



CASE COMPS 101

• GLOBAL CASE COMPETITION CLUB •

\\\\\\\\\\

2016-2017

///////

TEAM FORMATION

Team composition is extremely important. For a team to be successful, there should be:

A balance of skills. Ideally, someone in the group should be proficient in presentation development (PowerPoint), basic financial analysis, and business strategy.

Clear communication. Make sure group members are comfortable working together and are able to work together professionally. Try to avoid creating a group where personal issues could get in the way of work.

A balance of personalities. Having five super strong leaders isn't always the best option.

Actively create strong group dynamics. Before the case even comes out, you should establish:

How work will be divided. Who will take the lead on financials, presentation, and any other parts of the project? When you see the case, will you read it together, or separately? How will you divide responsibility when you know more?

Group roles. How will big strategic decisions be made? Do you want a formal leader, or not? Who will bring snacks? What will you do about a scheduling conflict or last minute change? Establish clear expectations and responsibilities.

When work will be done.

When/where will you meet to work? Are there schedule conflicts that need to be known ahead of time?

Final tips & tricks:

Don't be afraid to mix up who you work with! You can learn a lot from new people.

Make sure to have fun with your group. Plan time for breaks, eat together, start a random tradition, make jokes, play music, dance, etc.

Do anything to enjoy your time together. If you take it too seriously, it will be miserable.

STRATEGY/ CASE ANALYSIS

Overall strategy is one of the more difficult parts of case competitions. In the end, your goal is to find a solution to whatever problem you are tasked with. Before the case comes out, you should discuss how you will approach it as a group. Methods include:

- Reading the case together, and noting important points as you go.
- Reading the case separately, and noting important points individually, then sharing your thoughts and creating a plan.
- Reading the case separately, creating basic plans separately, then coming together to share ideas about strategies, taking the

best ideas from each person.

When beginning the case, make sure to:

- Take time to read everything. Get all the information out in the beginning, and write down all important points for future use.
- Wait to decide on a strategy until many options have been discussed.
- Once a decision has been made to go a certain direction, try to stick with it, unless information comes out that your recommendations are completely wrong. Then you should change your direction.

The basic process of analysis should be as follows:

- Fully read the charge of the case. Make sure you understand what you have to do.
- Make a list of what you need to accomplish at the end.
- Fully read the case, and write down all important information.
- Based on the information, create several potential recommendations/solutions.
- Start to conduct outside research and analysis. Throw out recommendations/solutions as they are shown to be incorrect.
- After sufficient research, decide on a final recommendation.
- Create extensive support for your recommendation, including financial projections, any applicable industry analysis/quotes, etc.

While you can make up the process of analysis as you go, there are many frameworks you can use.

These include:

- **SWOT Analysis.** This breaks

down the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to an organization, and is a basic method to conduct general analysis of an organization or business. Best for general business strategy problems. **More info:** https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_05.htm

- **The 5 C's.** Another basic situational analysis, which analyses the Company, Costs, Competition, Consumers/Clients, and the Channels of Distribution. **More info:** <http://www.mbaskool.com/business-concepts/marketing-and-strategy-terms/11179-5-cs-of-marketing.html>
- **The 4 P's.** A classic marketing analysis, which looks at the Product (what is being sold), Price (for how much), Promotion (how is it being advertised) and Place (where is it sold). **More info:** <https://www.cleverism.com/understanding-marketing-mix-concept-4ps/>
- **BCG Matrix.** This looks at the growth potential and market

- share of a business, or of product lines, and is intended for questions about market expansion or growth. **More info:** http://www.valuebasedmanagement.net/methods_bcgmatrix.html
- **Profitability Framework.** This essentially splits profits into revenues and expenses, and follows the profit tree to find areas where change is needed. **More info:** http://www.spencertom.com/2014/04/17/profitability-framework/#.V_AqSOgrJEY
- No matter what framework you use, you must adapt it to the case. Feel free to abandon the framework if you find a better method of analysis.
- If you use a framework, have a slide in the appendix that covers what you did.
- If there is key information you used to make decisions, create an appendix slide for it, even if it's just a quote.
- Make sure everyone is comfortable with the final recommendation. Team buy-in is very important for a great project. Build consensus before moving forward.

