

MOR 466/ENST 466
Business and Environmental Sustainability
Spring 2023

Class times: Tu Th 2:00-3:50am

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Office hours: Friday 10-11am, and by appointment

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Course overall goals

Few issues are more urgent for contemporary society than business's impact on the natural environment. In addition to longstanding concerns about the exhaustion of global resources, degradation of the environment, loss of biodiversity, and the effects on human biology, there is a wide consensus that climate change must be addressed in the near term to avoid the worst of the predicted, disastrous long-term impacts.

As environmental concerns intensify, we all—both as citizens and as future leaders in industry and society—must develop a better understanding of the related scientific, economic, social, political, and regulatory forces, and of how these forces are reshaping the context and conduct of business. Under the pressure of these forces, some firms are developing more sustainable business practices and products. Debate continues on whether these changes will suffice to meet our environmental-sustainability challenge. And this debate is difficult: different stakeholders have more or less divergent interests, and competing perspectives and values lead to conflicting analyses and different policy recommendations.

To prepare you to participate and lead in this domain, this course explores four broad sets of questions, which the course will address in turn:

- (1) What is environmental sustainability? How environmentally sustainable is our current path? How urgent is the challenge?
- (2) What are the forces driving change in business conduct? How is business affected by depleting natural resources? By social movements? By government regulation? By financial markets?
- (3) Under the pressure of these forces, what new strategies and practices can firms adopt—in operations, technologies, product design, marketing, and non-market activities?
- (4) Will these changes in business conduct be sufficient? What will it take for us to meet the challenge of sustainability? What are the broader political-economy issues involved?

Course-specific objectives

The course has objectives in each of three domains: the intersection of environmental sustainability and business, strategic planning, and critical thinking skills. I think of them in layers. Critical thinking is the foundational skill for strategic planning, and in this course, strategic planning is the lens through which we will study business/sustainability. Upon successful completion of the course, students will have developed competencies in all three domains:

In the business/environmental sustainability domain, you will be able to:

- (1) explain the challenges of environmental sustainability facing business and society today;
- (2) describe the various forces driving change in business's environmental conduct;
- (3) develop alternative strategies for addressing both traditional economic considerations and environmental concerns;
- (4) explain the main competing points of view on the political-economy of environmental sustainability.

In the strategic planning domain:

- (5) analyze situations from the point of view of multiple stakeholders;
- (6) analyze how these diverse stakeholders interact in shaping the conduct of business;
- (7) identify and assess alternative course of action considering multiple criteria;
- (8) develop creative implementation approaches that respond to specific contextual challenges.

In the critical thinking domain:

- (9) balance advocacy and inquiry in discussion;
- (10) climb down the ladder of inference to identify the origin of divergent views;
- (11) find common ground in ambiguous, complex, and controversial problems.

Required materials

The materials are on Blackboard. If you have any questions about, or need assistance with, the Blackboard course pages, please contact the Marshall HelpDesk at 213-740-3000 or HelpDesk@marshall.usc.edu

Class process

Each week, we address a different topic, usually in two successive sessions: a first session focused on a case study and then a second session focused on some related readings. Note the sequence: in this course, unlike many others that use case studies, we do not use cases to illustrate how to apply a theory that is explained in the readings. Rather, the cases here portray situations that are complex and ambiguous—like the difficult situations we face in the real world, where the neither the critical issues nor the path to a solution are obvious. In this way, the course aims to help you build strategic-planning and critical-thinking skills. The cases do not simply illustrate the readings. That said, you will find it helpful to prepare the case and readings together. The readings will often give you some perspective on the case and perhaps suggest some lines of analysis.

The discussion of a case will usually begin the instructor framing the issues of the day, then a student team will present their analysis of the case and recommendations, as if they were consultants and the rest of the class were the client in the case and representatives of other relevant stakeholder groups. We usually have a second consultant team lead the ensuing discussion and open it to the class as a whole. As a group, we will try to build a complete analysis of the situation and address the problems and issues it presents.

The class sessions that are focused on readings will take the form of a facilitated discussion rather than a lecture.

Study time

Per University policy, this course will require an average of about two hours of preparation time per hour of class—about seven hours a week. The grading weights below reflect the relative share of that time associated with each component of the course.

Preparing the case

The detailed Session Information section below gives more specific “study questions” for the case discussions. However, these study questions are only prompts to alert you to some of the interesting aspects in the case. It is your job to identify the specific issues posed by the case and to decide how they can be best addressed. I will expect you to consider the case in the light of all the assigned readings for the theme, and to come to each class prepared to present and defend your own analysis.

Team “Consulting Reports”

At the beginning of the semester, I will assign students to teams, and over the course of the semester each team will prepare Consulting Reports (CRs) on three of the cases in the syllabus. All the teams will prepare a CR on the case that we discuss in the third week of the semester. You will have some choice as to the other two CRs.

