



CASE PREPARATION



Case Prep

- Case Preparation should be split into two parts: Short Cycle and Long Cycle
 - In the Short cycle the reader should first skim the case and write down their general ideas of what the case is about
 - In the Long Cycle you must think about and analyze the case



Case Preparation Sheet – Short Cycle

- All that needs to be added to this section is a general overview of the problem.
- Determine the players
- Determine the overall issue
- Determine whether the issue is time sensitive



Case Preparation Sheet – Long Cycle

- All that needs to be added to this section is a general overview of the problem. Of course this can be changed after further analysis
- Your first step is define the issues in the case. You can do this by identifying the basic vs. immediate issues.
 - Basic issues are long-term issues that the company will have to be grappling with for a long time. Basic issues also tend to be common e.g. deal with eroding market share
 - Immediate issues are issues that must be solved within a specific time frame. They are also usually very specific to the firm, e.g. deciding how to escort Frank out of the office after he has just been fired.



Case Preparation Sheet – Long Cycle

- The second step is to analyse the case data itself.
 - Identify the Cause and effect mentioned or implied in the case. Specifically those connected to issues identified in the first step.
 - Identify the constraints and opportunities that exist in the case. Again you are not just repeating what is in the case but providing insight.
- The third step is to use the analysis to generate alternatives to address the issues you identified.
 - Try to come up with creative ideas
 - Focus on the constraints and opportunities identified in the 2nd step. They may provide a good suggestions for solutions



Case Preparation Sheet – Long Cycle

- The fourth step is to create decision criteria for your alternatives.
 - The criteria should be connected to strategy and issues identified in the first step
- The fifth step is to assess the alternatives using the decision criteria.
 - Use assumptions that are grounded in the case data
 - Remember to think about the short term and long term effects.
 - When predicting outcomes think of providing a best and worst case scenario



Case Preparation Sheet – Long Cycle

- The sixth step is to choose an alternative.
 - This should be the easiest part of the analysis
 - All of the other steps were taken to create a “path” to this answer
 - Make sure your answer is consistent with the rest of the analysis
- The seventh step is to develop an implementation plan.
 - It should provide the details (the who what when where why and how) of the alternative
 - The specifics should be appropriate for the actions, ie. Telling me the projected 5-year sales increase by two decimal points but not informing me of the first three steps of your immediate plan is a problem



Case Preparation - Assumptions

- You will have to make assumptions throughout the case analysis
- Context assumptions do not need to be stated. For example it can be assumed that a small company will not have a lot of capital.
- You can assume that things are working as normal as long as the case does not state it. However normal does not mean fine. If the case states that a general policy is upsetting the marketing staff then it should not be assumed that everyone else is fine with it.
- Always explain your reasoning behind “if-then” assumptions. It is fine to assume a cause and effect but explain why the assumption is reasonable
- Don’t fall into the “perfect person” assumption. This is where the analyst assumes that they can acquire the perfect employees (or sometimes tool) that will fix all problems.