Final tips & tricks:

- Have a process that can be explained clearly to judges. Expect to be asked if you considered alternative recommendations/solutions, and be ready to back up your choice. Decision matrixes/stoplight charts are good for this.

FINANCIALS

The purpose of financials are to provide a foundation for everything you say and a projection for the effect of your recommendation on the company's bottom line. As such, financials should be:

- Only as complex as necessary. Overly complicated financials are hard to explain and unnecessary. You must be able to understand and explain all aspects of your financials.
- Relevant to your recommendation. Each part of your recommendation should have costs/revenues associated with it.
- Wide first, deep second. Make sure you have evidence for each claim you make before you take time to fully develop one aspect of your recommendation.

Some general reminders for financials:

- Basic projections are better than none. If you don't have a lot of time, at least write down how much something will cost/how much revenue you think it will generate.
- Have a method to your financial analysis (that you can explain). Basic finances with a clear methodology are better than complicated finances without one.
- Break down each aspect of a potential investment/decision. Instead of estimating how much a total factory will cost, break it down into parts. This will make it much easier to estimate costs, as each part is less complicated than the whole, and will make your total financial analysis that much better.

- The basis of all higher level financial models is the idea of the time value of money, which essentially says that a dollar today is more valuable than a dollar in the future. NPV is a great introductory tool to use, as it measures the value of an investment based on the revenues it will generate, and the initial cost. There are many easy-to-use calculators online.

Final tips & tricks:

- Take advantage of online resources, and find tools.
- Your end goal is to be able to tell the judges what your recommendation will mean for the company's bottom line. Focus on this goal: don't get bogged down in the details.
- Don't worry if everything isn't there the first time. You will learn and develop your skills.

PRESENTATION

The goal of your presentation is to convey your recommendations to the judges as efficiently and elegantly as possible. While it's great if your presentation wows the judges, it doesn't need to. Here are some tips for an effective presentation:

- Simple is always better. Slides should have a purpose, and clearly support any information you present. Don't let your slides be a distraction.
- Use quality images. Nothing ruins a slide like a pixelated background image.
- Don't use blocks of text. Too much text means the judges have to choose between listening to you and reading. If you do HAVE to use a lot of text, use color, bold, and italicize to draw attention to what is important.
- Be careful with framework designs. If you use a framework like SWOT or the 4Ps, take time to make it simple and easy to understand.
- Decision matrices, while effective, are also difficult to pull off. Use color and design to convey information as much as possible. Stoplight charts are your best friend.
- Building your own designs are easy. Whenever possible, take the time to create your own color scheme and design. Avoid using formats. (However, the easiest way to come up with a color scheme is to draw inspiration from the company you are analyzing).
- Beware of Mac to PC formatting issues. If you think formatting could be an issue, send your presentation as a PDF, not a PowerPoint.

- Use transitions effectively or not at all. Transitions can either be effective or extremely distracting.
- If you think your transitions could be detracting from your presentation, cut them.
- Use filters and websites for help. There are so many resources online to use if you need them.
- Practice makes perfect. Don't be afraid to experiment and be creative! The only way to improve your ability to create presentations is to practice it.
- Appendix slides don't have to be pretty: just get them done. Don't forget to leave time to hyperlink!
- Use shapes to make the PowerPoint look nicer. It forces you to use space effectively and reduces the amount of text on the screen.

Final tips & tricks:

- Remove the shadow from shapes.
- Do a progress bar, people love it.
- Hyperlink each slide back to the appendix.
- Make sure your fonts and color schemes are extremely legible.