In preparing and presenting these CRs, you will play the role of outside consultants reporting to your client in the case situation. The students in the class will role-play the client team (and occasionally some other stakeholders relevant to the situation). Some cases make the choice of client rather obvious, but others give you flexibility in selecting your client: your team should consult with me in making this selection.

Your CRs take the form of PowerPoint decks with associated Notes pages. They should be posted as an Assignment by one member of your CR team. The second and third one need to be prepared for presentation to the class, and you should also bring to class one hardcopy (including your Notes pages) for me. For these latter two CRs, one of the CR teams (picked at random) will present orally to the class. The other team will take the lead in responding the first team’s presentation on behalf of the client, with probing questions and perhaps offering an alternative perspective.

These CRs require considerable teamwork. Unlike your experience with some other team assignments in other courses, you will find that the work involved in preparing these CRs cannot be divided up simply among your team-members. Each part of the CR must fit with the logic of the other parts, and you will find that your team will need to revise the logic of your draft CR a few times to create a strong argument. You will need two or more team meetings to do this successfully, so you should plan your work accordingly. I trust that you will try to address any “team process” issues you might encounter, and also that you will alert me if you encounter any serious impediments.

To ensure maximum value from the work you invest in preparing these CRs, I will meet each team for 60 minutes as soon as possible after class (preferably in person the same day, zoom later if not), to discuss the report’s strengths and weaknesses, and to brainstorm how the report could be strengthened. After this “debrief” meeting, I will send the team and the class further feedback and grading.

Detailed guidance on these CRs is in the Appendix on *Guidelines for Case Notes and Consulting Reports*. They will be graded using the criteria shown in the Appendix on *Grading Sheet for Case Notes and Consulting Reports*. I have also posted on Blackboard a PowerPoint template you can adapt for your presentation. I have found that mastering these *Guidelines* is one of most valuable skills I can teach you. Your professional career depends crucially on the strategic-planning and critical-thinking skills these reports rely on and help build.

Note: As concerns the grading of the oral delivery, I will not penalize students for language difficulties when their first language is other than English.

Individual “Case Notes”

In case discussion sessions such as we conduct them in this course, students learn nothing if they have not invested sufficient time before class to study the case and do not come to class having formulated their own analysis and recommendations. Conversely, if you come to class having done this preparation, you can engage the discussion, confront your ideas with others’, and come away with deep insights. The investment is considerable, but the payoff is enormous.

The Case Notes aim to facilitate this investment. You will need to prepare 12 cases over the course of the semester. With your team, you will do CRs on 3 of these cases: for at least 6 of the remaining 9 cases, you need to prepare an individual “Case Note” (CN) —a written summary of your analysis. (There is no need for a CN if you are doing a CR.) I will count towards the course grade the 6 best of your CNs, plus the CN required for the Environment class on April 25.

You should use the *Case Notes Template* in this Syllabus’s Appendix (it is also posted on BB). You will see that these CNs follow the same general structure as the CRs but are somewhat simplified.

These CNs should be uploaded to (not pasted into) the Assignment page on Blackboard before the beginning of the relevant class session. Please upload them as MS-Word documents. Late submissions will not be counted toward the grade.

After-class “Take-Aways”

The main goal of a case discussion is not to acquire an in-depth knowledge of that particular case, but to help you develop a generalizable insight that you can use in other settings—a “take-away” (TA). That insight often emerges after class, as the “dust settles” and the key TAs become clearer in your mind. Each time we discuss a case, you should try to post a short note summarizing your TAs (10 lines or longer) to our Blackboard Discussion forum. Mostly, our case discussions will be on Tuesdays, and for grading purposes, your TA must be posted on BB by 5:00 am Thursday that week.

These TA postings should focus primarily on the generalizable lessons you have taken from the case discussion. They might also include responses to other students’ TAs already on the Discussion forum, or discuss the connections you see between the case and the associated readings, prior class sessions, or other real-world issues.

I will count toward the course grade the best 10 of your TA posts on the case discussions, plus your TAs for the for the Political-economy class on April 25.

Preparing the theme readings

To give you a good foundation in this field, I have selected a small number of readings aiming to explain the main relevant concepts, factual context, and debates. I will assume you have done these readings ahead of class, so I can rapidly underscore key concepts and use most of our time for discussion of your observations and questions.

Class participation

As in many of your other classes, your active participation in the class discussion is a crucial part of the learning process: your contributions help both you and the rest of the class master the target concepts and skills. In class, I will often “cold call,” so please avoid embarrassment by telling me before class if you are not prepared. And if you are uncomfortable with class participation, please let me know at the beginning of term and I will work with you to help you overcome this barrier.

Mid-term and Final exams

Both the mid-term and final exams will focus on your mastery of the assigned course readings (*not* the case studies). These will be in-class, closed-book exams, aiming to assess your understanding of the key concepts and arguments.

Class attendance

Engagement is essential to your learning in this course, and you cannot engage during classes that you do not attend. If you must miss a case-discussion class, it is particularly important to prepare the relevant Case Note and submit it before the class session.

