AI'S ENDGAME: LEVERAGING AI TO CRAFT THE AVENGERS CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In our research, we explore the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in enhancing strategic management education through storytelling-based case study development. Utilizing ChatGPT, a Generative AI model, we crafted a novel Avengers case study that serves as a modern, relatable educational tool. This AI-generated case study is rooted in the foundational elements of the classic "Robin Hood" case study, a well-established resource in the field. Our work validates ChatGPT's capability to produce short, content-rich cases suitable for single-class-period discussions or assessments. This addresses an existing gap in business education for timely and relevant case studies that effectively gauge students' analytical abilities. Moreover, ChatGPT's speed and adaptability enable instructors to swiftly generate alternative scenarios and corresponding answer keys, thereby maintaining the case's integrity in exam settings. Our research contributes to the evolving landscape of AI applications in educational case study development, particularly in strategic management pedagogy.

INTRODUCTION

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in educational settings has opened new avenues for enriching the learning experience, particularly in educational case study development. We describe the process of generating a novel case study, using the iconic Avengers from Marvel's cinematic universe, by leveraging AI capabilities. The methodology employed draws inspiration from the classic "Robin Hood" case study (Lampel, 1988), a staple in strategic management education.

The Robin Hood case study serves as an exemplary model for teaching strategic management concepts through storytelling. It presents students with a narrative that encapsulates the complexities of leadership, strategy formulation, and decision-making, all set within the context of Robin Hood's mission to redistribute wealth. The case is designed to provoke critical thinking and facilitate in-depth discussions, making it an invaluable educational tool. However, the modern classroom often seeks relatable and contemporary narratives that resonate with a new generation of students. Enter the Avengers, a team of superheroes facing multifaceted challenges that range from ethical dilemmas to strategic alliances, offering a rich tapestry for exploring advanced management theories.

The first step in the process involved a comprehensive analysis of the Robin Hood case to identify its core elements—character development, strategic challenges, ethical considerations, and decision points. This served as the foundational structure upon which the Avengers case was built. The next step was to integrate these elements with the unique characteristics and challenges facing the Avengers, as depicted in Marvel's cinematic universe. This included defining the team's mission, outlining their strategic options, and presenting dilemmas that require complex decision-making.

To ensure the case's educational efficacy, the teaching note instructions from the Robin Hood case were adapted to fit the Avengers context. This involved creating an overview, suggestions for using the case, a teaching outline, and analysis questions that educators can employ to guide classroom discussions. The objective was to provide a comprehensive package that educators could seamlessly integrate into their curriculum.

AI played a pivotal role in this endeavor, particularly in generating narrative content, simulating strategic scenarios, and formulating discussion questions. The AI's capabilities were harnessed to create a compelling story that not only engages students but also serves as a robust framework for teaching strategic management concepts. The AI was also instrumental in conducting both a SWOT and Porter's Five Forces analysis, generating potential mission statements, and even suggesting TOWS-based strategies for the Avengers, thereby enriching the case's educational value.

We present a blueprint for leveraging AI in the development of educational case studies, using the Avengers as a contemporary narrative vehicle and the Robin Hood case as a structural model. The resulting case study serves as a testament to the potential of AI in revolutionizing educational storytelling, offering a modern, relatable, and comprehensive tool for teaching strategic management.

IMPORTANCE OF STORYTELLING

The landscape of business education is evolving, and with it, the pedagogical tools and methods that educators employ must adapt to meet the needs of a new generation of learners. Traditional case studies have long been a staple in business schools, offering students the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios. Kiesel and Craven (2021) support the increasing need for innovative approaches that not only engage students but also foster creativity, critical thinking, and real-world application. One such approach is the use of storytelling-based teaching cases (López-Vázquez, Kaltenecker, Santana, & Villa, 2022), exemplified by classics like the Robin Hood case and more contemporary iterations like our new Avengers case.

The first compelling argument for storytelling-based teaching cases lies in their ability to engage and captivate students. Traditional business cases often focus on corporate settings, which may not resonate with all students, particularly those interested in entrepreneurship. By embedding business challenges and strategic dilemmas in well-known stories or popular culture narratives, educators can capture students' attention and make the learning experience more relatable and memorable. This is not merely a cosmetic change; it's a pedagogical strategy that enhances the educational impact. The familiarity of characters and settings in stories like Robin Hood or the Avengers provides an immediate context that students can relate to, thereby lowering the cognitive load required to understand the case's fundamental issues.

Secondly, storytelling-based cases offer a rich tapestry for exploring complex business challenges and ethical dilemmas. Our new Avengers case, for instance, could delve into topics ranging from team dynamics and leadership to ethical considerations of technology and national security. This multidimensional approach prepares students for the complexities they will face in their careers, where challenges are rarely one-dimensional and often require balancing various stakeholders' needs and ethical considerations.

Moreover, the storytelling approach aligns well with the increasing focus on entrepreneurship in business education. As more young people opt for entrepreneurial paths, it is crucial to develop educational tools to prepare them for the unique challenges that entrepreneurs face. Storytelling cases can simulate the entrepreneurial journey, from startup challenges to scaling issues, providing a safe yet realistic platform for students to practice decision-making and problem-solving.

Another critical advantage to storytelling-based cases is the fostering of creativity and critical thinking. Students engaged with the fairytale-based teaching case demonstrated heightened creativity in their approach to problem-solving (Kiesel & Craven, 2021). In an age where rote learning and standardized tests are often criticized for stifling creativity, storytelling-based cases offer a welcome change. They encourage students to think outside the box, explore alternative scenarios, and even challenge existing norms and assumptions, skills that are invaluable in today's fast-paced business environment.

Furthermore, the inclusivity that storytelling cases offer cannot be overlooked. Traditional cases often feature protagonists from specific demographic or professional backgrounds, inadvertently limiting the diversity of perspectives explored. Storytelling cases, with their varied characters and settings, offer a more inclusive platform that resonates with a broader range of students. This inclusivity is not just about representation; it enriches the educational experience by introducing diverse challenges and viewpoints, thereby preparing students for a globalized business world.

Storytelling-based teaching cases like Robin Hood and our new Avengers case offer a multifaceted, engaging, and effective approach to business education. They captivate students' attention, offer multidimensional challenges, encourage creativity and critical thinking, and provide a more inclusive and relatable learning experience. As business education continues to evolve, embracing innovative pedagogical tools like storytelling cases will not only enhance the learning experience but also better prepare students for the complexities and challenges of the modern business world.

