

Chapter 25

Management Methodology: Crafting Creative Case Studies to Capture Concepts and Contexts for Course Clarity

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ABSTRACT

This chapter overviews the rationale and methodology underpinning the implementation of two ‘purpose written’ case studies delivered within two separate undergraduate Management courses. Finding suitable pre-existing Management-related case studies for different student cohorts can be difficult and time consuming, and may only partially align with the learning objectives. Writing one’s own case studies to meet the learning objectives of courses is viewed by the writers as a proactive strategy to redress this gap. It is advantageous that the case study author enables students to apply diagnostic skills in diverse situations that may range from simple to complex, and to ensure that students are drawing on theoretical underpinnings from their Management coursework. This chapter further presents on how to develop in students the ability to shift from being a reactive learner to examining a case proactively through a strategic managerial lens for diagnosing and solving problems.

INTRODUCTION

Writing case studies for ‘Management’ courses can be perceived by instructors/lecturers as a chore and/or unnecessary as countless cases already exist. An effective case study can, however, instil interest and relevance into Management courses, particularly if they are able to capture the interest(s) of the student-readers. An effectual case can engage students’ curiosity while enabling them to apply their knowledge and skills to a simulated ‘real-life’ situation. For the educator, writing a case study that has been purposely created to target the course’s primary aim and learning objectives is (more) inclusive and considerate of the diversity of students in the classroom. There is also *less* likelihood of students

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succumbing to temptations of plagiarism as it is not published and has not been used in other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

Business students do *not* usually get opportunities to work in real-time dynamic workplaces and to implement theoretical concepts etcetera, as do students studying architecture, medicine, nursing, social work, and teaching for example who have work experience placements (McHann & Frost, 2010). The challenge for business educators is to make available teaching and learning strategies that will enable students to practice ‘authentic’ and ‘hands-on’ techniques to fill the void from a lack of work-related experience. A simulated workplace case study is reflective of the real business world, and empowers students to be creative in being *responsive to* and *predictive of* a dynamic and rapidly changing authentic business environment.

BACKGROUND

This chapter outlines two ‘Management’ case studies written and delivered by one author for (a) the University of South Australia’s (UniSA) Open Universities Australia’s (OUA) online business unit; and (b) the South Australian Institute of Business and Technology’s (SAIBT) Associate Degree in Management program.

First, Open Universities Australia (OUA) was originally established in 1993 as Open Learning Australia to provide distance education using printed courseware and non-commercial television. OUA and its university providers continue to enjoy the benefits that come from this pioneering open learning legacy. For over 20 years, OUA has enabled students to undertake online HE or Professional Development (PD). When students complete a degree through OUA, their qualification will be identical to that awarded to an on-campus student. The external online unit, originating from the University of South Australia, is delivered in distance mode. Titled *Communication and Organisational Practices*, this module is focused on a broad range of communication topics, relevant to managers and others operating in organisations that are internationalised and characterised by a high level of diversity amongst employees. Both learning and assessment are designed to develop links between cutting-edge research and its practical application(s) in the workforce.

Second, as a member of the Navitas Group that has in excess of 120 colleges across 27 countries (Navitas, 2014), SAIBT is the preferred pathway provider to the *University of South Australia* that specialises in preparing predominantly international Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) students for HE in mainstream Australia (Velliari & Breen, 2014; Velliari & Willis, 2014; Velliari, Willis, & Breen, 2015; Velliari, Willis, & Pierce, 2015). Instructors face several ‘interconnecting’ challenges that include, but are not limited to: *acculturating* international students to Australian HE; *confronting* English language-related teaching and learning barriers; and *improving* students’ academic integrity and overall academic performance. SAIBT offers an Associate Degree in Management; a program designed for students with a low-GPA in their Diploma of Business, but who aspire to work in a professional business environment. It comprises eight core courses that include: (1) Communication in Organisations; (2) Customer Service Strategies; (3) Financial Management; (4) Foundations of Project Management; (5) Internship and Career Development; (6) Management of Human Resources; (7) Management of Organisations; and (8) Managing Information in Organisations. Moreover, this award gives students the opportunity to undertake an 80-hour internship in an Australian work environment.

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