

USING A 2 - PAGE CASE TO INTRODUCE CONCEPTS OF BUSINESS STRATEGY INTERACTIVE SESSION

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MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

OBJECTIVE(S) OF THE SESSION

- The purpose of this session is to demonstrate the pedagogical value of short cases and provide session participants with practical hands on experience through participation in a structured analysis of two classic short cases -- Morton Ltd. And Robin Hood.
- Session participants will gain insights into using short cases in general and these two cases in particular, and see how they can use short cases to introduce students to, and/or test them on, concepts of business strategy.

TARGET AUDIENCE

- Business faculty who teach business strategy, who are looking for short cases to introduce course concepts, or summarize and reinforce course concepts.
- Any faculty who use cases in their courses and are interested in improving their skills at leading a case analysis.
- 10-20 participants

TIME NEEDED (INCLUDING DEBRIEFING/DISCUSSION TIME)

- 2 hours. One hour for each of the two cases.

SESSION DESIGN

- A case will be distributed to session participants to read. (5-10 minutes)
- The session leaders (acting in the role of instructor) will lead the session participants (acting in the role of students) in a case analysis discussion. (30-40 minutes)
- Debrief (10-20 minutes).
- This design will be repeated using a second case.
- Case notes will be provided at the end of the session.

- Blackboards or at least three pads and easels

THEORY

- The value of case studies has a long list of documented support. The references provided below constitute only a small list of research conducted in this area.
- Examples of Concepts in the Cases to be Discussed:
 - Core competence
 - Sustainable Competitive Advantage
 - Managing Technological Change.
 - Industry Key Success Factors
 - Tactical (Short-run) vs. Strategic (Long-run) Decision Making
 - SWOT analysis
 - Identifying key issues facing firm
 - Developing and selecting alternatives
 - Implementation issues

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

- The use of short cases can set the stage for analysis of long, complex cases. The short cases present students with a “manageable” problem, while demonstrating the richness that can be discovered in the case with a comprehensive analysis. Students can practice how to approach a case analysis without being overwhelmed by the depth and breadth that exists in cases exceeding 20 pages. They are also simultaneously made aware of the rigor needed to adequately analyze any case.
- The 2-page case also provides the opportunity for in-class testing of students. While a large case requires significant outside-of-class preparation, a 2-page case can be used within a 30-45 minutes time limit to test students’ comprehension of course concepts.
- The session participants will act in the role of the student, analyzing and discussing the case handout under the direction of a session leader experienced in teaching the

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particular case. This direct involvement will allow the session participants to experience the case in a true “experiential” session rather than just intellectually discuss its merits.

IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

- Early in term to introduce course concepts.
- Middle to late in the term to (a) test students analytical skills regarding course concepts or (b) to provide a “breather” case that does not require extensive preparation (e.g., use in the first session following spring break).
- End of term as a vehicle to review and emphasize key course concepts.

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