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| **ANALYZING A CASE STUDY** |
| 1. Read through the case study once just to get a feel for the information.  If there are questions at the end, make note for the next step. 2. Read through the case a second time. This time highlight important information: the who, what, when, where, why and how of the case.    * Make notes, either in the margins or on a separate sheet of paper.    * If there were questions at the end, look for the answers as you read through the material a second time. 3. Review any exhibits, graphs, photos, etc that may be included with the case. 4. When you are doing a detailed reading of a case study, look for the following sections. These sections may have headings or may just be a paragraph or two.  You will have to read the information carefully to see if any of this type of information is available:    * **Opening paragraph** - introduces the situation.  Look for details on the tone of the case.    * **Background information** - look for information on the industry, organization, products, history, competition, financial information, personal information on people involved and anything else of significance.    * **Specific (functional) area of interest** - is the case about marketing, finance, operations, human resources, etc.  Then narrow it down to a specific section inside each area, i.e.: if the area is HR, then does it concern recruitment, selection, training, etc.,; if the area is marketing, does it concern advertising, promotion, distribution, retailing, etc.    * **The Specific problem** or decision to be made.    * **Alternatives** open to the decision maker, which may or may not be stated in the case. You may have to generate alternatives or you may have developed other alternatives besides those given in the case.    * **Conclusion** - this will set up any tasks, constraints or limitations that may need to be considered.  This section may also state the urgency of the problem.   **Analyzing Any Case Should Include the Following Steps:**   1. **Defining the issue(s)** - What appears to be the problem? What are the immediate issues that need to be addressed? Look at things that may have an impact on such areas as profitability, strategic direction of the company, source of competitive advantage, morale of employees or customer satisfaction. 2. **Analyze case data** - How or why did these issues arise? What resources were used or may be needed? Who is affected most by the issue(s)? What constraints or opportunities are involved in this situation?  What do the numbers tell you? 3. **Generating alternatives** - There are many ways a problem can be solved.  Be realistic.  Alternatives must fit the constraints of the situation and be realistic.  Not making a decision is not an acceptable decision for most case studies.  It *could be* an alternative but generally is not the accepted solution. 4. **Key decision criteria** - when choosing an alternative to solve your case you must consider certain criteria.  These will be different for each situation.  These criteria can help you make your decision based on the alternatives generated. Some things to keep in mind    * How can I improve profitability?    * How can I increase sales, marketing, recruiting or selecting?    * How do I maintain or improve customer service?    * How can we be consistent with our corporate mission or strategy?    * Are the alternatives within our capabilities? Resources? Risk?    * Can we minimize environmental impact? Employee impact? 5. **Evaluation of Alternatives** - Once you have moved through the steps above, your choice of an alternative should be straightforward.  Measure each alternative against the criteria.  Sometimes a simple table will help with the decision.  Or you could list the pros/cons of each alternative. 6. **Recommendation** - You must have a recommendation. You should justify your decision based on your reading and analysis of the case.   **Structure of the Written Report** (No questions at the end of your case)   1. Title Page 2. Table of Contents (Optional) 3. Problem (Issue Statement) 4. Data Analysis 5. Key Decision Criteria 6. Alternative Analysis 7. Recommendations 8. Action and Implementation Plan (if required) 9. Exhibits as Appendices   **Structure of the Written Report** (Questions at the end of your case)   1. Title Page 2. Table of Contents (Optional) 3. Questions answered in order and numbered. 4. Enhibits as Appendices (Exhibits may be included in answers) |