



**Management
Consulting Club**

Case Competition Guide

Introduction

This guide serves as an overview of the format and structure for the Management Consulting Club's Internal Case Competitions. This guide covers the following material:

- Preparation
- The 'Matrix'
- Presentation Roles
- General Tips

If you have any questions or queries, feel free to email the Training Director at training@uoamcc.co.nz.

Case Competition Overview

Your team will receive a 'case', which is a briefing about an organisation. You will have three hours to and analyse the case and prepare a strategy recommendation. After your preparation, you will have ten minutes to present their case, a "two minute" sign will be held up after eight minutes and a "one minute" sign will be held up after nine minutes. This is the same for question and answer.

At ten minutes, you will be cut off and should not struggle to finish their current sentence or answer.

Resources

Additional resources such as tutorial slides, tutorial recordings and presentation examples are available on the [MCC website](#). All resources are password protected. If you have registered for an Internal Case Competition, the password would have been emailed to you in the same email outlining your preliminary round time.

1.0 Preparation

Preparation Activity	Timing
Read the Case	40 minutes
Individual Matrix	10 minutes
Consolidate the Matrix	20 minutes
Key Issues & Strategy	30 minutes
Subgroup and Slides	30 minutes
Reality Check	5 minutes
Finishing Off	25 minutes
Practice	20 minutes
Total	3 hours

These times are given as a rough guidance; don't sacrifice clarity for the sake of progress. It helps to write the timeline on the board at the start of your preparation to keep track of progress.

1.1 Read the Case

Read the case, but **don't mark it**. Record any notes you need on a separate piece of paper. Remember that you'll need to discuss things later on, so notes are useful to point you back to something you think is important.

1.2 Individual Matrix

Go through the matrix (see The "Matrix" section below) individually, and once you have finished, write it up on the board. Try not to look too much at what other people are writing, because you want as many different points as possible. If you have time at this point, note down what you think the key issues are, and a few strategy ideas, because this will save time later on.

1.3 Consolidate the Matrix

One person (the 'pen') leads the team through the content written on the board in the matrix. Go through each row covering what each person has written about the issue and discuss as a team what you think is the most important point or points to take from the team's collective points. Write this in the 'consolidated' column for each row.

1.4 Key Issues and Strategy

Key Issues: Pick two key issues as a team. Discuss them, and clarify them as much as possible. A key issue can either be a constraint, or a driver (it is important to stress key issues do not always need to be negative, they may represent opportunities). It will always underpin the strategy. Try to use the format of **'Issue, meaning, and impact'** when talking about the key issue in the room, as this forces clarity.

Key issues should not be conceived with a specific strategy in mind (do not make up a key issue after thinking up of a strategy), rather they should be there as a standalone problem, of which a strategy has been devised to solve it.

Likewise, do not put in a key issue if it is infeasible to solve. A common example of this is "Competition". Competition is a key issue in which companies themselves cannot directly address. Often, the underlying issue at hand could be lack of exposure, brand dilution or a myriad of other examples. Word your key issues clearly. This will help clarify the issue at hand and allow a more lucid strategy being formed.

Strategy: From these key issues and from the consolidated column of the matrix, come up with a strategy. It may be useful at this stage to have a few minutes of individual brainstorming of strategy ideas to get a variety of options to discuss. The strategy should have about two or three arms (it's unusual for one strategy to be the silver bullet for all of the problems), and it should address the key issues. **Discuss and debate these as much as possible.**

1.5 Sub-groups and slides

Split up, and start putting together the presentation slides. There are some useful partnerships at this point to work on different aspects of the case.

- **Strategy & Implementation:** Work out what parts of the strategy will be covered at the implementation stage and which at strategy.
- **Implementation & Finance:** Work together to estimate costs (e.g. if implementation decides to open 3 new factories this needs to be factored into the finances).
- **Strategy & Introduction:** Clarify the compelling arguments behind each key issue. Work out in what order key issues and strategy arms will be mentioned.

If the introduction & conclusion person has finished with their slides early, they should assist other team members with their work or make a few back up slides.