This is an in-person class. If health issues force you to miss a session, contact me before class to make other arrangements.

Grading

The target average grade for this course is 3.5/4 (A-/B+). Course grades are calculated based on how you perform in the class, both (a) relative to the course goals and (b) relative to other students. The component weights are as follows:

Component	Weight
1 st team Consulting Report	7%
2 nd team Consulting Report	7%
3 rd team Consulting Report	7%
Class engagement: ➤ Case Notes (7) ➤ In-class participation ➤ Take-Aways (11)	19% 10% 10%
Mid-term exam	20%
Final exam	20%
Total	100%

Communications

All course information is available through your Blackboard account. Blackboard is the primary channel of communication for this course, so take note of announcements and other email messages you receive. Assignment and exam scores are posted here as well. You can also communicate directly with your professor, your project team members, and other classmates.

Technology policies

For most of our class time, I will ask you to close your laptops. Your classmates and I will appreciate your undivided attention. You will not need to take many notes. (If you have a DSP certification relevant here, please speak with me.)

Class Notes Policy

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Classroom etiquette

An atmosphere of mutual respect and professionalism is in order. So please...

- arrive at class on time: late arrivals are disruptive to your fellow classmates and to the conduct of the class;
- avoid leaving the classroom while the class is in progress: biology has its imperatives of course, but our class is a collective conversation to which your contributions are important;
- turn off your cell phones—no calls, no texting, for 1hr 50mins;
- do not engage in side conversations during class;
- do not pack up and leave towards the end of the class until it is clear the class is over.

Evaluation of Your Work

I will do my best to make my expectations for the various assignments clear and to evaluate them as fairly and objectively as I can. If you feel that an error has occurred in the grading of any assignment, you may, within one week of the date the assignment is returned to you, write me a memo in which you request that I re-evaluate the assignment. Attach the original assignment to the memo and explain fully and carefully why you think the assignment should be re-graded. Be aware that the re-evaluation process can result in three types of grade adjustments: positive, none, or negative.

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, comprises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Students and Disability Accommodations

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Theme	Case
THE CHALLENGE WE FACE		
Jan 10	What is environmental sustainability?	
Jan 12	The climate change threat	
FORCES DRIVING CHANGE		
Jan 17, 19	Finite resources	Clearwater Seafoods
Jan 24, 26	Government regulation	California AB 32
Jan 31, Feb 2	Social movements	Amazon
Feb 7, 9	Investors	BlackRock
BUSINESS RESPONSES		
Feb 14, 16	Strategy	InterfaceRAISE
Feb 21, 23	Products	Herman Miller
Feb 28	<i>Review</i>	
Mar 2	<i>Mid-term exam</i>	
Mar 7, 9	Buildings	Genzyme
<i>Spring break</i>		
Mar 21, 23	Marketing	Clorox
Mar 28, 30	Operations	Millipore
April 4, 6	Industry collaboration	General Mills
April 11, 13	Environmental justice	Marathon Petroleum
PROSPECTS		
April 18, 20	International agreements	Paris Accord
April 25	Political economy of sustainability	
April 27	<i>Review</i>	
May 4, 2-4 pm	<i>Final exam</i>	

SOME OPTIONAL BACKGROUND READING

Understanding basic financial statements (UVA 6549, Oct 2012)

Note on capital budgeting (HBSP TCG 324)

Stakeholder mapping (BSR Nov 2011)

Harris and Codur: Macroeconomics and the environment. 2004

Roach, Harris and Codur: Microeconomics and the environment. 2015

SESSION INFORMATION

PART 1: THE CHALLENGE WE FACE

Mon Jan 10: What is environmental sustainability?

Assigned reading:

Course Syllabus (please read the whole thing)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainability>

Jan 12: The climate change threat

Assigned readings:

D. Wallace-Wells: "A Tour of the new world: Envisioning life after climate change," NYT Magazine, Oct 2022

"Climate change in 2020: Implications for business" (HBS 9-320-087)

"World Scientists' Warning of a Climate Emergency," *BioScience*, Jan 2020

Study questions:

1. Do we face an "emergency," as suggested by the *BioScience* article?
2. What does the urgency and scale of the environmental sustainability challenge imply for business?

PART 2: FORCES DRIVING CHANGE IN BUSINESS CONDUCT

Jan 17, 19: Finite resources

Case: Clearwater Seafoods (HBS 9-716-023)

Assigned reading:

Note: Industry Self-Regulation: Sustaining the Commons in the 21st Century? (HBS 9-315-074, rev Mar 2016)

Study questions:

1. Why did the North Atlantic cod fisheries collapse?
2. Are the fisheries in which Clearwater active (scallop, lobster, clam, shrimp) likely to collapse too?
3. Where and how does Clearwater make most of its profits? How do you expect this to change over time?
4. Does the firm have the right degree of vertical integration (stages of production) and horizontal differentiation (product) and geographic scope?
5. Clearwater attempts to compete in a different way from most of its competitors. Has it been successful? Why or why not?
6. Do Clearwater's sustainability initiatives make sense from a shareholder value standpoint?
7. What advice would you give to Ian Smith?