VALUE FOUND IN STORYTELLING-BASED CASES: THE ROBIN HOOD CASE

The Robin Hood case has been a cornerstone in business education, particularly in the strategic management. Its storytelling approach offers a compelling narrative that engages students and facilitates a deeper understanding of complex business challenges. Lundberg, Rainsford, Shay, and Young (2001) challenge the conventional wisdom that a good teaching case should primarily be decision-focused. It argues for a diversified approach to case writing that includes a variety of learning objectives and educational opportunities. This perspective is echoed by Dean and Fornaciari (2002), where they explore the limitations of the traditional case method and proposes a novel approach that combines case analysis with role-playing. Additionally, Corner and Corner (2003) advocate for a student-centered, non-directive approach to teaching. These papers explicitly mention the Robin Hood case as offering a rich narrative and multiple dimensions for analysis, which can significantly enhance the educational experience by providing a diversified and student-centered learning environment.

Thomas (1999) emphasizes the critical role of the initial class sessions in setting the tone for the entire semester and introduces exercises designed to foster student participation. This paper, along with Corner and Corner (2003), underscores the value of using the Robin Hood case as an introductory exercise that engages students in group discussions and critical thinking. Furthermore, Kiesel and Craven (2021) supports the increasing need for innovative approaches that not only engage students but also foster creativity, critical thinking, and real-world application. The Robin Hood case, with its storytelling approach, serves as an ideal platform for achieving these pedagogical objectives.

Lastly, Corner and Corner (2003) mentions the use of a one-page Robin Hood case for training sessions, serving as an introductory exercise for more complex strategic discussions in OR/MS courses. This aligns with the Dean and Fornaciari (2002) suggestion that popular cases like Robin Hood can be effectively adapted to innovative teaching methods like role-playing. Moreover, Kiesel and Craven (2021) argue that storytelling cases offer a more inclusive platform that resonates with a broader range of students, thereby enriching the educational experience by introducing diverse challenges and viewpoints.

The Robin Hood case serves as an example of the power of storytelling in business education. It not only engages students but also offers a multi-dimensional framework for exploring complex business challenges. The case's widespread use and adaptability to various teaching methods, as evidenced by prior use (Corner & Corner, 2003; Dean & Fornaciari, 2002; Kiesel & Craven, 2021; Thomas, 1999), make it an invaluable resource in modern business education. It offers a template for storytelling-based cases that not only captivates students' attention but also provides a comprehensive learning experience. As business education continues to evolve, embracing innovative pedagogical tools like storytelling cases will not only enhance the learning experience but also better prepare students for the complexities and challenges of the modern business world.

CREATING STORYTELLING-BASED CASES USING GENERATIVE AI

The introduction of Generative AI in business education offers a compelling avenue for enhancing the pedagogical impact of storytelling-based teaching cases. Çakmakoğlu (2023) emphasizes the capability of ChatGPT to distill complex concepts into digestible formats. While the study primarily focuses on dental education, the underlying principle of utilizing AI to simplify intricate ideas is directly translatable to business education. Specifically, Generative AI models like ChatGPT can dynamically create storytelling-based case studies that are rooted in contemporary or hypothetical business scenarios. These AI-generated cases offer a rich narrative, similar to classics like the Robin Hood case, that engages students and allows them to apply theoretical knowledge in novel and challenging contexts.

Shahriar and Hayawi (2023) further elaborate on the versatility of Generative AI, like ChatGPT, in generating contextually relevant and coherent text. This capability is particularly beneficial in business education, where the need for dynamic and current case studies is pervasive. By leveraging Generative AI, educators can create storytelling-based cases that not only reflect contemporary market trends but also resonate with a new generation of learners. Eager and Brunton (2023) add another layer to this discussion by highlighting the importance of "prompt engineering" in guiding AI models to produce logically coherent and pedagogically robust case studies. Mastery of this technique enables educators to align AI-generated cases with specific learning objectives, thereby enhancing their educational efficacy.

The potential of Generative AI in enriching storytelling-based teaching cases in business education is significant. Through the careful application of Generative AI technologies, educators can create dynamic, relevant, and pedagogically sound case studies that captivate students' attention, offer multidimensional challenges, and bridge the gap between theoretical instruction and practical application. Using these new AI tools is not only efficient and effective in generating focused storytelling-based case studies but it can be used to enrich the learning experience.

CREATION OF THE STORYTELLING-BASED CASE USING CHATGPT

Using OpenAI's ChatGPT 4.0 to generate a new storytelling-based case called "The Avengers Initiative - A Strategic Quandary in a Post-Thanos World" required some background information, specifically, the "Robin Hood" case and Teaching Note, and some simple prompts. We prompted ChatGPT to:

- 1. Generate a 1000 word case study
- 2. In the style of the "Robin Hood:" case study
- 3. Using the characters for the Marvel movie series
- 4. Giving sufficient information to perform the strategic analysis of the type contained in the teaching note

The following case was generated based on these prompts:

The Avengers Initiative - A Strategic Quandary in a Post-Thanos World

In the aftermath of the defeat of Thanos, Tony Stark, also known as Iron Man, found himself in a reflective mood within the high-tech confines of the Avengers Tower. The Avengers Initiative, originally a brainchild of Nick Fury, had grown from a team of extraordinary individuals into a complex organization with global and even cosmic responsibilities. Stark pondered the evolving dynamics of the team, the increasing scale of threats, and the financial and ethical dilemmas that lay ahead. The Avengers had started as a tight-knit group with Stark as the de facto strategist and financier, Steve Rogers (Captain America) as the tactical planner and moral compass, and Natasha Romanoff (Black Widow) in charge of intelligence and espionage. Other original members like Thor, Bruce Banner (Hulk), and Clint Barton (Hawkeye) had specialized roles that complemented the team's capabilities.

However, the Avengers had evolved significantly since their inception, incorporating new members like Wanda Maximoff, also known as the Scarlet Witch, Vision, Sam Wilson, who goes by the moniker Falcon, and James Rhodes, better known as War Machine. Each of these individuals brought unique abilities and perspectives to the table. Wanda Maximoff, with her reality-altering powers, offered unparalleled tactical advantages but also posed ethical questions about the extent of her abilities. Vision, an android with a synthetic body and a powerful mind stone, was a technological marvel but raised concerns about the integration of artificial intelligence within the team. Sam Wilson, a former military pararescue airman, brought a disciplined approach to missions but also advocated for greater transparency in the team's operations. James Rhodes, a decorated military officer, added firepower and strategic acumen but was also a liaison to the U.S. military, creating potential conflicts of interest.

