

How to Write A Strategic Marketing Case

The key to writing a successful case is related to three issues:

- First, using Part 1 of the [Marketing Management Case Worksheets](#) to develop a detailed overview analysis of the case; remember to keep the written aspect of this analysis to two pages.
- Second, using Part 2 of the [Marketing Management Case Worksheets](#) to clearly understand the main problem facing the company and develop original and innovative alternative solutions to the problem; this section should be no longer than three pages.
- Third, writing clearly and without errors, in a total of *five* pages -- double-spaced, normal font size and page margins. You can include unlimited appendices. Appendices do not count to the page total, and can include financial tables and charts, perceptual maps, summary exhibits, etc. The goal is to force you to write, edit, and rewrite to the point where you are able to fully address all aspects of the case in a concise, but fully detailed five-page report.

Note: You must include your case analysis worksheets along with your written case report to receive full credit.

THE CASE ANALYSIS (within 5 pages)

Executive Summary:

This section discusses the relevant points of the case, including the main problem and proposed solution. *No longer than one paragraph.*

Company/Product Audit:

This section of the case write-up examines the company's strengths and weaknesses, company history and background, and critical elements of the product or service featured in the case. Several paragraphs.

Environmental Analysis:

This section investigates the external environment in which the organization operates, examining key environmental forces, environmental opportunities and threats, and the structure of the competitive environment. *Several paragraphs.*

Problem Statement and Underlying Symptoms:

This section should be no longer than -- as it says -- a statement. You should address the fundamental problem of the case in one sentence. If there are sub-problems you feel you should identify, feel free to do so, but make sure you clearly identify the main problem in

the case. Remember that strategic marketing problems are long-term, involve large sums of money, and affect multiple aspects of the firm.

You should be on alert for symptoms parading as key issues and underlying problems, as case writers often present false clues. Identify the symptoms that led you to the main problem. *Several paragraphs.*

Alternative Solutions:

This section is the most important section of the case write-up and should clearly identify and develop **two independent** alternative solutions to the problem in the case. You need to fully develop each alternative, including details about the alternative, implementation of each alternative, potential outcomes of implementing each alternative, as well as discussing advantages and disadvantages of each alternative.

This section shows your creativity, your ingenuity, and your marketing strategy expertise, which is why this section is the most important section of the case write-up. Be as thorough as possible in your development of *each* alternative. *Each alternative should be fully developed and analyzed in a total of no more than one page for each.*

Recommended Solution:

This section should state which of the two alternatives you developed in the previous section should be implemented by the company. The key is to match the internal resources (strengths) of the firm to the opportunities and threats in the external environment in a way that addresses (and resolves) the key marketing problem(s) you've identified.

Be certain to describe the decision-making process that led to your recommended solution.

Marketing Management Case Worksheets

Part 1: The Situation Analysis*

The first thing you need to do with any case analysis is develop a detailed review of the internal and external environments. You won't have enough information in most cases to answer all of these questions, but you should do your best to find as many answers as possible. Be sure to go beyond just the facts given in the case to make educated analyses and assumptions.

The 20 Key Questions:

1. What is the company's mission? Is it a good mission statement?
2. What is the essential company background information?
3. What environmental forces are most critical?
4. Describe the key environmental threats and opportunities. Be specific.
5. What is the composition of the competitive environment?
6. What product or service does the company market? How deep is its product line?
7. What type (classification) of product does the company market?
8. Who is the target market for the product(s)?
9. Describe how the typical consumer buys the product -- and how much he or she buys.
10. Describe how the typical consumer uses the product.
11. What are the strengths and weaknesses of competing products/services? Be sure to examine obvious competing products as well as substitute products/services.
12. What is the sales history for the company's product/for the industry?
13. What is the sales forecast for the company's product/for the industry?
14. What is the current (and historical) market share for the product?
15. What is the financial health of the company? Be specific. Review key financial ratios/analyses -- and complete analyses yourself if not done in the case.
16. Describe the current positioning strategy of the product/service. Be sure to analyze success of current positioning.
17. How are competing products positioned? Again, be sure to examine a wide range of competing products.
18. What is the company's pricing strategy for the product? Does it make sense?
19. What is the company's distribution strategy for the product? Does it make sense?
20. What is the company's promotion strategy for the product? Does it make sense?

**Once you've completed this worksheet, the information from it needs to be condensed into about a 2-page summary for the written case analyses.*

Part 2: The Marketing Problem and Alternative Solutions*

Once you've completed the detailed situation analysis, the next step for marketing managers is to examine symptoms -- indicators -- of the problems facing the company. Once problems are identified, then alternative solutions have to be developed. And finally, a recommended solution must be brought forth.

Solving the Case:

1. What is the underlying fundamental problem facing the company? Be specific.
2. What are the symptoms that led you to the main problem?
3. What are the causes of the symptoms and problem?
4. What other problems does the company face? Show your brilliance.
5. What are two alternative solutions to the main problem? Be detailed, specific, and comprehensive in your development of these two alternatives.
6. What criteria will you use to evaluate the alternatives you developed?

7. What are the expected outcomes of each alternative solution?
8. What is your final recommendation?
9. Describe your decision-making process in coming to your recommended solution.

**Once you've completed this worksheet, the information needs to be condensed into about the final three pages of your written case analysis.*