

YOUTH VENTURE

Case Competition Guide

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Technical Knowledge	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marketing• Finance• Business Administration• Entrepreneurship• Hospitality and Tourism	
Competition Structure	20
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structure and Timeline• Preliminary Procedures• Analyzing the Case• Developing the Solution• Managing Your Time	
Integrating Creativity	23
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quotes• Statistics• Real-World Examples• Famous Leaders• Mindsets• Advanced Analyses• Implement Business Strategies	
Presentation Tips	26
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Body Language• Maximizing Communication• Effectively Answering Judges' Questions• Memorable Introductions and Conclusions	

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever walked out of a case competition thinking, “Well, that was a disaster!” Maybe you worked hard but still felt like everyone else had some secret formula you were missing. Or maybe you’re new to case competitions, and you’re wondering where to start.

Business case competitions are an excellent way to immerse yourself into the world of business. They help to provide and train you with the necessary skills that can be applied in real life scenarios. Preparing for a case competition can be quite confusing and difficult, this guide will help to clear that confusion and prepare you for your next competition. Regardless of how many case competitions you’ve done, this guide aims to help you grow and succeed!

But before we start, we exactly are case competitions, what can you gain from them, and why should you participate? In short, case competitions are events where students analyze real or hypothetical business problems, develop a solution for them, and present their solution to a panel of judges. From networking opportunities to possibly gaining something to add to your resume, case competitions provide students with hands-on experience in the business world.

Some examples of business competitions where this guide will be best relevant to are:

- DECA
- FBLA
- Ivey High School Case Competitions
- Harvard Crimson Global Case Competition
- National Economics Challenge

1: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

The Marketing Mix:

- The marketing mix, also known as the four P's of marketing, refers to the four key elements of a marketing strategy: product, price, place and promotion.



Types of Products:

- **Consumer goods** are manufactured items purchased by individuals and **households for personal use.**
- **Industrial goods** are bought by industries and firms. The three main categories of industrial goods are machinery, manufacturing plants, and raw materials.
- **Production goods** are used in the production of a final consumer good or product, while support goods help in the production process of consumer goods such as machinery and equipment.



1: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

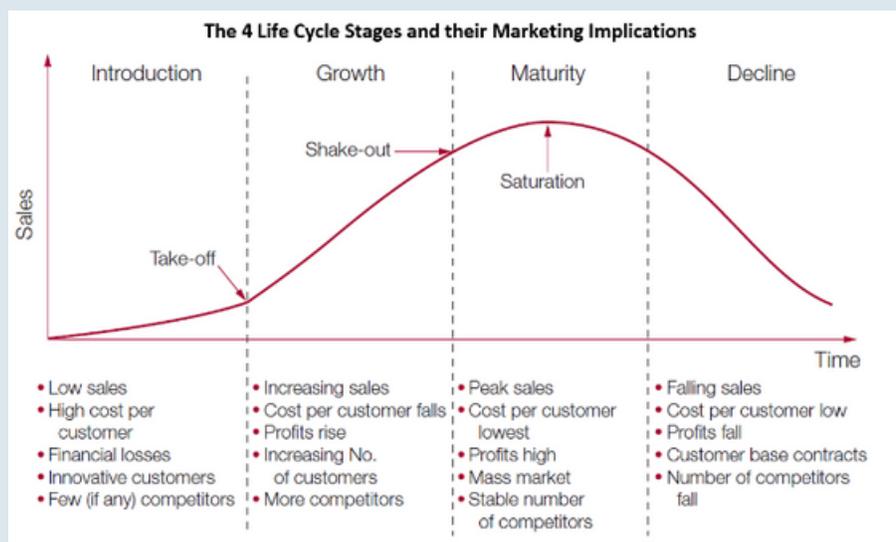
Types of Products continued...

- The distinction between **durable** and **non-durable** goods is their reusability over an extended period of time. Durable goods have a significant lifespan of three or more years. The consumption of a durable good is spread out over the entire life of the good, which causes demand for maintenance and upkeep. Bicycles, furniture, and cars are examples of durable goods. Non-durable goods are purchased for immediate consumption or use. These goods generally have a lifespan of fewer than three years. Food, beverages, and clothing are examples of non-durable goods.



Product Life Cycle

- A product life cycle is the length of time from a product first being introduced to consumers until it is removed from the market.