Stark found himself pondering the complexity of his team, musing, "We've got a sorcerer, a king, and a teenager who talks to spiders. How do we make this work as a coherent team?" The diversity within the Avengers was indeed a double-edged sword. On one hand, it significantly enhanced the team's capabilities, allowing them to tackle a broader range of threats and challenges. On the other hand, it introduced complexities in coordination, decision-making, and resource allocation. For instance, Wanda's powers could alter reality but required careful ethical considerations. Vision's capabilities were tied to technology that could potentially be hacked. Sam's insistence on transparency could conflict with the need for secrecy in certain operations, and Rhodes' military obligations could compromise the team's independence.

Financial sustainability was another pressing concern for Stark. Stark Industries had been the primary financier of the Avengers since their formation. However, the increasing scale and complexity of their operations had begun to strain the financial reserves. Advanced technologies like Vision's synthetic body, intergalactic travel to confront cosmic threats, and the maintenance of secure facilities like the Avengers Compound required substantial financial investment. Stark found himself at a crossroads, contemplating whether to seek external funding to sustain the Avengers' operations. He considered various options, including partnerships with other technology firms, crowdfunding, and even governmental funding. Each option came with its own set of challenges and implications. For example, governmental funding could provide the necessary financial support but would likely subject the Avengers to political oversight, compromising their operational autonomy.

Adding to the complexity was the introduction of the Sokovia Accords, a regulatory framework for superhuman activities. The Accords had divided the team, with some members seeing it as a necessary step for accountability and others viewing it as an infringement on their autonomy. Stark was torn; he understood the need for oversight but also feared the loss of independence that made the Avengers effective in the first place. Moreover, ethical questions were being raised about the Avengers' unilateral interventions in global and cosmic affairs. Public opinion was divided, and Stark knew that the team's actions were under increasing scrutiny. Stark realized that the Avengers were at a strategic crossroads. One option was to become a government-sanctioned operation, which would provide financial stability but could compromise their independence and flexibility. Another option was to form alliances with other superhero groups or cosmic entities, which would distribute the operational burden but would require a reevaluation of the Avengers' mission and objectives. A third option that Stark considered was monetizing some of the Avengers' proprietary technologies. While this could provide a much-needed revenue stream, it could also lead to ethical and security risks if the technology fell into the wrong hands.

As Stark sat in the Avengers Tower, he knew that the decisions made in the coming days would shape the future of the Avengers and potentially the world. The stakes were high, and the challenges were complex. Stark understood that the team needed to adapt to the new realities but was uncertain about the best path forward. He knew that whatever course of action was chosen, it would require careful planning, strong leadership, and the collective will of a team of extraordinary individuals, each with their own beliefs, capabilities, and stakes in the Avengers' mission. It was a strategic quandary that demanded a solution, and Stark was all too aware that the clock was ticking.

DEVELOPING A USEFUL TEACHING NOTE

Evaluating this ChatGPT generated storytelling-based case for usefulness, we attempted to create a teaching note providing instruction for using the case in a strategy orienting business course. By generating a quality teaching note we validate the usefulness of the case.

Case Overview:

The case study delves into the complex strategic challenges facing the Avengers Initiative in a post-Thanos world. Initially formed as a response to unprecedented threats, the Avengers have evolved into a multifaceted organization with diverse capabilities but also intricate dilemmas. Tony Stark (Iron Man), the de facto strategist and financier, grapples with issues ranging from team coherence and financial sustainability to regulatory compliance and ethical considerations. The case is set against the backdrop of the Sokovia Accords, a regulatory framework that has divided the team and raised questions about their autonomy and accountability. Stark contemplates various strategic options, including government sanction, forming alliances with other superhero groups, and monetizing proprietary technologies. Each option presents its own set of advantages and disadvantages, requiring a nuanced understanding of strategy formulation and execution. The case offers a rich context for exploring topics such as organizational complexity, stakeholder management, ethical considerations, and the challenges of leading a diverse team in a volatile environment. It serves as an excellent vehicle for applying various strategic frameworks and tools, making it highly relevant for courses in strategic management, organizational behavior, and leadership.

Case Use Recommendation:

The "Avengers Initiative - A Strategic Quandary in a Post-Thanos World" case study is designed to serve as a multifaceted teaching tool that can be employed in various educational settings. It is particularly well-suited for courses focusing on strategic management, organizational behavior, leadership, and ethics. Below are some suggestions for effectively utilizing this case in a classroom or professional development setting:

• Strategy Formulation and Execution

The case provides an excellent opportunity to explore the complexities of strategy formulation and execution in a dynamic and uncertain environment. Instructors can guide students to apply strategic frameworks such as SWOT analysis, TOWS analysis, or Porter's Five Forces to dissect the challenges and opportunities facing the Avengers. The case can serve as a transition case that allows students to move from crafting strategy to executing it, emphasizing the importance of both in achieving organizational objectives.

• Organizational Behavior and Team Dynamics

The case offers a rich context for discussing organizational behavior and team dynamics, especially in a diverse and decentralized team. Instructors can focus on topics such as leadership styles, decision-making processes, and conflict resolution. Role-playing exercises can be employed to simulate the decision-making challenges faced by the Avengers, allowing students to explore the complexities of leading a team with diverse capabilities and viewpoints.

• Ethical Considerations and Stakeholder Management

The case raises important ethical questions related to accountability, autonomy, and the use of power. Instructors can guide discussions on the ethical implications of various strategic options, such as government oversight or monetization of proprietary technologies. The Sokovia Accords serve as a focal point for discussing stakeholder management, including how to balance the interests of different stakeholders while maintaining organizational integrity.

• Financial Management

The financial constraints faced by the Avengers provide a basis for discussions on budgeting, resource allocation, and financial sustainability. Students can be tasked with developing a financial model to evaluate the feasibility of various strategic options, incorporating considerations such as operational costs, potential revenue streams, and risk factors.

Case Questions:

The following questions assume a "Strategy Formulation and Execution" focus for analysis and in-class discussion.

