



Online Case Study Analysis: Developing 21c Leadership Competencies

A case study is a management story. It encapsulates a particular issue or dilemma, providing a snapshot of the organization at a specific point in time. The process of analyzing the issues, conducting further research, and proposing solutions creates an experiential dimension to management education.

In addition to learning related to the content of the case study, participants can develop skills:

- Critical and creative thinking
- Group process, team and collaboration
- Decision-making
- Communications and technology

When you select cases, note distinctions between two main types: *descriptive* cases and *teaching* cases.

- *Descriptive* cases offer examples that illustrate a particular set of issues or practices—may show a particular way to handle them.
- In *teaching* cases a particular dilemma is embedded within the story, and the case is designed so participants can extricate the dilemma and resolve it in a way that demonstrates achievement of learning objectives.

One shows you the answers to the dilemma at hand and the other asks you to figure out the answers. Either can be used for talent development purposes—but you may find you need to adapt the descriptive case or add some open-ended questions or add other elements to the case to customize it to your talent development needs.

Key Steps in Case Analysis

1. Define the problem

Participants identify a problem or key issue from the case they will use as the basis of the exercise.

2. Research the problem

Participants look for pertinent history and facts, background of the situation or business that is the subject of the case.

3. Broaden the inquiry

Participants locate, evaluate and integrate other information as needed to understand the scope of the issue at hand.

4. Offer alternative solutions

Participants brainstorm possible remedies, strategies or approaches to the problem.

5. Evaluate each alternative

Participants critically assess the alternatives generated in the brainstorm.

6. Offer your best recommendation

Based on your analysis, participants agree on the best solution to recommend.

7. Identify potential assets or obstacles

Participants consider implications of the recommended solution, including external and internal factors and other relevant trends.

8. Plan implementation

Participants outline steps and procedures for implementing the recommended solution to achieve the desired outcomes—while maximizing assets or overcoming obstacles.

9. Present final decision and plan of action

Participants determine the best way to present the recommended solution, rationale, and plans.

Find Case Studies Online

- *Asian Business Case Centre* <http://www.asiacase.com/> or the *Asia Case Research Centre* <http://www.acrc.org.hk/> offer cases about the Asian business experience.
- *CasePlace*: Part of the Aspen Institute, focus is on business and sustainability— from corporate governance to sustainable development. Teaching and exemplary cases-- some cases are free and others have a small fee. www.caseplace.org
- *eLearn Magazine*: Free cases about elearning topics. http://www.elearnmag.org/subpage.cfm?section=case_studies
- *Electronic Hallway*: Cases for teaching public administration and public policy. Free with registration. www.hallway.org
- *Harvard Business*: Teaching cases from Harvard Business School and their partners, usually offer instructional materials to accompany the cases. In addition to pdf downloads, they offer an array of multi-media cases online and on disc. <http://harvardbusiness.org/search//100011>
- *IGI Global Case Collection*: Teaching cases on IT topics, available as single cases or case books, also publisher of the *Journal of Cases on Information Technology*. <http://www.igi-global.com/cases/>
- *Safari Books*: Exemplary case studies on technical and business issues. <http://www.safaribooksonline.com/>