1: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

MARKETING

Market Research:

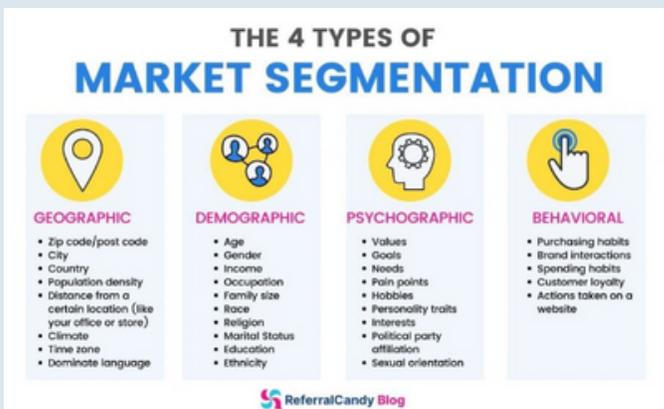
- **Causal research** is a type of study that determines whether two different situations have a cause-and-effect relationship. In this case, the national fast-food chain is testing the market to see if there is a relationship between its new sandwich and increased sales.
- **Descriptive research** means observing and measuring without manipulating variables. It can identify characteristics, trends and correlations.
- **Statistical research** involves collecting, examining & presenting data to uncover patterns & trends.



- **Exploratory research** involves collecting information to help the business define its issue, situation, or concern, and decide how to proceed with its research.

Target Market:

- **A target market** is a specific group of potential customers who a business aims to reach with its products or services. Market segmentation is the process of splitting buyers into distinct, measurable groups that share similar wants and needs. The four main types of market segmentation are demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioral.



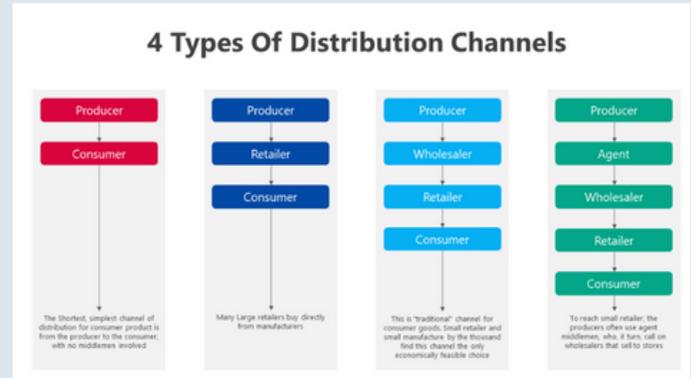
1: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

MARKETING

Place

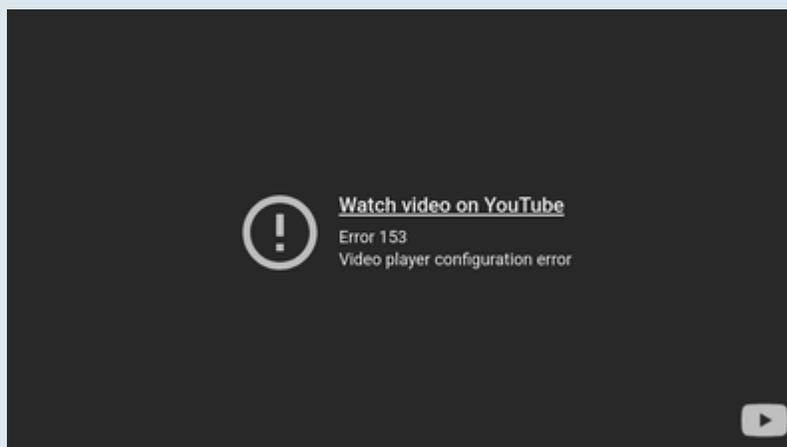
Distribution Channels

- Distribution channels are the paths that products and services take on their way from the manufacturer or service provider to the end consumer.



Slotting Allowances

- A slotting allowance is a fee paid by suppliers to retailers in exchange for the placement of their products on store shelves.
- Often, the manufacturer that offers the largest allowance is the one that gets shelf space for its new product. This is sometimes considered to be unethical because small manufacturers that cannot afford to pay large slotting allowances do not have an equal opportunity to distribute their products. This fee is also charged to cover the costs for placing a new product on the retailer's shelves. By charging a slotting allowance, the customer (e.g. brand) is trying to cover the costs of stocking and maintaining the product. If a new product does not sell well, the fees can help cover the time on the shelf that could have been used for a higher moving item.



1: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

MARKETING

Promotion Branding

- Branding is the process of creating a strong, positive perception of a company, its products or services in the customer's mind by combining such elements as logo, design, mission statement, and a consistent theme throughout all marketing communications.
- There are typically 8 core brand elements that every brand needs: logo, color palette, shape, tagline, tone of voice and vocabulary, fonts, imagery, and positioning.



Pricing

- Pricing strategies determine the price companies set for their products.



1: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

FINANCE

The Accounting Equation

The Fundamental Accounting Equation

Assets = Liabilities + Capital



- **Assets:** Assets are items of value or resources that a business owns or controls.
- **Liability:** A liability occurs when an individual or business owes money to another person or organization. Bank loans and credit card debts are common examples of liabilities.
- **Equity** is the amount funded by the owners or shareholders of a company for the initial start-up and continuous operation of a business.

Credits and Debits

- **Credits** are accounting entries that increase liabilities or decrease assets. They are the functional opposite of debits and are positioned to the right-hand side in accounting documents. **Debits** are accounting entries that increase assets or decrease liabilities. They are the functional opposite of credits and are positioned to the left-hand side in accounting documents.

