

Requirements for the Case Preparation document (aka “Case Prep”)

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Course: BUS 302

Title: *The Gateway Experience* (3 units)

“Chance favors the prepared mind.”

---Louis Pasteur (1822-1895)

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to enumerate the requirements for the Case Preparation document (hereafter referred to as “Case Prep”). Recall that the common BUS 302 outline/calendar indicates that a “workplan” is to be completed and submitted on the day of the coaching for each individual case in class. A workplan is a student-generated summary of the major activities and individual responsibilities for a given case. In addition to a one-page workplan, the “Case Prep” includes number of other elements that are critical to understanding and analyzing the case with sufficient clarity, depth, precision, and alacrity. (Note: On the common BUS 302 outline/calendar, students should replace each instance of the word “Workplan” with the words “Case Prep.”)

The “Case Prep” document was jointly designed and developed by Professors Lauren Ross (Business Law) and Wayne Smith (Management) to directly assist student professionals enrolled in BUS 302. If this document is unclear, please contact the instructor of your BUS 302 class.

Why a “Case Prep?”

At least two interrelated value propositions are associated with the use of the “Case Prep” document. First, preparing for success on the day of coaching for the case is paramount. This is true at both the individual level and the team level. The “Case Prep” document can help a team form a consistent view of the major issues in the case. Second, it should be clear that the content contained in the “Case Prep” originates with both the case and supporting materials, and in turn, much of the content of the “Case Prep” flows into the final case deliverable in one way or another. In this way, the task of writing up the final written case is eased, because some of the conceptual work is shifted to earlier in the case analysis cycle.

One of the professors’ students recently referred to the “Case Prep” document and process as “pre-study”. The student’s use of the term of “pre-study” is *precisely* correct.

What is a “Case Prep?”

Each “Case Prep” document must be completed before the day of the coaching session of the case (the dates for the coaching session for each case are indicated on the common BUS 302 outline/calendar). In conjunction with the case materials in the textbook, case-specific coaching slides, technical questions, and accompanying data, the “Case Prep” document forms the basis of the coaching session and synchronous, in-class discussion regarding each case. The general case analysis process, including technical detail, is identical for both types of student final deliverable--written or oral. Therefore, the “Case Prep” document is required of all teams and for all cases. Just as different student teams can analyze the same case differently and produce different final case deliverables, it is expected that student teams will produce similar, but not identical, “Case Prep” documents for any given case.

The same “Case Prep” structure applies to all cases, except as indicated differently by the instructor in class. The order of the sections as presented in this document is the order the sections should appear in the “Case Prep” document. Each section of the “Case Prep,” including the cover page, is one page in length with the minor exception that each IRAC legal brief must be on a separate page. *Therefore, the “Case Prep” document is approximately seven or eight pages in length, depending on the number of legal cases in the case library.* Neither page numbers nor headers/footers are required; however, each section should be clearly labeled at the top of the page. Teams can choose a line spacing format that best supports the structure and content of each section. Students will lose points for not following the instructions below.

You must bring at least two copies of the “Case Prep” document to class. One copy is to be submitted to the instructor and the other copy is to be used as a team-based resource during the case coaching session. The “Case Prep” document is to be submitted in printed form at the beginning of class.

Each written case report must be submitted as a single unit. There should be a single staple in the upper-left hand corner of the document.

Cover Page

Each “Case Prep” document must have a cover page. There is no single “one” format for this page; in fact, some teams may choose a more professional format and some teams may choose a more creative format. Either is acceptable, as long as the following information is clearly identifiable—team number (and team name, if applicable), all of the team members (with the last name underlined), class # (or day/time identification), case name, and due date (that is, the date of the case coaching session).

Section I. Principals, Context, and Open Questions

Each “Case Prep” must include a “Principals, Context, and Open Questions” section. The Principals component of this section identifies (to the extent known) the name, title, organization, role, and additional pertinent information of each individual in the case.

The Context component of this section addresses the following questions in a clear and unambiguous manner:

What industry or market sector does this case concern?

Who is the report being submitted to (typically an executive or a manager)?

Who is the report being submitted on behalf of (typically a professional or a manager)?

If there is a specific request made in the case, what is that specific request?

The Open Questions component of this section identifies no fewer than six, and no more than eight, open questions or issues regarding this case. There must be at least one question from *four* of the six Lower-Division Courses (i.e., FinAcct, MgtAcct, MicroEcon, MacroEcon, BusLaw, and BusStat). There must be at least one strategy-related question and one ethics-related question. Additionally, for each question there must be a brief (2-4 sentences) justification/explanation as to why that specific question is important. An open question is a question, either major or minor, that may need to be addressed in the case. Strong open questions are 1), rooted in the facts and relevant issues of the case, 2), filtered through the varying education and experiences of the team members, and 3), refined by individual critical thought and team deliberative consensus. A strong open question is a question that the team feels is important enough to be asked and discussed (but not answered) at, say, a first meeting with a key principal in the case.

Section II. Case Chronology

Each “Case Prep” must include a “Case Chronology” section. This section identifies the key times (milestones) and events in the case. A two-column format is required (a well-formatted table can be useful for this section). The first column identifies the time, and the second column identifies the event or activity. The case chronology is ordered by time from earliest to latest.

It should be clear that each case, paralleling the complexity of organizations and environments, is different. Depending on the case, the times or the events (or both) may be explicit or implied. The difference between the earliest date and the latest date might be measured in days, weeks, years, or even decades. Finally, the position in the chronology where the case is being analyzed should be clearly identified in the two-column table.

Section III. “IRAC” Brief of Prior Case(s)

Most cases in the course textbook include a case “library.” This “library” is typically comprised of one or more legal cases or judicial opinions that are related to the main case in some way. If a case includes a library that contains at least one legal case or opinion, then the “Case Prep” must include an “IRAC” Brief section. For each legal case, a legal “brief” is required. The “brief” is to be completed in standard business law format—Issues, Regulations (or rules), Application (or alternatives), and Conclusion (IRAC).

Each brief is to be a single page. If the case library section doesn't include an adjudicated case *per se*, than just summarize the key ideas from the case library section.

Section IV. Technical LDC Concepts

Each "Case Prep" must include a "Technical LDC Concepts" section. This section summarizes the Lower-division Core (LDC) concepts that are most relevant to the case. A mastery of these LDC concepts will be needed to address the central questions in the case adequately. These LDC concepts are usually identified by discipline and number at either the end of the case or with the instructor-provided questions for each case.

A four-column format is required (again, a well-formatted table can be useful for this section). The first column identifies the discipline (abbreviations are acceptable), the second column identifies the concept number, the third column identifies the concept (usually one or more sentences), and the fourth column identifies one or more resources (probably a prior course textbook) that can be used to review the concept. The LDC disciplines, numbers, and concepts can be located in the "Review Materials" section of the student BUS 302L (lab) web page.

Section V. Glossary

Each "Case Prep" must include a glossary. The glossary should include no fewer than five, and no more than ten, important and difficult vocabulary (words, terms, or phrases) from the case or the case library. Each term should be referenced with a page number and paragraph to aid in locating at a later date. Each term should be defined using a textbook or a dictionary. The vocabulary in the glossary can consist of either general terms or technical terms, however both types of terms must originate from the case itself.

Section VI. Projected Workplan of the Final Case Deliverable

Each "Case Prep" must include a projected (estimated) workplan. This structure and content of the workplan is similar to the sample workplan in the coursepack (the sample workplan is also located in the "Materials" section of the student BUS 302 web page). Over time, teams may find it useful to adjust the structure and content of the workplan as needed.