- 1. What are the key challenges facing the Avengers Initiative, and what issues need immediate attention?
- 2. Do the Avengers need a new mission statement or set of objectives?
- 3. What strategic options are available to the Avengers? Is continuing with the current strategy sustainable?
- 4. What are the pros and cons of aligning with governmental bodies or other superhero groups?
- 5. What action plan would you recommend to Tony Stark?
- 6. How should the recommended plan be implemented? What steps are needed to ensure effective execution?

Teaching Outline:

Case Preparation and Discussion

Instructors are advised to assign the case as pre-reading and provide students with a set of guiding questions to prepare for class discussion. The case is designed to be engaging and thought-provoking, encouraging students to think critically and analytically. A 75 minute class session is recommended for a thorough exploration of the case, including a debriefing session to synthesize key takeaways.

Assessment

The case can be used for both formative and summative assessment. For formative assessment, instructors can use in-class discussions to gauge student understanding and analytical abilities. For summative assessment, students can be tasked with preparing a written analysis of the case, providing recommendations for the Avengers' next steps.

Objectives

- To apply strategic frameworks such as SWOT analysis, Porter's Five Forces, and TOWS analysis to a complex, dynamic case.
- To understand the intricacies of strategy formulation and execution.
- To critically evaluate various strategic options and their implications.

Pre-Class Preparation

- Students should read the Avengers case and prepare answers to the case questions.
- Instructors should review the key strategic frameworks that will be applied during the class.

Class Structure

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Briefly introduce the Avengers case and its relevance to strategy formulation and execution.
- Outline the class objectives and the key questions that will guide the discussion.

Case Question Discussion (60 minutes)

- 1. Key Challenges and Immediate Issues (10 minutes)
 - Open the floor for students to share their thoughts on the key challenges facing the Avengers Initiative.
 - Guide the discussion to identify issues that require immediate attention.
- 2. Mission Statement and Objectives (10 minutes)
 - Discuss whether the Avengers need a new mission statement or set of objectives.
 - Encourage students to consider how a new mission or objectives would align with the identified challenges and opportunities.
- 3. Strategic Options and Sustainability (10 minutes)

- Ask students to present various strategic options available to the Avengers.
- Facilitate a debate on the sustainability of the current strategy.
- 4. Alignment with Governmental Bodies or Other Groups (10 minutes)
 - Explore the pros and cons of aligning with governmental bodies or other superhero groups.
 - Discuss the implications such alignment could have on the Avengers' mission and objectives.
- 5. Recommended Action Plan (10 minutes)
 - Invite students to recommend an action plan for Tony Stark.
 - Discuss the feasibility and potential impact of these recommendations.
- 6. Implementation and Execution (10 minutes)
 - Discuss how the recommended plan should be implemented.
 - Emphasize the steps needed to ensure effective execution, including resource allocation, timelines, and key performance indicators.

Summary and Conclusion (10 minutes)

- Summarize the key takeaways from the discussion.
- Reiterate the importance of both strategy formulation and execution in achieving organizational objectives.
- Assign any follow-up tasks or readings.

Post-Class Activities

- Distribute a summary of the class discussion and key insights.
- Assign a short reflective essay or case analysis for students to articulate their understanding of the strategic frameworks applied to the Avengers case.

This teaching plan is designed to provide a structured yet flexible framework for exploring the complexities of strategy formulation and execution using the Avengers case. It aims to engage students in critical thinking and practical application of strategic frameworks, thereby enriching their understanding and preparation for real-world challenges.

Analysis and Questions Answered:

The case is designed to offer a comprehensive exploration of strategic management principles, set against the backdrop of a complex, dynamic, and ethically nuanced environment. It provides an excellent platform for applying a range of strategic frameworks, from SWOT and TOWS analyses to ethical decision-making models. The case also delves into the intricacies of organizational behavior, offering insights into the challenges of leading a diverse and decentralized team. The financial aspects of the case add another layer of complexity, allowing for discussions on resource allocation, budgeting, and financial sustainability. The case is structured to be versatile, suitable for advanced undergraduate or graduate-level courses in management, strategy, or leadership. It is particularly effective as a capstone case, allowing students to apply a wide range of concepts and frameworks in a real-world context.

1. What problems does Tony Stark have? What issues need to be addressed?

Tony Stark, also known as Iron Man, faces a multitude of complex problems that require immediate attention. One of the most pressing issues is the organizational complexity stemming from the Avengers' expansion. The team has grown to include members with diverse abilities and backgrounds, such as Wanda Maximoff (Scarlet Witch), Vision, Sam Wilson (Falcon), and James Rhodes (War Machine). While this diversity enhances the team's capabilities, it also complicates coordination, decision-making, and resource allocation. Stark is concerned about how to integrate these new members effectively while maintaining team coherence. He muses, "How do we make this work as a coherent team?" indicating the depth of this challenge.

Financial sustainability is another critical issue. Stark Industries has been the primary financier of the Avengers, but the escalating costs associated with advanced technologies, intergalactic travel, and secure facilities are becoming unsustainable. Stark is contemplating whether to seek external funding, which could come with strings attached, such as loss of autonomy or influence from external stakeholders. The financial constraints are not just a matter of keeping the lights on; they directly impact the Avengers' ability to operate effectively and respond to threats.

The regulatory landscape presents another layer of complexity. The introduction of the Sokovia Accords, designed to regulate superhuman activities, has divided the team. Compliance would offer legitimacy but could severely limit the Avengers' operational autonomy. Stark is torn between the need for oversight and the potential loss of the

independence that makes the Avengers effective. This regulatory issue also raises ethical questions about the Avengers' unilateral interventions in global and cosmic affairs, adding to the public relations challenges the team faces.

Moreover, Stark is grappling with strategic direction. The Avengers are at a crossroads, and Stark is considering several strategic options, including becoming a government-sanctioned operation, forming alliances with other superhero groups, or monetizing some of the Avengers' proprietary technologies. Each option has its own set of advantages and disadvantages, and the decision will have far-reaching implications for the Avengers' mission, autonomy, and public perception.

Tony Stark is confronted with issues related to organizational complexity, financial sustainability, regulatory compliance, ethical considerations, and strategic direction. Each of these problems is interrelated, adding to the complexity of the situation. Stark realizes that the decisions made in the coming days will shape the future of the Avengers and potentially the world, making it imperative to address these issues in a comprehensive and thoughtful manner.