Jan 24, 26: Government regulation

Case: The California Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32) (HKSG 1944.0). Please take as your client Jerry Brown or Meg Whitman, and take as the Critical Issue: for or against Prop 23? (The case tells us they have already taken a position, but imagine you are advising the candidate before that decision was made).

Assigned readings:

California Air Resources Board, "Climate Change Scoping Plan," Dec. 2008, Read: "Executive Summary" and "Introduction."

M. Mildenberger and L. Stokes: "The trouble with carbon pricing," Boston Review, Sept 2020

M. Porter and C. van der Linde: "Green and Competitive: Ending the Stalemate," *HBR*, September-October 1995

Study questions:

1. Was California's decision to commit to reducing emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 a wise one, given the information available at the time (as described in the case)?
2. Given a commitment to AB 32's goals, what are the pros and cons of the three main policy instruments available—emissions standards, carbon taxes, cap and trade?
3. How should CARB respond to the EJ movement's pressure?
4. Is AB32 enough? What assessment do you make of the arguments presented by Mildenberger/Stokes? What is the role of business in a program such as they propose?
5. Please take either Governor Brown or Ms Whitman as your client: what would you advise them to do in these last days before the vote on Prop 23?

Optional extra reading:

C. B. Drotman, R. H. Huff and C. Q. Lee: "A Look at CARB's AB32 GHG Programs, from Early Action to Today," 2021

Jan 31, Feb 2: Social movements

Case: Amazon: Customers and climate change (Ivey W20800)

Assigned reading:

D. Spar, L. T. La Mure, "The power of activism: Assessing the impact of NGOs on global business," *California Management Review*, Spring 2003

J. Hari, "The wrong kind of green," *The Nation*, March 2010

Study questions:

1. What stakeholders in Amazon's non-market environment are affected in this case?
2. How vulnerable is Amazon to social movement pressures?
3. What strategies have the various political groups involved used against Amazon?
4. What should Amazon do now (at the end of the case)?

Feb 7, 9: Investors

Case: BlackRock: Linking Purpose and Profit (HBS 9-120-042, Rev July 2020)

Assigned readings:

PRI: "Macro risks: universal ownership," 2017

A. Buller: "Eco-investing?" NLR Sidecar, March 2021

A. Puzder: "Larry Fink's Crusade Runs Into Resistance," Heritage Foundation, Feb 2022

Optional background:

HBS Note on asset management industry

Study questions:

1. Do BlackRock's stewardship efforts on corporate purpose help companies and/or the market?

2. What 'teeth' does BlackRock have in playing the role of a governance agent in shaping corporate purpose and policies?
3. How do you think the role of BlackRock should evolve going forward? Do you agree with their current strategy? Should they have more stringent engagement policies?
4. What would you advise Edkins and Novick to solve the Goldilocks' dilemma? Do more or do less?

PART 3: BUSINESS RESPONSES

Feb 14, 16: Strategy

Case: InterfaceRAISE (in 2010): Raising the Bar in Sustainability Consulting (MH005T)

Assigned reading:

"Strategy and Positioning in Professional Service Firms" (HBS 9-904-060)

W. Mitchell: "Strategic analysis primer" 2014

Study questions:

1. What is sustainability consulting? How is it distinct from management consulting?
2. Is sustainability consulting an attractive industry (using Porter's five forces)?
3. What is InterfaceRAISE's position in the sustainability consulting industry?
4. Apply a VRIN analysis. What are InterfaceRAISE's resources, competencies, and capabilities? Can they be a source of competitive advantage? Why or why not?
5. Is InterfaceRAISE positioned to compete successfully in the sustainability consulting industry (SWOT analysis)? Why or why not?
6. What strategy should Jim Hartzfeld propose to grow InterfaceRAISE to \$5 million in five years?
7. What corporate strategy is best for Interface Inc.? Does it make more sense to remain vertically integrated, or should InterfaceRAISE become a standalone company?
8. Which competitors does Mr. Hartzfeld need to monitor most closely as he implements his chosen strategy?

Feb 21, 23: Products

Case: Cradle-to-Cradle Design at Herman Miller: Moving Toward Environmental Sustainability (HBS 607-003, rev'd Dec 2009)

Assigned reading:

F. Reinhardt: "Environmental product differentiation: Implications for corporate strategy," *California Management Review*, 40(4) 1998: 43-73.

Sustainability and innovation: frameworks, concepts, and tools for product and strategy redesign (Darden UVA-ENT-0138)

Study questions:

1. What is your assessment of how Herman Miller implemented the C2C protocol?
2. Why did Herman Miller undertake this strategic environmental initiative?
3. Should Herman Miller use PVC or TPU in the Mirra Chair arm pad?

