

AMNT 429

Case Analysis Guidelines and Sample Format

Several times throughout the course, students will submit a case analysis that is a **maximum** of two pages, with a reference page, (three total), double spaced, in APA format, using Times New Roman, 12 point font. For these activities, students read and review all module objectives and materials, consume the information, and research the internet to produce a case analysis. Each case analysis is directly related to the module learning objectives (LOs). Once all of the module material is reviewed, **find current (within the last six months), scholarly internet sources**, that directly relate to the case and module learning objectives and conduct your case analysis. In-text citations serve to substantiate and validate your statements.

If a source is not scholarly, it must be supported with other scholarly references. As an example; information may be pulled from an article in the New York Times (not a scholarly source), which will need a supported scholarly source that can be greater than six months but less than seven years, in support of the information from the New York Times; such as the textbook. Please see Table 1 below. Going beyond the text is highly encouraged and shows an understanding of research and how to find valid and reliable sources.

These activities promote scholarly research targeting topics specific to the learning objectives. They also require critical thinking throughout the entire case analysis process. Writing skills are enhanced over the conduct of the course (work is graded weekly using APA formatting and the Case Analysis Rubric) as you write two pages (with reference page) every week. The result is improved writing, and research skills, which fulfills several Ignite Student learning outcomes along the way. This process also provides a glimpse at the real world of organizational operations.

Case Analysis (*sample*) Format

I. Summary

The primary purpose of the summary is to develop the nature or the background from which the issue/problem/situation evolved. What is the environment that enabled this problem to exist? This section should be no less than one paragraph in length, and at least three to five sentences.

II. Problem

Begin this section with a clear problem statement, i.e., "The problem is...." Elaborate on what caused the problem. Nothing but the problem statement and its contributing factors should appear in this section. The problem should be specific and action oriented. The problem or issue statement reflects a situation that must be addressed. Do not confuse SYMPTOMS/RESULTS of the problem with the problem itself. This entire section should be no less than one paragraph, and at least three to five sentences minimum. However, this is the heart of the analysis. There must be a thread of consistency woven throughout the remainder of the analysis. "Do not introduce more than one problem." Your statement is the foundation of your analysis; everything that follows must be linked back to your problem statement.

III. Significance of the Problem

Identify what you consider to be the significance of the problem, not the cause of the problem. The problem is significant because, if not addressed, it might cause a decline in one segment of the industry, or result in a weak financial report/reduced revenue, or could have an impact on safety, etc. The significance of the problem may be multi-faceted, this is fine but do not lose focus on the problem that you identified in Section II. Another aspect of this section is to validate the problem and help determine what priority should be assigned to its resolution. This section should be no less than one paragraph in length and at least three to five sentences minimum. The significance of the problem is determined by what will happen if the problem is not resolved.

IV. Development of Alternative Actions (TWO)

Alternatives (two) should provide a feasible, realistic way to solve the problem. Provide rationale for each alternative and then provide two advantages and two disadvantages for each alternative. Be consistent with the problem and the related critical factors. Alternatives must be derived directly from the source of the issue/problem/situation and/or the assigned chapter(s)/learning objective(s). As you solve the problem be sure to consider the critical factors as well. Use the information you found, the source document, and/or the assigned chapter(s) from the textbook, to resolve the situation. "You must have two alternatives, each must have rationale, each must have two advantages and two disadvantages." This section should be no less than two paragraphs in length. "It is imperative that you **do not** use any part of your recommendation (next section) in either alternative action." One approach you may consider for developing your alternative actions is the matrix format (see Table 2).

V. Recommendation

Now, based on what you read in the source document, the assigned textbook chapter(s), and/or your professional experiences, "provide a recommendation, just one, completely outside of what is identified in the source document and/or the chapter(s) readings, that will solve the problem." You may explain why your recommendation is superior and why the advantage outweighs the disadvantage. You may discuss how the disadvantage might be overcome or minimized. You may discuss what is involved in implementing this recommendation. How long will it take? How much will it cost? What results do you anticipate? **BE CREATIVE!** You may have to make assumptions in formulating your recommendation. Assumptions are acceptable to the extent that they are clearly articulated. Use the information you have and work with it. Rarely do decision makers have all the information they would like to have. This is an opportunity to take a chance, to risk putting forth an idea or thought of your own device; use your imagination. "Be sure to provide rationale, one advantage, and one disadvantage for it." Do not hesitate to go out on a limb. Innovation is highly desirable. The recommendation should be at least one paragraph in length. Put your analysis into a concept of what should be done to address the issue/problem/situation. It doesn't have to be pretty but it should work, theoretically.

Table 1 - Alternative Actions Section: Matrix format option

This table may assist you in expressing alternative actions in your case analysis. This format is an option you can use over a standard expression in paragraph form.

Alternative Actions	Rationale	Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Meet the existing requirements as specified in Jacobs & Chase (2011).	The existing requirements meet or exceed Federal safety standards.	a. Reduce costs. b. No layoffs.	a. Additional oversight. b. More government waste.
2. Change existing requirement.	Safety can always be improved upon.	a. Reflects a positive approach to safety. b. Projects a "Safety first" philosophy.	a. Takes a lot of time to make the change. b. Results are not readily available.

Table 2 - Ranges of Sources:

You need a range of sources. The table below gives an account of typical sources you can find using an online library database search, and then assesses the accuracy of that source with an academic strength indication. This table also provides sources of literature and their use/risks:

Literature Accuracy			
Time	Material	Accuracy	Academic
1 day	Internet/news/New York Times	Can be good, but also weak; do not use as the foundation of facts	Weak – except government sites
Month	Trade magazines	Tend to be advertising in nature with little in depth thought of facts	Weak but it does discuss current exciting concepts new to the subject
6 – 12 months	Conference proceedings	Generally good, not fully checked by peers in the area	The first real academic reference showing current but with a degree of confidence in results
18 – 24 months	Learned journals	Very good, checked by internationally recognized experts	Great sources of work, leading edge of accuracy
5 yrs and beyond	Books	Very good, sound theory, no new theories	Great for establishing main points

Sources Continued:

News articles that meet the 6 month requirement but are not peer reviewed are okay if;

- Back up the article with other sources that can be older (within 7 years)
- These should be scholarly and/or peer reviewed
- The textbook is considered a scholarly source

The instructor will look for evidence that you reviewed sufficient literature which led to a comprehensive analysis and applied knowledge to the chosen topic.

If you can honestly say that you have done what is expected in that requirement, then you've probably done enough. Many students ask how many references meet the minimum requirement. The answer is, as many as needed. If the work is very mathematical, then less would be expected than a management based work. Ask yourself if you have a good range of sources. If not, more work needs to be done.

Referencing can be done wrong; reference your APA for advice, Chapters 6 and 7 will help.

Defeating bias (what is bias?)

- Look at the source
- Who reviews the source prior to publication?
- Are your sources [valid](#) and reliable? Need [both](#).
 - Valid = Information that directly pertains to your line of thought. Do the results found in the source meet the requirements?
 - Reliable = The source is an acceptable source within the context of the writing. Facts you draw on must fairly represent the larger situation. Findings are repeatable!