Debit	Credit
 Increases asset and expense accounts	 Decreases asset and expense accounts
 Decreases liability, revenue, and equity accounts	 Increases liability, revenue, and equity accounts
 Left side of an entry	 Right side of an entry



1: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

FINANCE

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If the company receives an electric bill for \$1,700, under the cash method, the amount is not recorded until the company actually pays the bill. However, under the accrual method, the \$1,700 is recorded as an expense the day the company receives the bill.

1: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

FINANCE

Financial Statements

Balance Sheet

- The balance sheet is a snapshot of a company's overall financial position at any given point in time, highlighting the amount of assets, liabilities and equity a company has.

BUSINESS CONSULTING COMPANY BALANCE SHEET As at December 31, 2015			
Assets	\$	Liabilities & Stockholders' equity	\$
<u>Current assets:</u>		<u>Liabilities:</u>	
Cash	85,550	Notes payable	5,000
Accounts receivable	4,700	Accounts payable	1,600
Prepaid building rent	1,500	Salaries payable	2,000
Unexpired insurance	3,600	Income tax payable	3,000
Supplies	250	Unearned service revenue	4,400
Total current assets	95,600	Total liabilities	16,000
<u>Non-current assets:</u>		<u>Stockholders' equity:</u>	
Equipment	9,000	Capital stock	50,000
Acc. dep. - Equipment	<u>3,600</u>	Retained earnings	<u>35,000</u>
Total assets	101,000	Total liabilities & stockholders' equity	101,000

Assets and liabilities are broken into 2 sections based on liquidity or maturity.

Liquidity is the ability of an asset to be converted into cash.

- Highly liquid assets including cash, accounts receivable, usually less than 30 or 60 days.
- Current Assets includes assets which can be liquidated within a year
- Fixed Assets includes assets that are less liquid: liquidated in more than a year

Within each of these categories, each individual asset is sorted by decreasing liquidity.

Maturity is similar to liquidity, but is used for liabilities, as the maturity date refers to the date on which the liability is due.

- Current Liabilities includes liabilities which are due within a year
- Fixed Liabilities includes liabilities that are due after a year.

1: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

FINANCE

Income Statement

- The income statement shows the profitability of a company over time, highlighting its revenues and expenses over fiscal periods. The net income or net loss for the business is presented. This shows the total profitability of the business over the specified time period.

HUNTER COMPANY			
Income Statement			
For the Year Ending December 31, 20X9			
Revenues			
Net sales			\$653,000
Expenses and losses			
Cost of goods sold	\$283,000		
Selling expenses	142,000		
General & administrative	170,000		
Loss on sale of land	2,000		
Interest expense	7,000		
			<u>604,000</u>
Income before tax			\$ 49,000
Income tax expense			<u>10,000</u>
Net income			<u>\$ 39,000</u>

Chart of Accounts

- The chart of accounts is a document that lists of all the financial accounts a company uses to record its transactions.

Chart of Accounts			
Number	Description	Account Type	Financial Statement
1-020	Cash	Asset	Balance Sheet
1-030	Accounts Receivable	Asset	Balance Sheet
1-040	Cash	Asset	Balance Sheet
1-050	Revenue	Asset	Income Statement
1-060	Accumulated Depreciation	Liability	Balance Sheet
1-070	Fixed Assets	Asset	Balance Sheet
1-080	Inventory	Asset	Income Statement
1-090	Bank Fees	Liability	Income Statement
2-001	Revenue	Asset	Income Statement
2-010	Cost of Goods Sold	Expense	Income Statement
2-020	Common Stock	Equity	Balance Sheet

1: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

FINANCE

General Journal

- The general journal is the first phase of accounting where all the transactions are recorded originally in chronological order.

GENERAL JOURNAL				Page 1
Date	Accounts	Debits	Credits	
01-01-X3	Cash	25,000		
	Capital Stock		25,000	
	<i>Issued stock to shareholders for cash</i>			
01-04-X3	Advertising Expense	2,000		
	Cash		2,000	
	<i>Paid for initial advertising programs</i>			
01-08-X3	Cash	4,000		
	Service Revenue		4,000	
	<i>Provided services to customers for cash</i>			
01-15-X3	Utilities Expense	1,000		
	Accounts Payable		1,000	
	<i>Received bill for utility cost incurred</i>			

The general journal consists of 5 columns: the date, the account name, the P.R. (page reference), debit and credit columns.

- Account name: states the accounts that were affected by the transaction
- PR: each account (e.g. cash, bank loan, sales, etc.) has its own general ledger in order to be easily refer between the general journal and ledger.
- Debit and Credit: The total monetary value of the debits and credits must balance out, regardless of the number of affected accounts.

**Assets and expenses have a natural debit balance and liabilities; equity & revenues have a natural credit balance.*

1: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

FINANCE

Cash Flow Statement

- The cash flow statement reveals the inflows and outflows of cash from operating, investing and financing activities within a company.

