



College of Business

Master of Strategic Leadership

INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDY GUIDELINES

MSL500 Strategic Dimensions of Business

Functions Section 1 & 2

FALL Semester- Term B, AY2020-2021



Background: What is a Case Study?

Case study is a scientific and critical exploration of a situation or a phenomenon that poses a problem or challenge for the company and requires providing suggested solutions, recommendations and pathway to the future. These are used by teachers to see how students can apply received knowledge in daily situations. It is all about preciseness, conciseness and practicality. So how it can be done.

How to Proceed or Be Ready for a Case Study?

There is certain way to proceed for a case study. Key steps to be followed are mentioned as below:

1. **Select any company as case from the real World:** Better to go for the company that you know already or can get sufficient information.
2. **Identify the problem/challenge/issue:** Let's say, sources of competitive advantage of Zara or the inability of Etihad Airways to provide a stable rise in profits. It can be a certain resolution of the problem or evolution of good practice over the period of time in the company.
3. **Think about the underlying causes of the problem or sources of competitive advantage:** Problems can vary from a poor supply chain structure to an incorrect market positioning strategy. Or reasons for best practices which lead to CA.
4. **Make an outline:** This will help identify the main points while writing the case study report.
5. **Examine cause-and-effect relations:** Try to explain why the problem occurred and which actions led to the reason for this problem or how the company has achieved competitive advantage.
6. **Formulate possible solutions to the problem or suggest the framework.** Think about how you would solve this problem and what actions you would undertake to eliminate the impact of negative circumstances or sustain the good practices.

What to Write/include in a Case Study?

The structure of a good case study just cannot be fit into a single universal pattern or copied directly from a sample case study since each company differs from others. Yet there are several important components that cannot be skipped because they establish the valuable core and supporting elements of a logical and persuasive reasoning or logic. A typical case study format (but it is not exhaustive) is like the following:



1. **Introduction** – Write an introduction where you identify the key problem/issue and describe it in a understand way. This should include what, why, where and how elements.
 2. **Background Information** – Include some relevant facts and issues of the case company and provide the details on the problem/issue. This is kind of overview of the case. *Experiential exercises can be included some where here in the background information of the case.*
 3. **Alternatives** – Describe several alternatives and explain why some were rejected or accepted. Describe existing constraints/reasons and explain why some alternatives were rejected or accepted. How they have not worked out or how they have worked out. This is kind of analysis of the case.
 4. **Solution** – Provide one realistic solution to the problem, explain the reasons behind the proposed solution, support this solution with justification, and include relevant theoretical concepts in addition to the results of your research.
 5. **Recommendations** – Identify specific strategies to accomplish the proposed solution, recommend further actions, and outline an implementation plan.
- **References** (if any)

Practical Tips:

Usually a case study opens up with a cover page with the details about the case and problem/issue as title. On the title page students can add their details (name, ID etc.) as well. Introduction can be brief and just mention the issue to be discussed. Background, Alternatives/solution and recommendations constitute the body of the report, so they take up the majority of the report. Overview provides the context of the matter of discussion, analysis highlights what needs to be changed/solved and what theoretical premises can be applied for analysis.

Try to **include more tables and figures/diagram** for the enriched information and improved quality of the report.

Overall, length of the case can be from **4000 words to 6000 words** altogether.