Notes: Notes: (a) Cost of arm-pad is about 10% of total cost of a chair, but total cost is not easy to estimate: you can assume it is about \$350. (b) Neo-con is a big deal: it is where new products are released, and if you miss that 'launch' window, it is a serious disruption to projected sales. (c) What is TPU? See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thermoplastic_polyurethane

Optional:

W. McDonough "[Cradle to cradle](#)" TED talk (20 mins)

Feb 28: Review

Mar 2: Mid-term exam

Mar 7, 9: Buildings

Case: Genzyme Center (A) (HBS 9-610-008, rev Sept 2010)

Assigned reading:

“Buildings and energy,” HBS 9-708-024, rev 2008

B. Barth: “Is LEED Tough Enough for the Climate-Change Era?” Bloomberg June 2018

Study questions:

1. What do you think of Genzyme’s motives for investing in green building practices?
2. Would you recommend that Genzyme make the additional investments required to get to LEED Platinum?
3. If they were to go for LEED Platinum, which features should they implement? What criteria should they use in deciding that? This analysis requires you to estimate the cost of each of the 5 options for additional green building features, the associated LEED credits, and the associated environmental benefits. Determining the LEED credits is not easy, but do not be deterred: with some careful digging in the Appendix (*not* Ex 8) you can come up with a good estimate. Information on the costs and environmental benefits are in the case. Then you'll need to work out what sub-set of these 5 features you recommend. Please complete the **Features Analysis worksheet available on BB** and come to class prepared to defend your point of view.
4. Looking forward to other building projects, what green building policy should Genzyme adopt? Should the policy be different for offices, laboratories, and manufacturing sites? Should it be different across US, Europe, and Asia regions?

Mar 21, 23: Marketing

Case: The Clorox Company: Leveraging Green for Growth (HBS 9-512-009, rev April 2012)

Assigned reading:

Terrachoice Environmental Marketing Inc.: “The six sins of greenwashing,” 2007

Ottman, Stafford, and Hartman, “Avoiding Green Marketing Myopia” *Environment*, 48, 5, June 2006, pages 22-36

Study questions:

1. Why did Clorox move into greener products?
2. How successful has this been for Clorox? For the environment?
3. What would you recommend to Springer? How can Clorox more effectively build on the successes of Brita, Burt’s Bees, and Green Works?
4. We will spend time discussing Green Works in particular: what strategy do you recommend?

Optional background reading:

“The seven questions of marketing strategy” (Darden UV2974, rev. 2018)

March 28, 30: Operations

Case: Sustainability at Millipore (HBS 9-610-012, rev’d Jan 2014)

Assigned reading:

Corporate Greenhouse Gas Accounting: Carbon Footprint Analysis (Darden UV2027)

E. Rochon and P. Dickinson, “Are Corporate Carbon Intensity Targets Greenwash?” *Ethical Corporation*, March 2009.

Study questions:

1. How should Millipore focus its Sustainability Initiative? How should David Newman measure success?
2. Going forward, how should Millipore prioritize projects for the Sustainability Initiative?
3. What factors should Millipore consider in setting its next greenhouse gas reduction target? Recall that key parameters include choosing between absolute and relative reduction, a percentage reduction level, its duration, and the scope of emissions covered.
4. Considering the pros and cons, should Millipore purchase carbon offsets as part of its strategy to meet its greenhouse gas reduction objectives?
5. What changes, if any, would you recommend to Chairman, CEO, and President Martin Madaus to improve the effectiveness of Millipore's Sustainability Initiative?

Optional background reading:

E. Reyna et al.: "The virtuous cycle of organizational energy efficiency" 2012

April 4, 6: Collaboration

Case: Growing better together: General Mills considers pre-competitive collaboration to advance sustainable supply chains (WDI W97C98)

Assigned reading:

Sustainable Food Lab: "Regenerative agriculture: how to make it grow," 2022

Study questions:

1. Why should General Mills reach out to the competition and consider pre-competitive collaboration for its regenerative agriculture initiative?
2. What could be the consequences of developing pre-competitive partnerships in the cereal industry?
3. If they are considering pre-competitive collaboration, which competitor(s) should General Mills consider first, and why? What hurdles does General Mills need to overcome to convince its competitors to collaborate?
4. What results would you expect to see in the cereal industry of companies announcing pre-competitive collaboration commitments to regenerative agriculture?
5. How can the benefits (i.e. more sustainability, company profit, etc.) of pre-competitive collaboration in regenerative agriculture be measured?