Good Deal Co.	
Statement of Cash Flows	
For the Month Ended April 30, 2024	
Operating Activities	
Net income	\$ 0
Increase in supplies	(150)
Increase in accounts payable	<u>150</u>
Net cash provided (used) by operating activities	0
Investing Activities	
	0
Financing Activities	
	<u>0</u>
Net increase in cash	0
Cash at the beginning of the month	<u>2,100</u>
Cash at the end of the month	<u>\$ 2,100</u>

The cash flow statement is broken down into 3 sections:

- **Cash flows from operating activities** includes cash generated or paid out through the core functions of the business, including the production and selling of its goods and services.
- **Cash flows from investing** takes into account any investments the business has made, such as purchasing or selling plant, property, or equipment assets, or marketable securities.
- **Cash flows from financing activities** includes financing activities include any changes in loans or debts, or any changes in equity such as the issuance of stocks or distribution of dividends in corporations.

Once the three sections are summed up, the net change in cash for the period is calculated. Using the cash balance at the beginning of the period it is added that to the net change in cash, to get the final cash balance for the end of the period.

1: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

FINANCE

Insurance

- Insurance companies protect clients against risk. By paying a premium, you transfer the majority of the risk of financial loss in case of disaster or other undesirable events to the insurance company. Insurance companies operate on the basis that of their total sum of customers, only a small portion will experience an event that will need compensation.



Financial Ratios

Financial ratios are a key component of fundamental analysis as they use figures from the financial statements issued by companies in order to achieve a better understanding of how well the company is performing financially.

Financial ratios can be classified into 4 categories:

- Liquidity ratios measure how easily a business is able to meet its short-term debt obligations.
- Profitability ratios measure how profitable a company is, or how efficient a company is at earnings profits given the amount of resources they possess.
- Leverage ratios measure how well a business will be able to survive in the long-term, which are useful to long term investors and creditors.
- Efficiency ratios measure how well your business is using assets and resources to determine the effectiveness of your operations.

<p>Liquidity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses a business' ability to remain liquid (i.e. be able to meet its short term liabilities) Measures the amount of "cash cushion" that a business has in each accounting period Useful for evaluating cash management strategy 	<p>Operational Risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses the amount of inherent risk that a business' capital structure and operating model carry Measures a business' creditworthiness and ability to meet its periodic liabilities Useful for evaluating leverage
<p>Profitability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses a business' ability to generate profits given the investments made in assets or equity Measures how well the company's management has used funds to develop a profitable operational model Useful for evaluating profitability 	<p>Efficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses the overall level of efficiency that a business is able to achieve through its operations Measures business performance in terms of multiples of themselves (i.e. turnover) Useful for identifying areas of improvement

1: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Communication

- In a workplace, communication generally flows in three directions: upward, downward, and laterally.
- **Lateral, or horizontal communication** is between people on the same level.
- **Upward communication** moves from employees up to management.
- **Downward communication** passes information down the chain of command to employees. This is a frequently used form of communication because supervisors must often provide general information to all workers.

Features	↔ Lateral communication	↓ Downward communication	↑ Upward communication
Direction	Between employees on the same hierarchical level	From superiors to subordinates	From subordinates to superiors
Nature	Collaborative	Directive	Participative
Purpose	To obtain information, exchange ideas, achieve common goals, solve problems, etc.	To give orders, provide instructions, prescribe guidelines, inform, assign responsibilities, etc.	To provide ideas, give feedback, make complaints, offer suggestions, etc.
Frequency	Frequent	Frequent	Usually frequent
Speed	Fast	Fast	Slow
Effectiveness	Immediate	Usually immediate	Usually limited

- **Memorandums** are a frequently used form of brief, written communication exchanged by people within a business. They are informal and simple because they are intended only for the use of the business's employees. Memos are often distributed to employees within a business to update them on the progress of various projects, or inform them of changes in policies and procedures.

Memorandum

TO: GTS Sales Staff

FROM: Karen Moore

CC: Mr. John Sakazaki

DATE: April 18, 2008

SUBJECT: Customer Presentation

The JSKL Marketing presentation you prepared last week to showcase our new product line was exceptional!

Your enthusiasm, sales strategy, and product knowledge were impressive and certainly sealed the deal with Mr. Lockhart!

Thank you for your outstanding work and dedication. Bonus checks will be distributed next week.

My sincere congratulations to all of you!

1: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Supply Chain Management

- **Supply chain management** the process of planning, organizing, and managing the flow of goods and services from suppliers to customers.



Total Quality Management

- **Total quality management (TQM)** is the continual process of detecting and reducing or eliminating errors in manufacturing. It streamlines supply chain management, improves the customer experience, and ensures that employees are up to speed with training.



Business Law

Business law is the body of laws that govern how business organizations and business entities are established, run, and managed.

- Contract law governs the creation, execution, and enforcement of agreements between parties, ensuring that all terms are legally binding.
- Intellectual property protects creations of the mind, such as inventions, trademarks, and copyrights, allowing businesses to safeguard their innovations.
- Employment law regulates the relationship between employers and employees, covering issues like wages, discrimination, and workplace safety.
- Tort law addresses civil wrongs, such as negligence or defamation, that harm individuals or businesses.