1.6 Reality Check

Take a break and ask yourselves:

- Have we answered the question of the case?
- Does our strategy align with the nature of the industry/nature of business/purpose?
- What will be the response of our customers and our competitors?
- How does it differ from the current strategy?

1.7 Finishing Off

Take this time to finish slides, clarify speeches, and think of questions that could be asked in Q&A. Note: The introduction person will most probably finish their work earlier than the rest of the team. Take the opportunity to assist other members on their slides/speeches etc. – Not only will this ensure efficiency, but it will improve general coherency between team members as to what everyone is doing. They may also wish to prepare any backup slides or help number slides so they are kept in order. Back up slides should include key analysis that lead to the strategy but are not included in the presentation such as customer analysis. However first priority at this stage will be to assist other team members finish their slides in order to get the most practice time possible.

1.8 Practice

Make sure you practice both individually and with the team. When you do a run through as a team, listen and give pointers on each other's presentations. Make sure your speeches fits within 10 minutes. See the Presentation Roles section below for a more detailed guide on what the presentation should entail.

2.0 The Matrix

The matrix is a tool that is used to extract the most important information from the case. Some aspects of the matrix demand analysis and insight and are vital for the structuring of your ideas, key issues and ultimately your strategy. Write it up on the whiteboard at the start of your three hours.

	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Consolidated
Case Question					
Purpose					
Nature of Industry					
Nature of Business					
What Do We Do					
Current Strategy					
Customers					
Competitors					
Other Stakeholders					
Key Issues					

2.1 Case Question (CQ)

This is what the case asks you to solve. It might be specifically asked, or it might be hinted at. It will generally be more 'small-picture'. The question of the case will generally be on the first page or last page of the case. Some cases will ask more than one question – all of them will need to be addressed. If there are too many questions to present on, focus on the most important ones but have the other questions and their answers in back up slides to show that you have thought of them.

2.2 Purpose

What is the company's ultimate purpose? What are they striving to do in the long term? Is it to achieve long-term sustainable growth or to gain more exposure? This will be a macro goal that you can compare with the case question.

2.3 Nature of Industry (NOI)

NOI involves looking at what the industry is (e.g., luxury fashion, aircraft manufacturing), where it is (e.g. Invercargill, North America, Asia, global), and its characteristics. Consider whether there are any major competitors, whether there are any barriers to entry, whether the industry is fragmented or consolidated, and the size of the market. Every NOI should have an implication.

2.4 Nature of Business (NOB)

NOB is about what do they do and how they do it. What are their strengths / weaknesses? Are they a leader in the industry, or one of the small players? What is their core competency? What characteristics label this business?

Your NOI and NOB will generate significant analysis and insight that is vital for Key Issue formulation.

2.5 What do we do? (WDWD)

What does the company do? It is important you understand exactly what your company does. For example, Piako Yoghurt produces, markets and distributes gourmet yoghurt to NZ and UK.

2.6 Current Strategy

What is the current strategy the company is taking? What are its significant characteristics?

2.7 Customer and Competitors

Who are your customers and who are your competitors? Identify their traits, socio-economic positioning, behaviour etc.

2.8 Other Stakeholders

Think about different perspectives on what is going on at the company. What do the owners/CEO want out of the company? Why do customers choose this company? What would competitors like to see happen? Does the government or regulatory bodies have any say in what goes on?

2.9 Key Issues

See above 1.4 Key Issues and Strategy. At this stage in the matrix the key issues are likely ideas only and not yet fully developed.

3.0 Presentation Roles

Role Outlines

In a team of four, there are the following roles:

- Introduction & Conclusion
- Key Issues & Strategy
- Finance
- Implementation

Timing of the roles should be approximately:

Role	Timing
Introduction	1 minute 30 seconds
Key Issues	1 minute
Strategy	2 minutes
Finances	2 minute 30 seconds
Implementation	2 minute 30 seconds
Conclusion	30 seconds
Total	10 minutes

3.1 Introduction

- **Company or Industry Insight:** Briefly summarise one important aspect of the industry or business. This should be a key fact of the case leading to a key insight you have gathered from the case. Make sure to keep this short and no longer than two or three sentences.
- **Case Question & Answer:** State and answer the question of the case.
- **Current vs. Proposed:** Briefly outline where the strategy will take you by comparing current strategy with proposed.
- **Size of Prize:** Slide showing value increase after implementing your strategy. Give the quantitative benefit the strategy will add (e.g. 25% increase in company value).

