=228), the American Institute of Aeronautics & Astronautics, SIAM (http://www.siam.org/membership/corporate.php), the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics, and ACM (http://www.acm.org/membership/panel?pageIndex=4), the Association for Computing Machinery. Documentation on these and several other examples has been forwarded to the Society.

The review of this initiative for the Society's Policy Council is being led by Etiënne Rouwette, VP Membership, and Jürgen Strohhecker, the president-elect of the Society (2015).

"CRM" Initiative to Facilitate SIG/Chapter/Society Communication and Collaborations

This initiative was surfaced at the 31st ISDC in Cambridge last July and is discussed briefly in the Business SIG 2013 annual report (http://sigs.systemdynamics.org/reports/business/2013.pdf).

The objective of this initiative is to develop a resource along the lines of commercial Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platforms to facilitate communication and collaborations across the SIGs, Chapters, Society leadership, and global membership of the Society. This

initiative is being pursued as a collaboration between Leverage Networks (led by Kris Wile and Rebecca Niles), iseeSystems (led by Karim Chichakly and Bob Eberlein), and the Business SIG, which will serve as a pilot group for the development and testing.

Business SIG on the Web

The SIG has established a web page within the site for the System Dynamics Society at http://sigs.systemdynamics.org/business/ as well as a page on the LinkedIn networking site at http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Business-SIG-System-Dynamics-Society-5083395?trk=myg_ugrp_ovr. Updates on SIG activities and related developments will be posted periodically to both web sites.

Email for the SIG can be directed to business@sigs.systemdynamics.org and discussion threads can be posted to the SIG's page on LinkedIn.

Membership Status

As of March 24, 2014 there were 300 member of the Business SIG, of which 184 are regular members of the System Dynamics Society.

How to Join the Business SIG

The Business SIG of the System Dynamics Society is open to all, not just Society members, in order to encourage the widest possible participation and collaboration among those with an interest in business applications of System Dynamics.

For Society members not already registered with the Business SIG, go to http://www.systemdynamics.org/web.portal then *Update Contact Information,* check the *Business SIG* box*,* and *save changes*.

If you are not already registered (you do NOT have to be a Society Member), register first at the same page http://www.systemdynamics.org/web.portal then *Add Contact Information,* check the *Business SIG box,* and *save changes*.

Business SIG Purpose

The purpose of the Business Special Interest Group (SIG) of the System Dynamics Society is to promote and support the wider adoption of System Dynamics methodology and best practices in businesses and provide communication channels for recognizing the achievements of System Dynamics practitioners across all business sectors.

Supporting Goals

The Business SIG has several goals that support its overall purpose and mission statement. These include:

People and Businesses

1. Facilitate networking of System Dynamics practitioners in businesses. This effort will leverage the resources of the System Dynamics Society but also those of other professional societies, software vendors, meeting/conference sponsors and organizers, and business leaders.

2. Raise the awareness of System Dynamics, its methodology and achievements, and areas of application among prospective practitioners, business unit leaders, and senior executives across all business sectors.

3. Increase membership in the System Dynamics Society through the efforts noted in items 1 and 2 above. Further, consider collaborating with the Society to create a business member (organization) category with its own dues structure but with the added feature of discounts to dues and other services for employees, executives and partners/directors of the firm who join the Society under the business member affiliation.

4. Increase participation by businesses in events where System Dynamics applications are featured (e.g., specialty conferences, round tables, webinars, sessions at meetings of the Society as well as other professional societies).

Methodology, Resources, and Practices

5. Facilitate improved awareness and access to System Dynamics modelling resources for a broader base of business practitioners.

6. Facilitate greater awareness of best practices in System Dynamics through wider practitioner networking within businesses and collaboration with the Society on contributors and documentation of best practices for the System Dynamics field.

Applications and Achievements

7. Aid in the promotion of and identification of candidates for the Society awards, including the Application Award, that recognize business applications of System Dynamics. Help publicize winners and their achievements and aid in the development of new awards that will improve broadly the recognition of good work done in business using System Dynamics.