Key Concepts and Principles in Business Law



1: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Types of Business Ownership

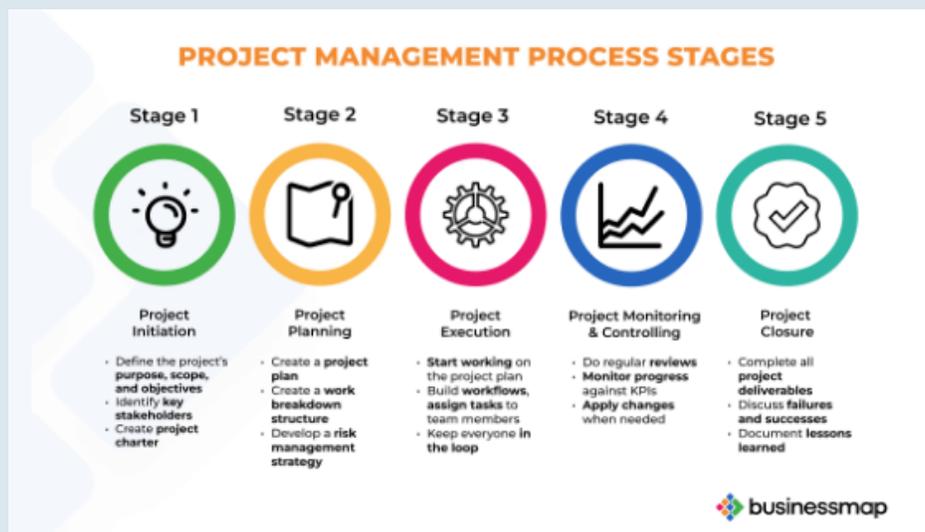
The 4 most common types of business ownership are sole proprietorships, partnerships, corporations, and franchises.

- **A sole proprietorship** is a business owned by one person, offering full control but with personal liability for debts and losses.
- **A partnership** involves two or more individuals sharing responsibilities, profits, and liabilities, which can be either general (equal responsibility) or limited (with some partners having limited liability).
- **A corporation** is a legal entity separate from its owners, providing limited liability protection and allowing for the raising of capital through stock sales; it's subject to more regulations and taxes.
- **A franchise** allows individuals to operate businesses under an established brand, following the franchisor's systems and paying royalties in exchange for brand recognition and support.

Project Management

Project management involves the planning and organizing of a company's resources to move a specific task, event, or duty toward completion.

Effective project management ensures all parties know their roles and responsibilities, agree on the objectives for each project stage, and work together to meet deadlines. Project management is important because it ensures projects get delivered on time, on budget, and within the agreed-upon scope.

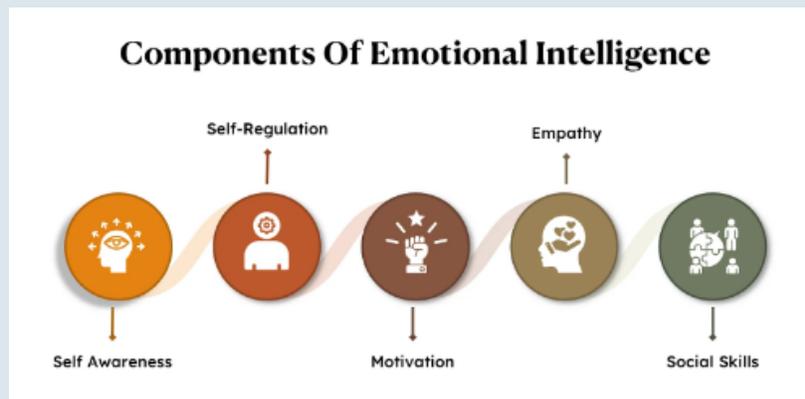


1: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is the ability to manage both your own emotions and understand the emotions of people around you. It is often characterised by empathy, the ability to recognise, understand and influence other people's motives and emotions.



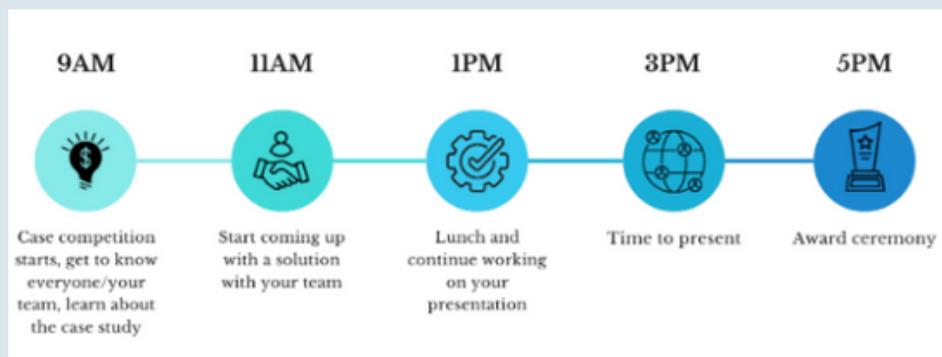
High emotional intelligence in hospitality leads to numerous advantages. Staff can de-escalate tense situations, manage conflict effectively, and build trust with guests. This translates to better customer service, positive online reviews, and increased guest satisfaction.

