

Analyzing a strategy case study – some tip

[Business](#)



Some Tips Copyright: Adrian Haberdasher and the University of Westminster, 1998 Give yourself time to assimilate a case rather longer than a case study is given to “sink in” to your subconscious, the deeper the understanding you will get and the better your answers will be. Read the case material for the first time as soon as you have been allocated it as an assignment or seminar example. Get general impression: Which organizations and industries does it relate to?

Is the organization doing well or badly now, and how has it performed in the past? Is it a company that has an unbroken record of success? Or a successful company that has fallen on hard times? What are the main issues and choices confronting the company? Is it in an expanding industry, or a maturing one? Are customer needs changing? Does the firm confront a variety of opportunities? Or is there a particular business decision which the case is oriented towards? What information is there in the case, as tables and annexes?

Analyses thoroughly, and use what you have been learning Put the case aside for a few days before reading it a second time. Then, start to analyze it seriously: Look at the development of the organization over time.

What strategies has it pursued? Which have succeeded and which have failed? Which are the types of environment where it has been able to succeed, and in which types has it had problems? Use the tools and techniques of strategic management theory, to see what insights they give you. What is the nature of the competitive environment?

Nat kind of strategic resources does the organization have - and which does it lack? How successful has the organization been - and how do you know? Look carefully at all the tables, annexes and appendices. Why are they there? What information is the case writer trying to get you to get out of them? If there are numerical data in the case - analyze them. What trends over time do they show? What ratios can you use to analyze performance in areas that are important to the organization? Then, if you have time, put the case aside again for a day or two, and let all this sink in.

You may at this stage like to use SOOT analysis as a framework for a preliminary analysis of [Our thinking. But beware - SOOT analysis is not sufficiently precise to feature in a DOD final report.

Relate your analysis to the question Now start to relate the analysis to the task or question you have been set. What elements of the strategic analysis do you require to carry out the task, and how do they relate to it? Is there further information or analysis that you need? E logical and critical Think hard about your conclusions and recommendations.

Have you really demonstrated them, backing up your reasoning with hard evidence : events and results) from the case study? Have you allowed yourself to be swayed by the opinions of the organization's own managers? They have a vested interest in showing their actions in the best possible light. You do not have to agree. Do the facts support their claims of success, or their excuses for failure? Beware of being taken in by the rhetoric to the case writer.

Sometimes they may genuinely believe that this is a wonderful company, sometimes they may just be trying to mislead you.

Don't read what they think - we want to know what you think! Dare to be different - if you can marshal the evidence to support what you say. Make sure it is clear what you are recommending... If you are asked for a particular decision or recommendation, make sure that it is clearly stated (I.

E. Not just implied) in the report. You may have come up with fifteen DOD reasons why the company should enter the market in Utopia, but unless you clearly state that that is what you recommend, you will lose marks. ...

Don't why Make sure that, in developing recommendations: you have considered the alternatives. There is hardly ever just one, single "obvious" response to a strategic problem. And bear in mind that, if there is, all the company's competitors will have thought of it, too! You have made it clear why the recommendation you have chosen is the best of the available alternatives. That means showing what is wrong with the others! You have looked at the downside of your proposals.

Try to avoid proposals that would bankrupt the company if they failed, or which can be easily copied by the competition.