Optional background reading:

C. J. Welch, J. M. Hawkins, J. Tom: "Precompetitive Collaboration on Enabling Technologies for the Pharmaceutical Industry," 2014

April 11, 13: Environmental justice

Case: Marathon Petroleum and Southwest Detroit (WDI 2-652-482)

Assigned readings:

A. Borunda: "The origins of environmental justice," National Geographic 2021

M. Pastor et al.: The Climate Gap, 2018

Study questions:

1. Has Marathon Petroleum violated basic human rights with its Detroit refinery? Why or why not?
2. Who is more to blame for environmental racism, Marathon Petroleum, the oil industry in general, the real estate market, zoning laws, other? Why?
3. How can oil companies, including Marathon, be incentivized to minimize their environmental impact on local communities?
4. How can we ensure that any efforts by Marathon Petroleum to reduce its environmental impact have long-term effectiveness and do not create an opportunity for greenwashing?
5. How does framing Marathon Petroleum's behavior as an issue of environmental racism, rather

than simply a disregard for general environmental safety, influence public or government perception of the issue?

6. Will Marathon Petroleum's Property Purchase Program benefit the local community? Why or why not?

PART 4: PROSPECTS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

April 18, 20: International agreements

Case: Climate change: Paris, and the Road Ahead (HBS 9-718-038)

In analyzing this case, please put yourself in present, post COP27. I suggest that you take as your client the Sect-Gen of the United Nations.

Assigned readings:

"COP26 hasn't solved the problem: Scientists react to the UN climate deal," *Nature*, Nov 2021

C. Farand, J. Lo, and M. Darby: "What was decided at COP27 climate talks in Sharm el-Sheikh?" *Climate Home News*, 2022

S. Tagliapietra and G.B. Wolff: "Form a climate club: United States, European Union and China," *Nature*, March 2021

Study questions:

1. Who should take the lead on coordinating and encouraging climate change efforts across the world?
2. What role should companies play in this process? Should they take action on their own, or should governments coordinate them, and if the latter, through what type of policies?
3. Which factors are responsible for the substantial differences in attitudes to climate change across countries?
4. The case refers to BCAs: this has been generalized in the "carbon club" proposals: do these represent an alternative path forward?

April 25: Competing perspectives on the political economy of sustainability

Assigned reading:

J. Manzi & P. Wehner: "Conservatives and Climate Change," *National Affairs*, Summer 2015

A. B. Lovins, L. H. Lovins, P. Hawken, "A road map for natural capitalism," *Harvard Business Review* 2007

R. Smith: "An ecosocialist path to limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C," *Real-world Economics Review*, 87, 2019

W. Nordhaus: "The Pope and the market," *New York Review of Books*, 2015

B. McKibben: "A world at war," *New Republic*, 2016

T. Weckesser, and Y. Lin: "Industrial Planning In China," Sino Consulting

Assignment: To ensure we have a high-quality discussion, I'd like everyone in the class to draft a summary of your responses to the questions listed below and post it to BB as your Case Note. I am expecting about 5 pages single-spaced. Please also post a TA before the following class. (Both the CN and TA count toward the course grade.)

Questions to be answered:

1. There are six perspectives expressed in these articles (counting separately the Pope and Nordhaus). From each of these points of view in turn: what do they see as the root challenge that makes it difficult for our country to assure environmental sustainability? And what do they think is the best way forward?

2. Create a matrix so you can summarize what they agree on and disagree on with each of other readings.
3. Which perspective comes closest to your personal views? Why?

April 27: Review

May 4, 2-4pm: Final exam

Marshall Learning Goals

GOALS	COURSE
<p>Learning goal 1: Our graduates will demonstrate critical thinking skills so as to become future-oriented problem solvers, innovators and decision makers in diverse and rapidly changing business environments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students will demonstrate the ability to anticipate, identify and solve business problems. They will be able to identify and assess central problems, identify and evaluate potential solutions, and translate a chosen solution to an implementation plan that considers future contingencies · Students will demonstrate the ability to be accurate, clear, expansive (thorough, detailed) and fair-minded in their thinking · Students will critically analyze concepts, theories and processes by stating them in their own words, understanding key components, identifying assumptions, indicating how they are similar to and different from others and translating them to the real world · Students will be effective at gathering, storing, and using qualitative and quantitative data and at using analytical tools and frameworks to understand and solve business problems · Students will understand the concepts of critical thinking, entrepreneurial thinking and creative thinking as drivers of innovative ideas 	High
<p>Learning Goal 2: Our graduates will develop people and leadership skills to promote their effectiveness as business managers and leaders in the 21st century’s evolving work and organizational structures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students will recognize, understand and analyze the roles, responsibilities and behaviors of effective managers and leaders in diverse business contexts e.g., functionally diverse, culturally diverse, geographically diverse, etc. · Students will understand factors that contribute to effective teamwork including how to elicit, manage and leverage diverse perspectives and competencies. · Students will recognize, understand, and analyze the motivations and behaviors of stakeholders inside and outside organizations (e.g., teams, departments, consumers, investors, auditors) 	High
<p>Learning Goal 3: Our graduates will be effective communicators to facilitate information flow in organizational, social, and intercultural contexts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students will identify and assess diverse personal and organizational communication goals and audience information needs · Students will demonstrate an ability to gather and disseminate information and communicate it clearly, logically, and persuasively in professional contexts · Students will understand individual and group communications patterns and dynamics in organizations and other professional contexts 	High
<p>Learning goal 4: Our graduates will demonstrate ethical reasoning skills, understand social, civic, and professional responsibilities and aspire to add value to society.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students will recognize ethical challenges in business situations and assess appropriate courses of action · Students will understand professional codes of conduct 	Medium
<p>Learning goal 5: Our graduates will develop a global business perspective. They will understand how local, regional, and international markets, and economic, social and cultural issues impact business decisions so as to anticipate new opportunities in any marketplace.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students will understand that stakeholders, stakeholder interests, business environments (legal, regulatory, competitor) and business practices vary across regions of the world · Students will understand how local, regional and global markets interact and are impacted by economic, social and cultural factors. 	Medium