2: COMPETITION STRUCTURE

Structure and Timeline

Every case competition has its own unique structure and timeline. Some competitions may last only 10 minutes, while others can span an entire day. Regardless of the length, most follow a similar format where participants are given a problem and required to create a slideshow presentation to propose a solution. Some of the popular case competitions include the Ivey High School Case Competition and DECA. On one hand, the duration for the IHSCC is a few hours and on the other hand, the duration for DECA is about 10 minutes.

For a case competition that lasts a couple of hours, the time is allocated so that you typically get 3 hours to come up with your solution and presentation with a team and 10 minutes to present. Although this can be stressful, time management is especially important. You must allocate your time to brainstorm, create and practice your presentation as well as coming up with possible answers to questions the judge may ask you at the end. Here is an example of how time may be allocated for a case competition that spans a few hours:



Preliminary Procedures

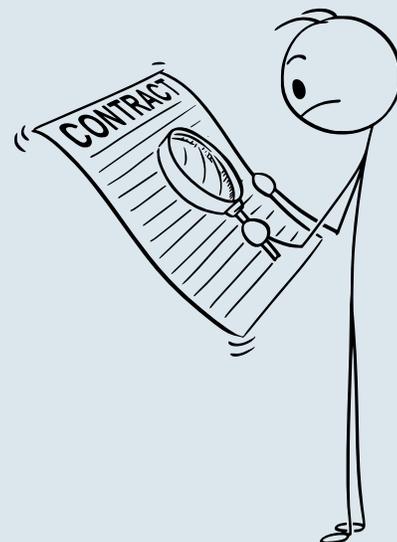
Before the actual case presentation, many competitions include preliminary tasks, such as multiple-choice questions (MCQs), which can impact your score. Preparing for these tasks in advance is crucial, as they can set the foundation for your performance. Typically, the MCQ and the case competition is weighted fifty-fifty, but this also changes for each competition so make sure to read the instructions and regulations of your case competition carefully!

2: COMPETITION STRUCTURE

Analyzing the Case

Once you are presented with the case, the first step is to fully understand the problem you're tasked with solving. It's important to consider your role—whether you're acting as a consultant, marketing specialist, or CEO—because this will influence how you approach the case. Analyzing the case involves identifying the key problem, understanding the stakeholders, and considering any constraints. Staying updated on current events can provide valuable context to better approach the problem. Here are some steps you can take to effectively and efficiently analyze your case:

1. **Read the entire case** → this helps you to get a basic understanding of the case and you can analyze details afterwards. During this stage, you may take notes if you wish
2. **Read the scenario** → now, you can look at what you need to solve specifically
3. **Read the case again** → this time when reading the case, look for key points that relate to the given problem you must try to solve
4. **Start brainstorming** → work individually or with a team to come up with possible solutions for the presented problems
5. **Start your presentation** → once you are done brainstorming, start to create your presentation that you will present to the judges
6. **Practice your presentation** → make sure that everyone is familiar with what they are presenting and also come up with possible answers for questions the judges may ask



2: COMPETITION STRUCTURE

Developing the Solution

In most competitions, the solution you present will depend on specific criteria, such as key performance indicators (KPIs). You should aim to integrate real-world examples and data where relevant. Visual aids like business cards, graphs, or mockups can help reinforce your ideas and make your presentation more engaging. Be sure to clearly explain any technical terms so that the judges can easily understand your solution. Here are some tips to develop an effective solution:

- **Focus closely on the KPIs** → these are the points the judges will be looking for to see if you hit them
- **Use real world examples** → these can be from real world businesses that have succeeded when faced with a similar situation, famous business leaders, etc.
- **Include data** → if possible, try to include real statistics or data to show that your reasoning is credible
- **Include visuals** → visuals help judges follow along with what you are talking about. This includes timelines, comic strips or graphs
- **Ensure clarity** → make sure to present your ideas in a logical format and do not jump all over the place

Managing Your Time

If you're given a limited amount of time, such as seven minutes, it's essential to manage it effectively. Start by spending the first minute or two analyzing the case. Use the next few minutes to develop your solution, ensuring you address all key points. The final minute should be used for summarizing your solution and leaving a lasting impression on the judges.

When closing the case, offer a concise summary of your solution and key points. This is your chance to stand out, so make sure the judges remember you. Don't forget to ask if they have any questions at the end; it shows confidence and helps foster a conversation about your presentation.



