Assessing SIMALTO for Product and Pricing Strategy

Tuna Fish Optimization Exercise

SIMALTO Illustration

Tuna Fish Optimization Exercise

You have 10 points. Choose one option per row.

Feature	Level_1	Level_2	Level_3
Can Size	3 oz (1 pt)	5 oz (2 pt)	7 oz (4 pt)
Packing Medium	Water (1 pt)	Olive oil (3 pt)	Extra virgin olive (5 pt)
Freshness Claim	Wild caught (1 pt)	Line caught (2 pt)	Caught within 24 hrs (4 pt)
Fish Origin	Not listed (0 pt)	Product of USA (2 pt)	Ocean + boat ID (4 pt)
Omega-3 Content	Not listed (0 pt)	Contains Omega-3s (2 pt)	Verified high (3 pt)
Sustainability Label	None (0 pt)	Dolphin safe (1 pt)	Certified sustainable (3 pt)

Programming can assure more than 10 points are not allocated

What's Really Going On Here?

Conceptual Critiques

- **No model. No price. No behavior.**
  Despite the grid's structure, this task doesn't reflect how decisions are actually made.
- **Price is sleight of hand.**
  In the real world, price is a function of value and market. Here, it's a disguised points system.
- **Performative logic.**
  It feels rigorous. But the task's structure only allows a story to be told—not discovered.

Mechanical Flaws

- **Points are arbitrary.**
  Change the budget from 10 to 15, and it's a different task entirely.
- **Option realism breaks down.**
  Product of USA? Wild caught? Boat traceable? These don't always co-occur. But Simalto treats them like buffet options.
- **No aggregation logic.**
  If genetic algorithms are used, what are they maximizing? Preference is manufactured, not modeled.

Why This Still Persists

- **Visual theatre.**
  Clients see a grid and constraints and assume strategy. They rarely question if it represents real behavior.
- **Compliance culture.**
  Insight teams hand Simalto to vendors like a recipe: safe, check-the-box, blame-free.

Programming note: this exercise could easily allow more than 10 points—changing the constraint will surely change the outcome. That's part of the illusion.

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