

ANALYZING A CASE STUDY

Seven Steps Involved in Analyzing a Business Case Study

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Case Analysis

- Solving a business problem will require a number of discrete steps from the manager and her team.
- Failure at any step or overlooking any step may result in a loss or serious setback for the company involved.

Step One

Define the business problem and draft a problem statement.

What's the basic issue here? Tell your reader in one or a few paragraphs about the essence of the *business* problem that you have identified. An improper definition of the problem is almost certain to result in failure.

Step Two

Rank-order the critical issues.

As you consider relevant information and underlying assumptions, can you identify the critical issues in this case? Can you rank order them from most-to-least important? What must get fixed first?

Step Three

Identify key stakeholders.

Who is most directly affected by the situation in this case? What's at stake for them? Can you identify any indirect stakeholders? Are any individuals or groups at odds with one another (each hoping for a different outcome)?

Step Four

Specify interested observers.

Identify those without a direct stake in the outcome of the case who may, nonetheless be interested. Consider NGOs, single-issue special interest groups, the news media, elected officials, regulators, or members of the immediate community.

Step Five

List options for action.

What alternatives are available to the manager in the case? What are the strengths or drawbacks of these alternatives? Which alternative solutions would you select and why? Make your most rational argument in favor of this solution.

Step Six

Explain how to communicate the solution.

What should the manager in the case do first? Who sends the message? What's the content and structure of the message? Which communication channels should the manager employ? Which audiences should he or she address? Any cultural factors to consider?

Step Seven

Specify how to evaluate your outcomes.

How will the company or its key constituents know if they've succeeded? What will success look like? Can you specify or quantify the outcomes you're most hoping for? Explain what's optimal and what's acceptable here.