3: INTEGRATING CREATIVITY

Quotes

Depending on the case, quoting business leaders can reinforce your solution by providing credibility and insight. A strong case should include one to three relevant quotes that align with the proposed strategy. For example, Steve Jobs once said, "Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower." This quote can be particularly effective when arguing for a disruptive or creative business approach. Mark Zuckerberg's words, "The biggest risk is not taking any risk," can be used to support a strategy that emphasizes bold market moves. Peter Drucker's statement, "The customer is the foundation of a business and keeps it in existence," highlights the importance of customer-centric solutions.

Adding humor to a solution can make it more engaging and memorable. In a marketing case, one might say, "If our competitors' strategy were a Netflix show, it would be canceled after one season." In a finance-related case, humor could be incorporated by stating, "We propose a budget so tight it makes accountants cry—but with results so good they'll smile through the tears."

Statistics

Real-world statistics provide strong support for case competition solutions. For instance, "80% of startups fail within the first five years, but those with clear differentiation have a 60% higher survival rate." Another compelling statistic is that "Companies that embrace digital transformation see 23% more profitability than those that don't."

In addition to real statistics, realistic but fabricated data can be strategically used to strengthen arguments. For example, "A 30% increase in customer engagement leads to a 15% boost in revenue, based on market trends." By incorporating statistics effectively, case presenters can make their recommendations more persuasive.



3: INTEGRATING CREATIVITY

Real-World Examples

A mixture of past and recent business examples helps illustrate key points. A past example of business evolution is Netflix's pivot from DVD rentals to streaming, which allowed it to avoid the fate of Blockbuster. A more recent example is Tesla's impact on the automotive industry by normalizing electric vehicles and shifting consumer expectations.

Failed businesses that made successful turnarounds provide useful insights. Apple was on the brink of bankruptcy in 1997 before Steve Jobs introduced the iMac and iPod, revitalizing the company. Similarly, Starbucks faced major over-expansion issues in 2008 but refocused on quality and customer experience, regaining its position in the market.

New businesses can significantly influence the market, as seen with Uber and Airbnb, which reshaped the transportation and hospitality industries. Additionally, consumer tastes play a crucial role in market shifts, as seen in the growing demand for plant-based diets, leading to innovations like Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods.

Famous Leaders

Tying leadership philosophies to case solutions strengthens arguments. Elon Musk is known for his visionary thinking and ability to redefine industries, making his leadership style relevant for discussions on innovation. Warren Buffett's long-term strategy approach can be applied to cases requiring sustainable business models. Oprah Winfrey's success demonstrates the power of personal branding and influence in building a strong consumer base.

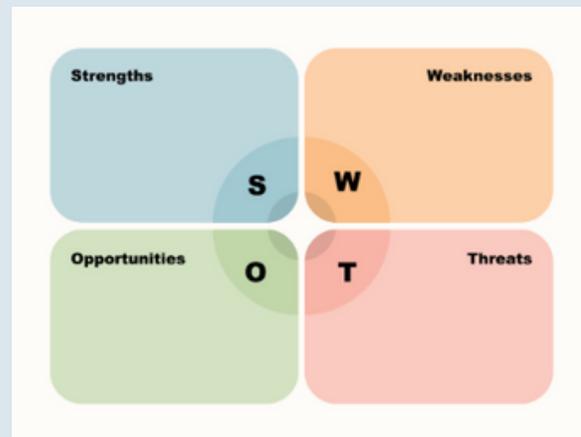
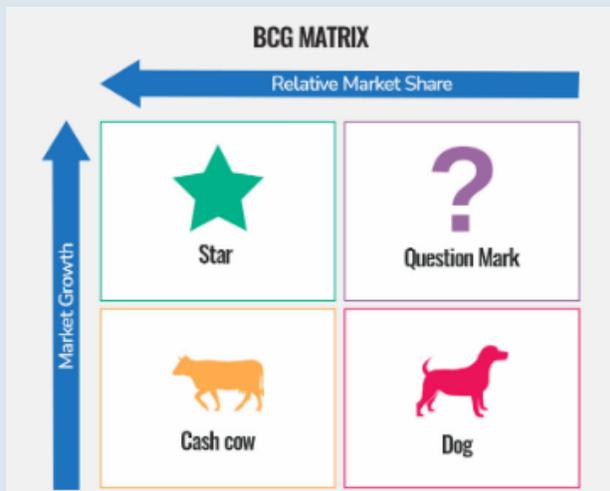
Mindsets

Implementing the right mindset can drive creativity in solutions. First-principles thinking involves breaking down a problem to its fundamental elements and rebuilding a solution from the ground up. A growth mindset allows teams to see challenges as opportunities for learning and iteration. Divergent thinking encourages brainstorming multiple unconventional approaches before narrowing down the best one.

3: INTEGRATING CREATIVITY

Advanced Analyses (e.g. SWOT, PESTLE, Porter's Five Forces, BCG Matrix)

Strategic frameworks help analyze business situations effectively. SWOT analysis evaluates strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, while PESTLE analysis examines political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental factors. Porter's Five Forces framework assesses competitive dynamics within an industry, and the BCG Matrix helps categorize business units based on market growth and relative market share.



