Why use Cases?

Decision-forcing cases offer a set of unique benefits over their more traditional counterparts because they stop short of the solution. Rather than detailing how a decision maker approached a real-world problem, readers step into the shoes of the decision-maker, synthesizing information inside and outside the case study to make a decision that solves the problem facing the protagonist. Eric Morse, Professor of Entrepreneurship and the Executive Director of the Morrissette Institute for Entrepreneurship at the Ivey Business School, put it this way:

"Cases to me are a fantastic way to transfer that knowledge around how to make decisions within a lot of different contexts where sometimes I have too much information, sometimes I don’t have nearly enough information, but I have to make a decision, I have to take action."

Decision-based cases by their very nature resist closed-ended analysis and offer many avenues for students to take based on how they synthesize information provided in the case with their own personal assumptions and biases, as well as how they choose to apply theory. A corollary of this open-ended design is that it is more difficult for students to cheat their way through a class discussion or even an exam.

Case studies are remarkable for their ability to decrease social distance in large classes. In a case discussion class, the instructor acts as a conductor of students from a variety of backgrounds, bringing them together to weave their experience and opinions into a tapestry that can be richer than any text. In some ways this result hinges on the abilities of the instructor. If, however, participation requirements are laid out in advance, students will know that they may be called on at any time and must prepare accordingly.

The active learning afforded by the case method helps prepare students to thrive in business and society. Case studies allow them the opportunity to apply theory while practicing leadership, teamwork, and respect for diversity of talent, background, intellect, and demographic. Case learning develops the ability to think quickly and critically, anticipate objections, compromise, and to back down from a position when presented with more compelling information.
What is a Case?

Case studies, broadly defined, come in a variety of forms such as the law school casebook method or cases where historical information is provided for retrospective analysis. Ivey Publishing produces and distributes business case studies that rely on an interrupted narrative, set in a real-world setting. Students are engaged to make interactive decisions to resolve issues stemming directly from the realities of the business world.

How to Use a Case

**Classroom Discussion**
Engage students in active learning with asking questions, dialogue and debate. Students learn to become more competitive and better manage uncertainty.

**Assignments – Individual or Group work**
Have students take the time to analyze and solve a case on their own or in groups, or use a case as a Capstone project.

**Exam Material**
Allow students to apply the material they have learned in the course to a real-life situation.

**Learning Team Case Analysis**
Split students into learning teams to discuss a case study prior to class. Students are called on to present their conclusions. In some situations, it can be beneficial to conduct an entire class using learning teams to present various aspects of the resolution of the case.

**Role Play**
Transforming the classroom into a role play takes the natural aspects of case learning one step further. Students step into the roles of individual characters in the case in order to bring the case to life before the eyes of their classmates.

**Asynchronous Learning**
In addition to the above, case use can be adapted to bring discussion-based, active learning into the online classroom environment. Instructors can use discussion boards for debate, or assign students to prepare video comments or presentations.

Ivey Cases are suitable for programs such as BA, MBA, EMBA, MSc, & Executive Education