3.2 Key Issues and Strategy

Key Issues

Outline two key issues facing the business/industry and its implication. In your presentation, tell us why a key issue is important, with a compelling argument to justify it. A good way to format the presentation of your key issues is:

- Issue
- Meaning
- Impact

Strategy

Strategy covers your recommendation for the organisation. It answers the question of what are we going to do, and why are we going to do this? Briefly summarise the 'what' as this will be covered in more detail along with 'how' in implementation, and talk in more detail about the '**why**'. Link your proposed strategy back to your key issues identified and provide a compelling argument as a link (customer insight may be useful here).

3.3 Finances

Finances provide numerical and quantitative support to the strategy. Show us the quantitative benefit from your proposed strategy.

- **For Open Case Competition Teams:** Value your company and strategy arms to show the benefit of your strategy. In valuing your strategy, show how much value each arm of the strategy adds, and how much the strategy adds as a whole. State any assumptions you may have made in reaching these figures. Not all numbers that you need may be given in the case; make a reasonable assumption if this is the case and be prepared to justify it. The judges are most interested in your assumptions, so don't just present numbers – show them how you got to those numbers.
- **First Years' Competition Teams:** First year teams should choose to use profits or revenues as key metrics. There is a separate First Years' Financial guide that you should refer to.

- **Not for Profits:** In not for profit cases, revenue or profit may not be a good indicator of success. Tailor the financials / metrics of success to suit the purpose of the organization (e.g. how many pandas are saved by WWF).

3.4 Implementation

Strategy provides the why, while implementation explains **how the strategy will be implemented**. You need to provide sufficient detail to ground the strategy in specifics. For example, if your strategy involves marketing, the implementation of the strategy will require a comprehensive outline as to how you will do this: which media? Channels? Timeframe? Which consumer segment are you going to target?

Often, a criteria chart (Customer criteria, location criteria) is extremely helpful supporting references to further justify as to a specific route of implementation.

Because it is important to have a conclusion to your presentation, when you see the one minute warning sign, speak for another 30 seconds then finish off by saying you can cover any more implementation in Q&A then pass off to conclusion.

3.5 Conclusion

Recap the case question, current vs. proposed and size of prize. Lastly, suggest three things the company should begin to do tomorrow.

How You Will Be Assessed

The judges will be evaluating your team and comparing your performance with that of the other teams in your round. The judges will have read the case, and understand the business and industry. They will assess you on the following areas:

- Understanding of the business and industry
- Understanding of the key issues
- Strategy
- Quality of presentation
- Quality of question & answer

The judges will be using a standardised judging sheet to help ensure judging is fair. If time permits, judges will give feedback to each team and highlight areas to improve upon.

4.0 General Tips

Be professional and confident - you are professional consultants hired by the company. Make sure you have formal business attire. Look sharp and act confident at all times.

4.1 Presentation Tips

- Signposting (e.g. using hand gestures and – Improves clarity and adds structure
- Highlight important elements
- Step forward to speak – you are engaging with the judges, speak to them.
- Pause, speak slowly and use less words
- Situate yourself where you do not need to turn your body to read the slides
- Only the person changing slides should stand behind the lectern. The rest of the team should not hide behind the lectern

4.2 Slide Tips

- Try to keep the number of words on your slide to a minimum
- All slides should be landscape
- Use lots of colour and pictures
- Keep it simple, neat and tidy. Do not sacrifice clarity in your presentation

4.3 Q&A Tips

- Anticipating questions as much as possible. Some questions are fairly standard e.g. “Have you considered any other strategies, why or why not”, “Tell me about your customers”
- Share answers across the team
- Pause for a member to compose your thoughts
- Step forward to speak
- Be respectful. You can ask the judge to clarify the question if you did not understand it.
- Don't add on to another team member's answer unless it's necessary
- Do not provide false information if you don't know the answer