Guidelines for Case Analyses and Class Discussions

A “case” is a description of a situation or problem actually faced by a manager requiring analysis, decision, and planning a course of action. Generally, cases have no right answer. Most cases are ambiguous, presenting many viable alternatives, some of which are better than others. Cases present a lot of information, some of which is more useful than other information. You may not have all of the information you need or want. Managers make decisions based on incomplete information and must make assumptions. The future is uncertain. There are no guarantees. Judgment is risky in case analysis as it is in real life.

A case analysis is the closest you will get to making real managerial decisions while you are in school. To achieve the biggest impact, you need to come to class prepared to discuss the case. Yours and your classmates input and experience will help contribute to the discussion.

Case analysis is a reflection of your problem solving logic and thinking. However, while data gathering and analysis may be logical and linear, solutions should be more creative.

All students must come to class with their written assignment and prepared to discuss the case. If the student has NOT completed the assignment, (s)he will not be able to stay, participate in, and benefit from the class discussion. Late policies mentioned elsewhere in the syllabus will pertain.

Requirements:
- Page length is dependent on answering questions in full; APA format required: 12 pt font, 1” margins all around, double spacing.
- Demonstration and application of readings, theory, concepts and evidence to the analysis.
- Some must be from this class, but we expect you will also include and integrate concepts from other classes and personally researched readings on evidence and studies as well.
- You MUST select and use analytical frameworks from class lectures and readings.
- Attention to excellent written English, including grammar, diction, syntax, and spelling.
- Grading will take into account the quality and clarity of the writing.
- Creative but realistic solutions.

Case Discussion:
The value of the class discussion depends on you and what you bring to the discussion. Therefore preparation is critical to an exchange of good learning and dialogue. The instructor role will be to act as discussion facilitator. I may or may not participate in the discussion, and I may or may not provide my own views during the discussion. Management is a skill that comes from practice, practice, practice. A case analysis and discussion is the closest you will get to actually making managerial decisions while you are in school. Involvement is the best way to learn this skill.

Maximizing your Learning from Case Analysis and Discussion:
- Come prepared
- Review your ideas with your classmates, but remember to do the work yourself. Do not try to arrive at a consensus because did I say there are no right answers?
- Relate your past experiences to this case and try to identify similarities or differences.
- Learning management has a lot of do with understanding principles that travel across
experiences.
- Continually apply what you are learning to the current management situations in which you find yourself. Note how different people from different situations, organizations, and cultures analyze the situation differently. This may provide creative ways of evaluating a situation.
- Actively participate in the discussion and share your ideas. Take risks. It is okay if your classmates have different opinions. Articulating your views helps to clarify them and provides you with the opportunity to defend your decisions – an important managerial skill.