

Teaching through Case Study

Trigger Question: Dr. Rajan

Dear Learned Members

I wish to place what I had seen in my experience.

As rightly said according to me case study is one of the best teaching tool that could enhance almost all skills among the budding managers. But in most of the institutions where MBA is being taught this vital component is missing. Hence, even in the examinations, students do not know how analyze a case and present their solutions. As an examiner I have seen in most of the answer scripts the question related to case analysis either as unanswered or sometimes, the questions rewritten. This is due to wrongful advice given by the faculty members to the students. In earlier days, either a full day was allotted for case analysis, group discussions, presentations etc. In the time table itself. But today it is not at all take place in the time table.

Believe it or not there are faculty members, who prepare answers for five previous period questions and sell it to their students ranging from Rs.50 to Rs. 150 in order to ensure 100 percent result in the University examinations and to satisfy their superiors. Present founders of these institutions are also very much interested in this aspect.

In effect, it affect the employabilty of MBA's become !!!

What efforts could remedy this practice?

(i) Prof. Bruce Miller

As the discussion has brought up the case study method I am attaching the ppt I use during my introduction to case study for both faculty and students. I use this to supplement my presentation so if any clarifications or explanations are needed (or desired) let me know.

One point I would like to stress, though, is that case study is to analyze and determine the problem and come up with solutions - whether they are related to the course or not. Unfortunately, if the case is given in a finance class, only finance solutions (or a specific one) will be accepted, even if a 'better' marketing or hr solution may be possible. In the real world there is not one right answer to a problem, there are always several, with some better than others. In reality the 'problem' is usually not the 'real problem'.

If the forum is interested I can send a newspaper article that I use as an introduction to case study which seems straight forward, but the more you think about it and the deeper you go the more twists and turns you'll encounter (too much said).

If you haven't guessed I love the case method approach.

(ii) Prof. Bholanath Dutta

Dear Esteemed Learned Members

Here is my take on the topic under discussion.....

Case Study is one of the effective (can say most effective) teaching throughputs in delivering management concepts in the classroom which is far away from real-life i.e. Industry. Every one is talking about Case Study Method to support the idea and effectiveness of Participative and Collaborative learning.

But on the ground reality.....it is a mess! Few important points I would like to highlights in this regard.....

(i) Most of the available cases are outdated (available in text book) and has very little relevance with contemporary industry practices.

(ii) Case study is considered as just another subjective question carrying 20/25 marks. It has become like a comprehension test.

(iii) Many cases (most of the examinations) come with questions ultimately students try to find out the Answer (so called).

(iv) Cases available in foreign context may not have 100% relevance in different socio-cultural set-up.

(v) Confusion between Problem and Symptoms.

(vi) Case study is exercised in the class when there is nothing to dokill the TIME.

(vii) Confusion over how to analyze a case.

(viii) Confusion over being rationale and realistic assumption and unrealistic assumption.

(ix) Scope for out of the box thinking.

These are few of the observations..... then what can be done:

(i) Teachers need to develop their own case studies.

(ii) It can only happen when teachers involve themselves in external project, consultancy and other research project.

(iii) This will equip teacher better to handle the case in the class.

(iv) Proper orientation to the students about how to analyze a case.

(v) Use of Video case study.

(vi) Make use of contemporary cases linked with socio-economic set up.

(vii) Live cases.

(viii) Case/Case-let necessarily should not have any questions at the end.....needs to be open-ended, enabling students to think over.

IT IS NOT WHAT WE LEARN THROUGH CASE STUDY ANALYSIS BUT HOW WE LEARN----IS VERY IMPORTANT.