2. Do Tony Stark and the Avengers need a new mission? new performance targets? a new strategy?

Based on the complexities and challenges outlined in the case, it is evident that Tony Stark and the Avengers are at a pivotal juncture that necessitates a reevaluation of their mission, performance targets, and overall strategy. The original mission of the Avengers—to combat threats that no single hero could handle—while still relevant, may not be sufficiently comprehensive to address the new realities they face. The team's expansion, the introduction of the Sokovia Accords, and the increasing scrutiny of their actions all suggest that a more nuanced mission statement may be required. A revised mission could incorporate elements of accountability, collaboration with other entities, and a clearer ethical framework to guide their interventions.

Performance targets also need to be reconsidered. The Avengers' initial metrics for success were largely based on the effective neutralization of threats. However, the post-Thanos world presents challenges that are not just about combat effectiveness. Issues like team coherence, financial sustainability, and public perception are becoming increasingly important. New performance targets could include measures related to these aspects, such as operational efficiency, stakeholder engagement, and ethical compliance. These new metrics would provide a more holistic view of the Avengers' performance and could guide them in achieving a balanced set of objectives.

As for strategy, the case makes it clear that the current approach is unsustainable in the long term. Stark is contemplating several strategic options, each with its own set of implications. Becoming a government-sanctioned operation would solve financial issues but could compromise the team's independence. Forming alliances with other superhero groups would distribute the operational burden but would require a reevaluation of the Avengers' mission and objectives. Monetizing some of the Avengers' proprietary technologies could provide a revenue stream but might lead to ethical and security risks. Given these complexities, a new strategy is not just advisable; it is imperative.

The evolving challenges and complexities facing Tony Stark and the Avengers necessitate a comprehensive review and likely revision of their mission, performance targets, and strategy. A new mission should reflect the broader responsibilities and ethical considerations that come with their expanded role. New performance targets should capture a range of objectives beyond mere combat effectiveness, including operational, financial, and ethical metrics. Finally, a new strategy should be formulated to address the financial, organizational, and ethical challenges that have arisen, ensuring the Avengers' sustainability and effectiveness in a rapidly changing environment.

Possible new mission statements

- 1. "To protect and serve humanity and the universe at large, through a collaborative, accountable, and ethically-guided approach, while adapting to evolving threats and challenges."
- 2. "To unite extraordinary individuals in the pursuit of a safer world and cosmos, balancing the need for autonomous action with social responsibility and ethical governance."
- 3. "To be a dynamic force for good, committed to combating existential threats while upholding the principles of accountability, transparency, and ethical conduct, in partnership with global and cosmic stakeholders."
- 4. "To lead in safeguarding Earth and beyond, by integrating diverse talents and technologies, and by engaging responsibly with communities and governing bodies to ensure ethical and effective interventions."
- 5. "To serve as the vanguard of planetary and cosmic security, committed to excellence in operational effectiveness, financial sustainability, and ethical conduct, while fostering collaborative relationships with other entities for the greater good."

Each of these mission statements aims to capture the complex responsibilities and challenges facing the Avengers in the post-Thanos era. They incorporate elements of accountability, ethical considerations, and the need for collaboration, reflecting the multi-faceted nature of the Avengers' role in a changing environment.

3. What strategic options are available to the Avengers? Is continuing with the current strategy sustainable?

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis for Tony Stark and the Avengers would provide a comprehensive overview of the internal and external factors affecting their organization. This analysis is particularly crucial given the complex challenges they face in the post-Thanos era.

Strengths:

- 1. Diverse Capabilities: The Avengers boast a wide range of skills and powers, from Stark's technological prowess to Thor's cosmic abilities. This diversity allows them to tackle a variety of threats.
- 2. Financial Backing: Initially, Stark Industries provided substantial financial resources, enabling advanced technologies and facilities.
- 3. Strong Leadership: With leaders like Stark and Steve Rogers, the team has strategic and tactical expertise.
- 4. Global and Cosmic Reach: The Avengers have the capability to operate both on Earth and in cosmic settings, giving them unparalleled operational scope.
- 5. Public Support: Despite controversies, the Avengers generally enjoy a level of public support due to their role in combating existential threats.

Weaknesses:

- 1. Organizational Complexity: The team's expansion has led to coordination and decision-making challenges, as noted by Stark's concern about team coherence.
- 2. Financial Sustainability: The increasing operational costs are becoming unsustainable, forcing Stark to consider external funding.
- 3. Regulatory Constraints: The Sokovia Accords present a legal and ethical dilemma, dividing the team on the issue of oversight and accountability.
- 4. Public Scrutiny: Collateral damage and unilateral interventions have led to increased public and governmental scrutiny.

Opportunities:

- 1. Strategic Alliances: The possibility of forming alliances with other superhero groups or cosmic entities could distribute operational and financial burdens.
- 2. Monetization: Stark considers monetizing some proprietary technologies, which could provide a new revenue stream.
- 3. Government Sanction: Becoming a government-sanctioned operation could offer financial stability and legal protection, albeit with some loss of autonomy.
- 4. Ethical Leadership: By proactively adopting a more accountable and transparent operational model, the Avengers could set ethical standards for superhuman activities.

Threats:

- 1. Regulatory Oversight: Compliance with the Sokovia Accords could limit the Avengers' operational autonomy and effectiveness.
- 2. Public Opinion: A shift in public sentiment could lead to loss of support, impacting their social license to operate.
- 3. Financial Constraints: Without a sustainable financial model, the Avengers risk losing their operational capabilities.
- 4. Internal Division: Divergent views on issues like the Sokovia Accords or strategic direction could lead to internal conflict, weakening team cohesion.

The SWOT analysis reveals that while the Avengers have significant strengths, they are facing pressing weaknesses that need immediate attention. The opportunities and threats presented by their external environment further underscore the need for a strategic reevaluation. Stark, as the de facto strategist, must consider these factors carefully as he contemplates the future direction of the Avengers.

A TOWS (Threats, Opportunities, Weaknesses, Strengths) matrix goes beyond SWOT analysis by systematically considering how external opportunities and threats can be matched with internal strengths and weaknesses to develop strategic options. Below are TOWS-based strategies for Tony Stark and the Avengers:

Strengths-Opportunities (SO) Strategies:

- 1. Leverage Diverse Capabilities for Strategic Alliances: Utilize the team's diverse skills to form alliances with other superhero groups or cosmic entities, thereby distributing operational and financial burdens.
- 2. Monetize Proprietary Technologies: Use Stark's technological prowess to monetize some of the Avengers' technologies, creating a new revenue stream that can be reinvested into the organization.