<p>Learning goal 6: Our graduates will understand types of markets and key business areas and their interaction to effectively manage different types of enterprises.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Students will demonstrate foundational knowledge of core business disciplines, including business analytics and business economics· Students will understand the interrelationships between functional areas of business so as to develop a general perspective on business management· Students will apply theories, models, and frameworks to analyze relevant markets (e.g., product, capital, commodity, factor and labor markets)· Students will be able to use technologies (e.g., spreadsheets, databases, software) relevant to contemporary business practices	Medium
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Guidelines for Case Notes and Consulting Reports

NOTE: These Guidelines are for both your weekly Case Notes and team Consulting Reports. I have presented them in the context of the Consulting Reports, but the content of the analytic work you need to do is identical in nature. In practice, I don't expect as thorough or detailed an analysis for the Case Notes as for the Consulting Reports (for example, I am not expecting a Sensitivity analysis); but this kind of analysis is a skill that advances with practice, and the more rigorous your weekly Case Notes, the more your skill will improve.

These Guidelines reflect the accumulated insights of many colleagues with whom I have taught with over the years. They are consistent with, and offer elaboration on, Marshall's "USC-CT" framework for Critical Thinking:

- U: Uncover the various potential problems, challenges & opportunities vis-à-vis organizational goals.
- S: Select the most critical problem(s), challenge(s) and/or opportunity(ies). Prioritize.
- C: Create a multitude of potential solutions.
- C: Choose the solution(s) that has the potential to be the most effective.
- T: Translate your solution(s) into an effective implementation plan.

They are designed to help you structure arguments about "strategic" issues. Such issues are typically deeply ambiguous, and they are therefore rather different from those you encounter in many other courses, where the challenge is to resolve not **ambiguity** but rather **uncertainty** and **complexity**. Where issues are uncertain and complex but not ambiguous, we can often resolve them through calculation of some kind, even if the calculations are themselves complex. By contrast, where issues are ambiguous, the meaning of our goals and the significance of the facts at hand are in dispute, and calculations therefore do not convince. To find the way forward here, we cannot rely on calculation but must make a reasoned appeal to intuition to resolve these different meanings and developing a shared understanding.

* * *

Think of your case analysis as a consulting engagement. Imagine that you have been given a chance to study the focal organization and to come up with a diagnosis and a set of recommendations. (Note that these same guidelines apply if you are preparing a proposal to bring to your supervisor or to your peers about an issue in the organization you work in.)

A few issues are immediately posed:

- * You will need to explicitly identify a specific client, since your action recommendations will need to be ones that this client can implement.
- * In this course, you have some latitude in choosing your client: even if the case is written from the point of view of a given firm or person, you might choose to take as your client one of the other stakeholders. However, in choosing your client, make sure the case and associated readings provide you with enough material. If you have any doubts, please consult with me beforehand.
- * The issues to be resolved may not be obvious; but this is also true of many real-world situations. The Study Questions in the session descriptions are offered only to get your thinking going—they are not an agenda for your analysis.

* In this situation, you are not a “subject matter expert” but rather a “facilitator”: your client will know more about the issues and context than you, so your job is not to “sell” them on your recommendation but to lay out a clear chain of reasoning so that they can use your input to clarify their own thinking.

You will make this presentation to the class, and you should think of the class as if we were the client and their leadership team. (Do keep in mind, however, that in some class sessions, some students will be assigned to play the role of representatives of other stakeholder groups.) Given this context, and given the time constraints on your presentation, you should not waste time repeating the case facts that would be known to this audience. (In real engagements, you might review these case facts to establish common ground and to buttress your credibility; but in class, that will be a waste of precious time.)

* * *

When you are scheduled to do a CR presentation, you should bring an Executive Summary and a PowerPoint deck (with Notes). The Executive Summary should summarize your argument in ½-1 page. You can do this as an attachment or Appendix to the presentation.

For the presentation, it is usually a good idea to begin with a single **summary** slide that states your key “take-away message.” The best way to do this is to state succinctly (a) the key issue facing the client organization, (b) the root challenge that makes it difficult to resolve this issue, and (c) your main recommendation for overcoming this root challenge.