Implement Business Strategies

Business strategies provide a roadmap for success. The Blue Ocean Strategy focuses on creating untapped market space instead of competing in a saturated industry. Cost leadership and differentiation are two common competitive strategies, where businesses either compete on price or offer unique value propositions. The Lean Startup Methodology emphasizes rapid prototyping, continuous feedback, and iterative improvements to refine solutions efficiently.



4: PRESENTATION TIPS

4.1 – Body Language

- **Handshake:** Only shake hands if the judge offers one first. A firm but not overpowering handshake conveys confidence, using terms like “pleasure to meet you” during a handshake conveys respect and engagement.
- **Engagement Style:** Treat the roleplay like a professional meeting or discussion rather than a lecture. Engage with the judge by inviting conversation rather than simply reciting information.
- **Hand Gestures:** Use natural gestures to emphasize points but avoid excessive movements that can be distracting.
- **Eye Contact:** Maintain steady and consistent eye contact with all judges to show confidence and attentiveness. Avoid staring at notes or looking down too often. Try to look at your notes when the judge is looking down to write information.
- **Partner Chemistry:** Coordinate with your partner beforehand to ensure a smooth, cohesive presentation. If time allows, practice transitions between speaking points.
- **Avoid Repetition:** Do not restate your partner’s topic unless reinforcing or adding value. Instead, build upon their ideas to show teamwork and cohesion.



- **Vocal Variety:** Change pitch and tone to maintain engagement. Speaking in a monotone voice can make the presentation seem dull and unenthusiastic.
- **Posture and Dress:** Sit up straight to look presentable and confident. Ensure you are dressed according to the dress code provided.



4.2 - Maximizing Communication

- **Wearing a Watch:** Helps keep track of time without relying on a phone, ensuring smooth pacing during the presentation.
- **Avoid Filler Words:** Refrain from using “um,” “like,” or “you know.” Instead, use brief pauses to gather your thoughts and maintain professionalism.
- **Voice Projection:** Speak with confidence and clarity to assert credibility. Adjust your volume appropriately to ensure all judges can hear you clearly without shouting.
- **Pacing:** Manage your speaking speed—speak neither too fast nor too slow. Practicing beforehand can help find the right rhythm.
- **Handling Nervousness:** Take deep breaths before starting, to minimize nervousness. Confidence is key to a successful roleplay.
- **Distraction Management:** If in a large room with multiple presentations occurring, focus on your speech despite background noise. Practice tuning out distractions beforehand.



- Professional Responses: Thank the judge for their question or acknowledge it as insightful (e.g., “That’s an amazing question!”). This shows professionalism and engagement.
- Business Terminology: Use appropriate business jargon to demonstrate industry knowledge. However, ensure that you do not overuse technical terms to the point where clarity is lost.
- Closing Statement: Always thank the judge for their time before concluding. A strong closing leaves a positive lasting impression.



4.3 – Effectively Answering Judges’ Questions

- Think Before You Speak: It’s okay to pause briefly to organize your thoughts. A few seconds of silence is better than a rushed or confusing answer.
- Clarify If Needed: If a question isn’t fully clear, ask politely for clarification. (“Just to confirm, are you asking about our pricing strategy or our marketing approach?”)
- Be Honest and Strategic: If you don’t know something, don’t fake it. Instead, acknowledge it and pivot: “That’s a great point—while we didn’t address that directly in our plan, one way to explore it might be...”
- Use the STAR Framework (for behavioral-style or reflective questions): Briefly explain the Situation, Task, Action, and Result of a relevant example.



- **Play to Your Strengths:** Redirect the conversation toward the strongest aspects of your plan when possible. “That connects well to our digital outreach plan, which we’ll elaborate on...”
- **Team Dynamics:** If you’re presenting with a partner, share the Q&A space evenly. One person can start answering and the other can add a follow-up thought to show teamwork.

4.4 – Memorable Introductions and Conclusions

Introductions

- **Start with a Hook:** Begin with a compelling question, statistic, or scenario that ties directly to your case problem. For example: “What if a single change could boost this company’s revenue by 40% in one quarter?”
- **Introduce Your Team:** Clearly state your names and roles: “Good afternoon, I’m Jordan and this is Taylor, and today we’re your strategy consultants tackling [company name]’s growth challenge.”
- **State the Objective:** Set expectations right away. “Our goal today is to present a three-part solution that’s innovative, sustainable, and measurable.”

Conclusions

- **Summarize Key Points:** Recap your main strategies or proposals succinctly.
- **Call to Action:** Leave the judge with a clear takeaway or recommendation: “With these steps, [company] can not only recover but thrive in a competitive market.”
- **Express Gratitude:** Thank the judge sincerely for their time and consideration. “Thank you again for your time—it’s been a pleasure sharing our solution with you.”
- **Final Impression:** End with a confident tone and open body language. Smile, make eye contact, and close your folder or step back slightly to signal completion.