

Global Ecommerce

Case Research and Analysis Methods

Handout 3

Many Paths to Case Analysis

- # Standard IT Case Analysis
- # SWOT Analysis
- # STEP Analysis
- # Dramatistic Analysis
- # The 7 "Cs" of Ecommerce

Choose any one or a combination of methods to solve your case

Case Method 1

Standard IT Case Analysis Method

Standard IT Case Analysis

- # Identify the most important facts surrounding the case.
- # Identify the key issue or issues.
- # Specify alternative courses of action.
- # Evaluate each course of action.
- # Recommend the best course of action.

Identify the most important facts

- # Read the case several times.
- # Pay attention to the information in any accompanying exhibits, tables, or figures.
- # Assume the facts and figures in the case are true - but question statements, judgments, or decisions made by individuals

Identify the most important facts (continued)

- # Underline and then list the most important facts and figures.
- # If they are not available, make reasonable assumptions.
- # The "correctness" of your conclusions may depend on the assumptions you make.

Identify the key issue or issues

- # Use the facts to identify the key issue or issues facing the company you are studying.
- # Identify the most important issues and separate them from more trivial issues.
- # State the major problem or challenge facing the company. Restate the problem or challenge in one or two sentences.
- # Explain how this problem affects the strategy or performance of the organization.

Identify the key issue or issues

(continued-2)

- # Explain why the problem occurred.
- # Does the problem or challenge facing the company come from a changing environment, new opportunities, a declining market share, or inefficient internal or external business processes?
- # In the case of information systems-related problems, pay special attention to the role of technology as well as the behavior of the organization and its management.

Identify the key issue or issues

(continued-3)

- # Information system problems in business present a combination of management, technology, and organizational issues.
- # Ask what kind of problem it is: Is it a management problem, a technology problem, an organizational problem, or a combination of these?
- # What management, organizational and technology factors contributed to the problem?

Does the problem stem from management factors?

- # Are managers exerting appropriate leadership over the organization and monitoring organizational performance?
- # Do managers possess sufficient information for performing this role?
- # Or do they fail to take advantage of the information that is available?

Determine if a problem stems from technology factors by:

- # Examining any issues arising from the organization's information technology infrastructure:
 - its hardware, software, networks and telecommunications infrastructure, and the management of data in databases or traditional files.
 - Are the appropriate management and organizational assets in place to use this technology effectively?

Determine the role of organizational factors by:

- # Examining any issues arising from the organization's structure, culture, business processes; work groups; divisions among interest groups; relationships with other organizations.
- # Examining the impact of changes in the organization's external environment—changes in government regulations, economic conditions, or the actions of competitors, customers, and suppliers.

Specify alternative courses of action

- # List the courses of action the company can take.
- # For IS problems, do these alternatives require a new IS or the modification of an existing system?
- # Are new technologies, business processes, organizational structures, or management behavior required?
- # What changes to organizational processes are required by each alternative?
- # What management policies are required to implement each alternative?

Specify alternative courses of action (continued-2)

- # There is a difference between what an organization "should do" and what that organization actually "can do."
 - # Some solutions are too expensive or operationally difficult to implement, and you should avoid solutions that are beyond the organization's resources.
- # Identify the constraints that will limit the solutions available. Is each alternative executable given these constraints?

Evaluate each course of action

- # Evaluate each alternative using the facts and issues identified earlier. Identify the costs and benefits of each alternative.
- # Ask yourself "What would be the likely outcome of this course of action?" State the risks as well as the rewards associated with each course of action.
- # Is your recommendation feasible from a technical, operational, and financial standpoint? Be sure to state any assumptions on which you have based your decision.

Recommend the best course of action

- # State your choice for the best course of action and provide a detailed explanation of why you selected it.
- # Perhaps provide an explanation of why other alternatives were not selected.
- # Your final recommendation should flow logically from the rest of your case analysis and should clearly state your assumptions.
- # There is often no single "right" answer, and each option is likely to have risks as well as rewards.

Case Method 2

#SWOT Analysis

SWOT Analysis

Ask yourself what are the:

- # Strengths of the company?
- # Weaknesses of the company?
- # Opportunities for the company?
- # Threats to the company?

Use this type of strategic analysis to compare and contrast organizations, to see the big picture, and to forecast.

Case Method 3

#STEP Analysis

STEP Analysis

- # Social
- # Technical
- # Economic
- # Political

Use STEP analysis when you need a broader perspective on how the organization is positioned in many different environments; especially in relation to its competitors.

Case Method 4

#Dramatistic Case Analysis

Dramatistic Case Analysis

1. Read the case once quickly for meaning then as you re-read it, ask:
2. What is the country (currency), business, and industry?
3. What business model is being used?
4. Who are the major "players"?
5. What are their roles? Are there heroes and villains? Identify them.
6. What is the main plot? The subplots?

Dramatistic Case Analysis ⁽²⁾

6. What recent changes have transpired?
7. What key decisions or challenges are present?
8. What strategic decisions need to be made?
9. What operational or tactical decisions need to be made?
10. What else is needed to make a solid decision (information, money, intelligence...)?

Dramatistic Case Analysis ⁽³⁾

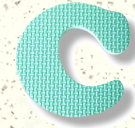
11. What steps can be taken to avert a tragedy?
12. What steps can be taken to prevent this from becoming a farce?
13. What are your recommendations and solutions? Prioritize them. Update your case information.

Case Method 5

#The 7 Cs of Ecommerce

7 C's of Ecommerce

- # Context
- # Content
- # Community
- # Customization
- # Communication
- # Connection
- # Commerce



Case Research and Preparation

- # Title the case.
- # Include your name and course number.
- # Identify a business model. Justify your choice.
- # Introduce the country and industry in a summary of the case.
- # Use an appropriate method to analyze the case including: standard IT case analysis; SWOT; and STEP; dramatic analysis; or the 7 "Cs". Justify your choice.
- # Identify challenges and decisions faced by the principals in the case.
- # Share your observations, recommendations and solutions. Update your case via the Web.

Case Preparation

Presentation

- # Use PowerPoint for a 30-35 minute presentation
- # Summarize the gist of the case & identify the business model
- # Introduce the country of origin and the industry
- # Identify and justify your choice of case analysis methods
- # Pose 2-3 discussion questions for the class
- # Present your observations, recommendations, and solutions
- # Include an Epilogue: Update your case with research about the company, industry and company

Global Ecommerce

Case Research and Analysis Methods

Handout 3