8. Support the expansion of the Case Repository and its accessibility through the Society web site. Help improve the review process and support its implementation for both cases and models that are included in the Repository.

Professional Development and Organization

9. Provide a channel for access to contacts and resources that will assist business practitioners in the improvement of their System Dynamics modelling skills and understanding of best practices.

10. Facilitate increased awareness of educational resources and short-term training opportunities available to business practitioners.

11. Facilitate the expansion of web-enabled/web-based resources for supporting business practitioners of System Dynamics (e.g., specialty webinars, speakers bureau, persistent web resources, etc). Coordinate these efforts with the Society's VP Electronic Presence and VP Professional Practice.

12. Collaborate and coordinate with the leaders of other Society SIGs on networking, activities, events, communications, etc where there are obvious overlaps in SIG coverage.

Membership

Membership in the Business SIG is open to all members of the System Dynamics Society as well as non-members who are System Dynamics practitioners and SIG supporters in the business, academic, and government sectors. System Dynamics Society members and other individuals wishing to join the Business SIG may do so by contacting its current representatives, whose contact information will be maintained on the web site of the System Dynamics Society (www.systemdynamics.org) as well as the dedicated web page for the Business SIG at http://sigs.systemdynamics.org/business/. Business SIG members who are also System Dynamics Society members will be identifiable/searchable in the Society's membership directory.

Meetings and Selection of Representatives

Consistent with the guidelines for all Special Interest Groups of the System Dynamics Society, the Business SIG will meet at least once in a calendar year at the annual meeting of the System Dynamics Society. At this meeting, or at another date approved in coordination with the Society, two leaders will be selected. The process by which this selection is made will be posted to the web site of the Business SIG and the selections will be confirmed by a simple majority vote of the SIG members present at the meeting, which may be a physical or electronic forum as

established jointly with the System Dynamics Society and communicated to the SIG members through its web site or other approved Society channels.

Dues

The Business SIG will not (and can not) charge any dues. The work of the SIG will be carried out through the voluntary efforts of its members and supporters, whether individual, corporate, or other organization. The SIG reserves the right to engage in activities that require monetary support or payment in kind, but any such payment must be made to a designated individual or other organization and not the SIG as it has no standing to conduct business directly or on behalf of the Society. Representatives of the SIG will determine on a case-by-case basis the payment amount and eligibility conditions for participation for any such activities or events.

Communications

The activities and current list of Business SIG members will be reported annually to the System Dynamics Society. To maintain its recognition by the Society as an established SIG, a minimum of six System Dynamics Society members must be registered as SIG members on an ongoing basis.

The Business SIG will communicate with the System Dynamics Society Policy Council through written reports submitted to the VP Membership.

Reporting of Business SIG activities and events as well as other matters of interest to the SIG members will be provided through the web site for the SIG. The Society will provide the space for this site and provide technical support on an as-needed basis, but the maintenance of its content will be the responsibility of the SIG members.

Founding Sponsors

The names of those System Dynamics Society members from the business community who have indicated their support as founding members of the Business SIG are as follows[1]:

Gary Baxter	Len Malczynski
Henry Carrier	Guido Wolf Reichert
Robert Eberlein	Esteban Ribero
Pascal Gambardella	Erin Rae Hoffer

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[1] Support for the establishment of the Business SIG has been offered by each of these Society members by email communication or through their responses posted on the LinkedIn site for WPI System Dynamics.

John Kapson	James Thompson
Fred Kautz	Kim Warren

2013-2014 Leadership

Fred Kautz
Raafat Zaini

Organizing/Leadership team

Fred Kautz
Raafat Zaini
Kim Warren
Bob Eberlein

Contacts

For additional information please contact:

Fred Kautz (fkautz@brg-expert.com)
Raafat Zaini (raafatzaini@gmail.com)