Strengths-Threats (ST) Strategies:

- 1. Utilize Public Support to Counter Regulatory Oversight: Leverage the Avengers' public support to negotiate more favorable terms for any government oversight, thereby minimizing the impact of regulatory constraints.
- 2. Financial Backing for Crisis Management: Use the initial financial backing from Stark Industries to develop a crisis management plan that can be activated in case of severe public backlash or other threats.

Weaknesses-Opportunities (WO) Strategies:

- 1. Government Sanction for Financial Sustainability: To address the financial sustainability issue, consider becoming a government-sanctioned operation, which could provide stable funding.
- 2. Adopt Ethical Leadership to Mitigate Regulatory and Public Scrutiny: Proactively adopt a transparent and accountable operational model to address the weaknesses related to the Sokovia Accords and public scrutiny.

Weaknesses-Threats (WT) Strategies:

- 1. Internal Reorganization to Address Organizational Complexity: Given the threat of internal division and the weakness of organizational complexity, consider a structural reorganization that clarifies roles and decision-making processes.
- 2. Financial Diversification to Counter Financial Constraints: To mitigate the threat of financial constraints, diversify funding sources, possibly through public-private partnerships or crowd-funded initiatives.

The TOWS-based strategies offer a roadmap for Tony Stark and the Avengers to navigate the complex challenges they face. By systematically aligning their internal strengths and weaknesses with external opportunities and threats, they can develop a more robust and adaptive strategic plan. Given the multi-faceted nature of their challenges, a multi-pronged approach that addresses organizational, financial, regulatory, and ethical dimensions is likely to be most effective.

A Porter's Five Forces Analysis provides the basis for an external analysis of the Avenger's current situation. The Avengers, a team of superheroes with diverse abilities and backgrounds, face unique challenges that extend beyond their primary mission of safeguarding the world. To understand the strategic landscape in which they operate, it is crucial to employ a framework like Porter's Five Forces. This analysis aims to evaluate the competitive forces affecting the Avengers, considering factors such as the threat of new entrants, the bargaining power of suppliers and buyers, the threat of substitutes, and the intensity of competitive rivalry.

Threat of New Entrants (Low)

- Barriers to Entry: The barriers to entry are high due to the unique skill sets, advanced technologies, and specialized knowledge required to operate at the Avengers' level.
- Capital Requirements: The financial outlay for technologies, intergalactic travel, and secure facilities is substantial, making it difficult for new teams to emerge.
- Governmental Oversight: Any new team would likely face significant scrutiny and potentially restrictive oversight, especially if they seek governmental funding.

Bargaining Power of Suppliers (Medium)

- Unique Resources: The Avengers rely on unique resources like Wanda's reality-altering powers and Vision's synthetic body, which are not easily replaceable.
- Financial Backing: Stark Industries has been the primary financier, giving it significant bargaining power.
- Technological Dependence: The team's reliance on advanced technology could give suppliers like Stark Industries leverage.

Bargaining Power of Buyers (Low)

- Uniqueness of Service: The Avengers offer a unique service that is not easily replicated, reducing the bargaining power of any governmental or organizational "buyers" who might want to contract their services.
- High-Stakes Operations: Given the global or even cosmic scale of the threats they address, few can afford to bargain hard with the Avengers.

Threat of Substitute Products or Services (Low)

- Specialized Skills: The unique abilities of each team member make it difficult to find a substitute for the Avengers.
- Scale of Operations: The Avengers operate on a global and intergalactic scale, making it challenging for smaller teams or organizations to act as substitutes.

Competitive Rivalry (Medium)

- Internal Rivalries: The diverse skill sets and backgrounds within the team could lead to internal competition, affecting coordination and decision-making.
- External Competitors: While there are other superhero teams, none operate at the same scale as the Avengers, reducing external competitive pressures.
- Resource Allocation: The need for specialized resources could lead to competition, both internally and externally.

The Porter's Five Forces analysis reveals that the Avengers operate in a complex strategic environment. While they face low threats from new entrants and substitutes, the bargaining power of suppliers and internal competitive rivalries pose challenges. Financial sustainability, resource allocation, and coordination are key areas that require strategic focus. As the Avengers contemplate their future, understanding these forces will be crucial in navigating the complexities they face, both as a superhero team and as an organization.

Alternative 1: Government Sanction

One viable alternative available to Tony Stark is to seek government sanction for the Avengers Initiative. This would involve formalizing the Avengers as a government-sanctioned operation, thereby providing them with legal protection and potentially stable funding. While this would address the immediate financial sustainability issue, it comes with its own set of challenges. Government oversight could compromise the Avengers' operational autonomy, as they would likely be subject to bureaucratic controls and political considerations. Moreover, this could exacerbate internal divisions within the team, especially among those who are opposed to the Sokovia Accords or any form of governmental oversight. Stark would need to carefully negotiate the terms of this arrangement to maintain as much operational flexibility as possible while satisfying regulatory requirements.

Alternative 2: Strategic Alliances

Another alternative is to form strategic alliances with other superhero groups or cosmic entities. This approach would allow the Avengers to distribute the operational and financial burdens associated with their expansive mission. By aligning with groups that have complementary skills or objectives, the Avengers could enhance their effectiveness and reach. However, this would require a reevaluation of the Avengers' mission and objectives to ensure alignment with their new partners. Stark would also need to consider the complexities of inter-group dynamics, decision-making, and resource allocation in such alliances. The potential for conflicting interests or ethical frameworks makes this a complex but potentially rewarding option.

Alternative 3: Monetization of Technologies

Stark could also consider monetizing some of the Avengers' proprietary technologies. Given his expertise and resources in technology development, this could provide a new revenue stream for the organization. The funds generated could be reinvested into the Avengers' operations, thereby addressing the financial sustainability issue. However, this alternative comes with significant ethical and security risks. The commercialization of advanced technologies could lead to misuse or unintended consequences. Stark would need to implement stringent controls and ethical guidelines to ensure that the technologies do not fall into the wrong hands or be used irresponsibly.

