

## What is a case study?

A case study is a written record of the events that occurred at a particular company or within a particular industry over a number of years. The details included in a case study may include, but are not limited to:

- Information about a company, industry, or project
- Objectives, strategies, and challenges established and encountered
- Responses, results, and recommendations

## The benefits of case study analysis

Case studies are often used to not only illustrate what a student has learned and retained in class, but also to provide students with valuable hands-on experience. When analysing a case study, you will have an opportunity to learn about the types of problems that many companies and industries encounter. You will also have an opportunity to analyse the steps other managers have taken to correct specific problems and concerns. This will put your problem solving skills to the test and allow you to engage in exciting discussions with classmates and teachers.

## How to Analyse a Case Study

If you want the case study analysis to be professional and accurate, you must have a clear understanding of the issues that the company or industry faced. Read the case thoroughly before you start. It's a good idea to take notes as you read and when you have finished, consider re-reading the case just to make sure you haven't missed anything.

Use a table like this for taking notes during your reading/discussions

Level	Main issues	Related problems	Relevant theories	Possible solutions / recommendations
Staff				
Management				
Operational				

## Steps to take when analysing a case study

### Step 1. Investigate and analyse the company's history and growth.

A company's past can greatly affect the present and future state of the organisation. To begin your case study analysis, investigate the company's founding, critical incidents, structure, and growth .

### Step 2. Identify strengths and weaknesses within the company

Using the information you gathered in step one, continue your case study analysis by examining and making a list of the value creation functions of the company. For example, the company may be weak in product development, but strong in marketing.

### Step 3. Gather information on the external environment

The third step in a case study analysis involves identifying opportunities and threats within the company's external environment. Special items to note include competition within the industry, bargaining powers, and the threat of substitute products.

### Step 4. Analyse your findings

Using the information in steps two and three, you will need to create an evaluation for this portion of your case study analysis. Compare the strengths and weaknesses within the company to the external threats and opportunities. Determine if the company is in a strong competitive position and decide if it can continue at its current pace successfully.

### Step 5. Identify corporate level strategy

To identify a company's corporate level strategy for your case study analysis, you will need to identify and evaluate the company's mission, goals, and corporate strategy. Analyse the company's line of business and its subsidiaries and acquisitions. You will also want to debate the pros and cons of the company strategy.

### Step 6. Identify business level strategy

Thus far, your case study analysis has identified the company's corporate level strategy. To perform a complete analysis, you will need to identify the company's business level strategy. (Note: if it is a single business, the corporate strategy and the business level strategy will be the same.) For this part of the case study analysis, you should identify and analyse each company's competitive strategy, marketing strategy, costs, and general focus.

## Step 7. Analyse implementations

This portion of the case study analysis requires that you identify and analyse the structure and control systems that the company is using to implement its business strategies. Evaluate organizational change, levels of hierarchy, employee rewards, conflicts, and other issues that are important to the company you are analysing.

## Step 8. Make recommendations

The final part of your case study analysis should include your recommendations for the company. Every recommendation you make should be based on and supported by the context of your case study analysis. Never share hunches or make a baseless recommendation.

## Step 9. Review your case study analysis

Look over your analysis when you have finished writing. Critique your work to make sure every step has been covered. Look for grammatical errors, poor sentence structure, or other things that can be improved.

### Tips:

- Know the case backwards and forwards before you begin your case study analysis.
- Give yourself enough time to write the case study analysis. You don't want to rush through it.
- Be honest in your evaluations. Don't let personal issues and opinions cloud your judgement.
- Be analytical, not descriptive.
- Proofread your work!

## How to write/structure a case study report

### Introduction

Overview of the situation and identification of key issues underlying the problems identified in the case study

### Main body

Present and analyse the issues.

Consider and assess possible solutions in terms of theoretical grounding, strengths and weaknesses and possibly risk factors.

Draw from both literature and experience

### Conclusion

Summarise main findings

Identify and justify strategy proposed

### Recommendations

Recommendations should be in line with your analysis. May be separate or within conclusions

### Appendices

A compilation of supplementary and illustrative material. **Do not** include items that are not mentioned in the report.

### Bibliography

A list of sources consulted or referred to in alphabetical order

### Tables, charts, graphs and diagrams

may be included within the report or added in the appendices. Used in the appendix, they avoid cluttering up the main text and do not add to your overall word count.

All illustrations should be clearly labelled and numbered, and referred to in the report.

## An effective case study report should:

- Clearly identify the core problem(s)
- Analyse the issues underlying the problem
- Separate the strategic management issues from the operational issues
- Identify for whom the issue is a problem
- Discuss and justify alternative solutions supported with evidence from research, studies or theories
- Present a realistic implementation plan
- Present feasible recommendations
- Be presented in an appropriate format.



To see another step by step method on how to analyse a case study go [HERE](#)



To read more information on how to analyse a case study go [HERE](#)



To watch a video on how to analyse a case study go [HERE](#)



To watch a video for tips on how to analyse a case study go [HERE](#)

## References

Glasgow Caledonian University School of Engineering and Built Environment. (2011). *How to: Analyse a case study*. Retrieved from [http://www.gcu.ac.uk/media/gcalwebv2/ebe/ldc/How\\_to\\_Analyse\\_a%20Case\\_Study.doc](http://www.gcu.ac.uk/media/gcalwebv2/ebe/ldc/How_to_Analyse_a%20Case_Study.doc)

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