

Case Method in Academic Learning

Objective of case work in an academic environment

- Overall objective: **Practice** for addressing similar challenges in the “real” world (learn by experiences)
- Working on written cases should prepare you to:
 - Approach complex questions
 - Analyse challenges, opportunities, threats and problems in a STRUCTURED way
 - Prepare action-oriented decision making
 - Present solutions & get challenged by audience

Key factor: Applying theory to practice!

Process of case analysis

1. **Read case at least twice!** (once to get a first impression; second time to make notes)
2. **Situation assessment** (understand the situation)
 1. Take the information within the case as enough; do not search the Internet for additional information (if not said otherwise)
 2. Tools like external analysis (PESTEL, 5 Forces etc) and internal analysis (e.g. Financial performance, cost – volume – profit logic)
3. **Problem identification** – identifying the multiple problems and get them in a order by importance
 1. Differ between causes and symptoms (e.g. declining sales often are symptom but not the cause)
 2. Analyse strategic gap between “Where are we today?” and “Where do we want to be?”
 3. Prioritize the problems (think about criteria on which you prioritise and share them later with the audience)
4. **Identifying facts – assumptions – opinions**
 1. Documenting the 3 different input classes
 2. Facts have to be taken into account; assumptions & opinions can be valuable input but must be checked carefully
5. **Analyse objectives**
 1. Identify if the objectives be mutually exclusive or conflict each other (e.g., higher market share and higher profits)
 2. Put the objectives in a hierarchic order

6. Specify & evaluate alternatives

1. What are the possible causes of actions – create a catalogue of decision alternatives
2. Evaluate alternatives – build a framework to prepare decision making; use financial metrics etc.

7. Make the decision

1. Pick one / a set of alternative(s) that can be executed

8. Build a plan

1. Derive an implementation plan
2. Document the assumptions taken (so in case assumptions are changing)
3. Think about how to measure the success
4. Think about how the organisation has to be set up and prepared to run the project

9. Present the plan (Summary, elevator speech etc.)

1. There is not one right answer (like in reality)