Each of these alternatives offers a unique set of advantages and disadvantages, requiring Stark to weigh them carefully against the Avengers' mission, capabilities, and the challenges they face.

Based on the Porter's Five Forces analysis, continuing with the current strategy may not be sustainable for the Avengers in the long term for several reasons:

- 1. Financial Sustainability: Stark Industries has been the primary financier, but the increasing scale of operations has drained financial reserves. Without diversifying their financial backing, the Avengers may face challenges in sustaining their operations.
- 2. Resource Allocation and Coordination: The team's diversity, while a strength, also complicates coordination, decision-making, and resource allocation. Without a coherent strategy to manage these complexities, the team risks internal discord and inefficiency.

- 3. Supplier Dependence: The Avengers' reliance on unique resources and advanced technology from specific suppliers like Stark Industries could become a vulnerability if those suppliers change their terms or face their own challenges.
- 4. Ethical and Oversight Concerns: If the Avengers opt for external or governmental funding, they may have to compromise on their operational autonomy due to increased oversight, which could conflict with their existing strategy.
- 5. Internal Rivalries: The diverse skill sets and backgrounds within the team could lead to internal competition, affecting the team's cohesion and focus on common objectives.

Given these challenges, it would be prudent for the Avengers to reassess their current strategy. They may need to consider diversifying their financial sources, improving internal coordination mechanisms, and possibly forming strategic alliances that align with their mission and values. A failure to adapt could compromise their effectiveness and long-term sustainability.

4. What are the pros and cons of aligning with governmental bodies or other superhero groups?

Based on the new Avengers case, aligning with governmental bodies or other superhero groups presents a set of pros and cons that need to be carefully considered:

Aligning with Governmental Bodies:

Pros:

- 1. Financial Stability: Governmental support could provide a stable source of funding, addressing one of the most immediate challenges facing the Avengers.
- 2. Legal Protection: Being a government-sanctioned operation would offer legal cover and potentially ease the regulatory constraints posed by instruments like the Sokovia Accords.
- 3. Public Legitimacy: Government endorsement could bolster public support and lend an additional layer of legitimacy to the Avengers' operations.

Cons:

- 1. Loss of Autonomy: Governmental oversight could restrict the Avengers' operational flexibility, subjecting them to bureaucratic controls and political considerations.
- 2. Ethical Dilemmas: Aligning with a government could raise ethical questions, especially if the government engages in actions that conflict with the Avengers' values.
- 3. Internal Division: Given the team's differing views on governmental oversight, this option could exacerbate internal conflicts.

Aligning with Other Superhero Groups:

Pros:

- 1. Operational Synergy: Forming alliances with groups that have complementary skills could enhance the Avengers' operational effectiveness.
- 2. Shared Burden: Both operational and financial responsibilities could be distributed more broadly, easing the burden on any single entity.
- 3. Strategic Flexibility: Collaborating with other groups could offer more strategic options, including joint missions and shared resources.

Cons:

- 1. Complex Coordination: Aligning with other groups would add another layer of complexity to decision-making and coordination.
- 2. Potential for Conflict: Different groups may have different missions, ethical frameworks, or methods, leading to potential conflicts.
- 3. Dilution of Control: Sharing responsibilities and decision-making with other groups could dilute the Avengers' control over their operations and strategic direction.

While both options offer potential solutions to some of the Avengers' most pressing challenges, they also come with significant drawbacks that could introduce new complexities or exacerbate existing ones. Therefore, any decision to align with governmental bodies or other superhero groups must be made carefully, considering both the short-term gains and the long-term implications for the Avengers' mission, autonomy, and internal cohesion.

5. What action plan would you recommend to Tony Stark?

Based on the new Avengers case, the recommended action plan for Tony Stark focuses on addressing the immediate challenges of financial sustainability, regulatory compliance, and strategic direction. The plan is divided into short-term and long-term actions:

Short-Term Actions:

- 1. *Financial Assessment:* Conduct a comprehensive financial review to understand the current state of the Avengers' finances. This will serve as the basis for future financial planning.
- 2. *Regulatory Consultation:* Engage legal experts to assess the implications of the Sokovia Accords and other potential regulatory constraints. This will inform the Avengers' stance on compliance and negotiation strategies.
- 3. *Internal Dialogue:* Initiate a series of internal meetings to discuss the team's future, focusing on regulatory compliance, financial sustainability, and potential strategic alliances. Aim to reach a consensus or at least a majority agreement on these critical issues.
- 4. *Stakeholder Engagement:* Begin preliminary discussions with potential strategic partners, including other superhero groups and governmental bodies, to gauge interest and compatibility.

Long-Term Actions:

- 1. *Strategic Alliances*: Based on the internal consensus and preliminary discussions, proceed to formalize strategic alliances. This should include drafting Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and, eventually, legal contracts.
- 2. Financial Diversification: Explore alternative funding options, which could include government grants, private sponsorships, or monetizing proprietary technologies. Implement the chosen financial strategy after a risk assessment.
- 3. *Operational Streamlining:* Address organizational complexity by revising operational protocols and possibly restructuring the team to improve efficiency and decision-making.
- 4. Compliance Framework: Develop a compliance framework to navigate regulatory constraints like the Sokovia Accords. This should be aligned with the Avengers' revised mission and objectives.
- 5. *Public Relations Strategy:* Develop and implement a PR strategy to improve public perception and address ethical considerations. This could include regular public briefings, third-party audits, or community engagement programs.
- 6. *Performance Metrics:* Establish new performance metrics that align with the revised mission and objectives. These should include financial, operational, and ethical KPIs to provide a holistic view of the Avengers' performance.
- 7. *Periodic Review:* Implement a periodic review mechanism to assess the effectiveness of the new strategies and make necessary adjustments. This should involve both internal reviews and consultations with strategic partners.

By systematically addressing the immediate challenges and setting the stage for long-term sustainability, this action plan aims to position the Avengers for success in a rapidly changing environment. It balances the need for immediate action with the complexities of long-term strategic planning, offering a comprehensive roadmap for Tony Stark and the Avengers.

6. How should the recommended plan be implemented? What steps are needed to ensure effective execution?

This question is addressed using the Project Management Life Cycle, a widely recognized framework in the field of project management. This framework is often encapsulated in the Project Management Institute's (PMI) Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) and is designed to guide projects from initiation to closure. The five phases in the plan correspond to the five process groups in PMBOK:

- 1. *Initiating (Planning and Assessment):* This phase corresponds to the "Initiating" process group, where the project's value and feasibility are measured. In this case, it involves forming a strategic committee and conducting initial assessments.
- 2. Planning (Internal Alignment): This phase aligns with the "Planning" process group, where all tasks and needed resources are listed, and stakeholders come to an agreement on what the project will achieve. Here, internal dialogues are initiated, and consensus is reached on critical issues.
- 3. *Executing (External Engagement):* This phase corresponds to the "Executing" process group, where the project plan is put into action. For the Avengers, this involves external outreach, due diligence, and drafting agreements.
- 4. *Monitoring and Controlling (Implementation and Execution):* This phase aligns with the "Monitoring and Controlling" process group, where performance is measured and changes to the plan are made as needed. In this

- context, it involves the operationalization of the financial plan and the implementation of operational and compliance frameworks.
- 5. *Closing (Monitoring and Review):* This phase corresponds to the "Closing" process group, where the project is formally closed, and post-project documentation is completed. For the Avengers, this involves establishing KPIs, conducting regular reviews, and making necessary adjustments.

By adhering to this well-established framework, Tony Stark can ensure that the plan is implemented in a structured, systematic manner, thereby increasing the likelihood of its success. This approach allows for adaptability and scalability, which are crucial given the complex and dynamic nature of the Avengers' operating environment. Here are the steps for implementing the plan:

Phase 1: Planning and Assessment

- 1. Form a Strategic Committee: Assemble a committee comprising key members of the Avengers and external advisors, such as legal and financial experts, to oversee the implementation of the plan.
- 2. Conduct Assessments: Complete the financial and regulatory assessments as outlined in the short-term actions. The findings should be documented and presented to the strategic committee for review.
- 3. Set Milestones and Timelines: Establish clear milestones and timelines for each action item in the plan. This will serve as the roadmap for implementation.

Phase 2: Internal Alignment

- 1. Initiate Internal Dialogue: Conduct the planned internal meetings to discuss the team's future. Use the findings from the assessments to inform these discussions.
- 2. Reach Consensus: Aim to reach a consensus or majority agreement on critical issues like regulatory compliance, financial sustainability, and strategic alliances. Document the outcomes and share them with the strategic committee.
- 3. Secure Buy-In: Ensure that all members understand and are committed to the new strategic direction. This may require additional discussions or briefings.

Phase 3: External Engagement

- 1. Preliminary Outreach: Begin initial discussions with potential strategic partners. Use non-binding letters of intent or preliminary agreements to gauge interest and commitment.
- 2. Due Diligence: Conduct due diligence on potential partners to assess compatibility, financial stability, and ethical alignment.
- 3. Draft Agreements: Based on successful preliminary discussions and due diligence, draft MoUs or formal agreements for review by the strategic committee.

Phase 4: Implementation and Execution

- 1. Finalize Agreements: After committee review and any necessary revisions, finalize the agreements with strategic partners.
- 2. Operationalize Financial Plan: Implement the chosen financial strategy, whether it's securing government grants, private sponsorships, or monetizing technologies.
- 3. Implement Operational and Compliance Frameworks: Roll out the new operational protocols and compliance frameworks, ensuring that all members are trained and aware of the changes.

Phase 5: Monitoring and Review

- 1. Establish KPIs: Develop key performance indicators (KPIs) based on the new performance metrics.
- 2. Regular Monitoring: Conduct regular reviews against the KPIs to assess the effectiveness of the new strategies.
- 3. Adjustments: Based on the reviews, make any necessary adjustments to the plan, agreements, or operational protocols.
- 4. Stakeholder Communication: Keep both internal members and external partners informed about the progress and any changes to the plan.

By following this structured approach, Tony Stark can ensure that the recommended plan is implemented effectively, addressing both immediate challenges and setting the stage for long-term sustainability. This will require meticulous planning, stakeholder engagement, and ongoing monitoring and adjustment.

DISCUSSION

The teaching note generated with the assistance of ChatGPT serves as a robust validation of the quality and depth of our storytelling-based case studies. The capabilities of ChatGPT extend beyond mere content generation, offering a rich, multi-layered platform for strategy discussion that adds significant value to the educational experience. This is particularly noteworthy in the context of real-time analysis, a feature that addresses the often-cited limitation of traditional case studies—

namely, the time lag between their development and classroom application. By enabling the generation of cases that are both timely and relevant, ChatGPT enhances the pedagogical efficacy of the case study method, aligning it more closely with the rapidly evolving dynamics of the business world.

Real-time case generation offers a significant advantage and has profound implications for the assessment of students' analytical skills. Traditional case studies, when used in exams, have frequently been compromised by issues of academic integrity, as students gain unauthorized prior access to case content or answers. ChatGPT can help mitigate this risk by allowing instructors to swiftly generate alternative storytelling-based cases, relevant analysis question, and corresponding answer keys. This agility in case generation makes it exceedingly difficult for students to procure the case or its solutions before an examination, thereby upholding the integrity of the assessment process.

The utility of ChatGPT extends even further when considering stakeholder engagement. By generating cases that are rooted in real-world scenarios or current events, educators can capture the attention of industry professionals and academic peers. This broadens the scope and impact of the case study, making it a versatile tool for various educational, training, and professional settings. It offers a template for storytelling-based cases that not only captivates learners' attention but also provides a comprehensive learning experience.

Looking ahead, the integration of ChatGPT into the educational landscape signifies a shift in how we approach case-based teaching. As AI technologies continue to evolve, we can anticipate further enhancements in the quality, relevance, and pedagogical soundness of AI-generated case studies. This will necessitate ongoing dialogue among educators, technologists, and policymakers to ensure that the application of AI in education is both ethical and effective.

We have demonstrated that ChatGPT is an invaluable asset in the generation of storytelling-based case studies for business education. Its capabilities extend from enriching content to facilitating real-time analysis, timely case generation, and robust assessment mechanisms. As we navigate the complexities of modern education, tools like ChatGPT offer a promising avenue for enhancing the quality and relevance of pedagogical materials. The onus is now on educators and institutions to leverage this technology responsibly, optimizing its benefits while mitigating potential risks. By embracing the capabilities of ChatGPT to generate storytelling-based cases, we are participating in the evolution of business education for the next generation of learners.

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