Next: the body of the presentation. Here you may want to reiterate the **Key Issue** facing the client if your summary slide’s characterization of that issue needs more explanation. The key issue is the problem to be resolved, so it is important that you state it in a way that your client will immediately recognize as an accurate statement of their problem. Your statement of the issue creates a “shared context” with your client/audience. It is sometimes rather obvious, and you may have addressed it sufficiently in your summary slide; but sometimes it is less obvious and warrants a slide and discussion to itself. This is the USC-CT step: “*U: Uncover the various potential problems, challenges & opportunities vis-à-vis organizational goals.*”

You need to be as clear as possible about the time-horizon relevant to this Issue. The time horizon you set will condition your analysis, recommendation, and implementation plan. These will be different if the Issue you address is something that needs to be resolved over the next six months versus, say, the coming three years. If you choose a longer-term issue, then it goes without saying that you will deal with the shorter-term issues that its implementation poses in your Implementation plan. Less obviously: if you focus on a shorter-term issue but you think there is a longer-term issue lurking behind it, you should address the latter in your Implementation plan too, as something the client should start considering.

Having identified the key Issue, your next task is to “peel the onion” another few layers to identify the **Root Challenge** facing the client. This is the USC-CT step: “*S: Select the most critical problem(s), challenge(s) and/or opportunity(ies). Prioritize.*” One way to do this is to use Toyota’s “Five Whys.”¹ The root challenge is the factor that makes it difficult for the organization to resolve its key

¹ As explained on Wikipedia: The problem (or what I am calling the Issue) is that my car won’t start. Ask:

1. *Why?* - The battery is dead. (first why)
2. *Why?* - The alternator is not functioning. (second why)
3. *Why?* - The alternator belt has broken. (third why)
4. *Why?* - The alternator belt was well beyond its useful service life and has never been replaced. (fourth why)
5. *Why?* - I have not been maintaining my car according to the recommended service schedule. (fifth why, a root cause)

Issue successfully. Think of your task here as akin to a physician's: the patient (client) comes in with a whole set of "presenting symptoms" (i.e. Issues) —it's your job to identify the underlying disease (i.e. Root challenge). For a consultant as with a doctor, a good root-challenge analysis yields insight that is actionable: actionability is crucial, since the rest of your presentation is going to focus on resolving this Root Challenge.

Note that organizations usually face multiple Issues, and for any one of these, there may be more than one root challenge. But you simply don't have time to address more than one issue and one root challenge in a short presentation. The burden is on you to provide as much value as possible for your client by identifying the most critical Issue and the highest-leverage root challenge.

Identifying a Root Challenge is often difficult—but it is immensely valuable for your client. In real life, your contribution will often be more appreciated by your colleagues and clients if you can help identify the right question than if you offer the right answer to the wrong question. Your diagnosis of this Root Challenge should be argued, not just asserted, using the relevant facts of the case and whatever analytic tools seem necessary. Some of the supporting analysis may need to go into an Appendix.

Note too that sometimes the client has a strong opinion as to the nature of their real problem, and this opinion may be expressed in the case, but you may think their analysis is not accurate. In this situation, you will need to convince them that your diagnosis is more accurate than theirs. And sometimes the case describes a situation without explicitly identifying any specific issues at all, perhaps because the client organization is doing very well: here your task will be to identify the deep source of their success a key source of vulnerability in the future, and what they could do address that vulnerability.

In cases such as the ones we study in this course, there are typically multiple internal and external **Stakeholders** relevant to your client's decision-making, and these stakeholders have different interests, rights, and concerns. Stakeholders are any groups affected by the issue or decision the client is facing, or in a position to affect the client's decisions. Your analysis will be more useful if you focus on these actors' stakes in the decision issue at hand, rather than zooming further out to the whole field of action. Some stakeholders may not be obvious at first sight—they may be "downstream" or "upstream." You need to ask yourself: Who are the parties affected here? What rights or interests or concerns of theirs are involved? What is the nature of the client organization's economic and political relations to these stakeholders? Somewhere during your presentation, you will need to consider these stakeholders. You should fold that discussion into your presentation wherever it adds most value for your argument. This may turn out to be in your characterization of the key Issue; it may be in defending your characterization of the Root Challenge; it may be in identifying and assessing your Options; or it may be in planning your Implementation plan. But it should contribute something to your analysis somewhere.

After defining the Key Issue and Root challenge, and perhaps after you have presented your Stakeholder analysis and the explained the insights that flow from that, you need next to identify the strategic **Options** – a small number (usually three or four) plausible candidates for addressing the Root challenge facing the client organization and thereby helping it resolve its key Issue. This is the USC-CT step: "*C: Create a multitude of potential solutions.*" These options represent alternative *compass headings*—overall directions the client could follow to overcome the Root Challenge. As such, they are stated in rather abstract terms, in contrast to the implementation plan which should be stated in more concrete terms to specify a detailed *itinerary* (see below). Your strategic Options should therefore not be a laundry list of things worth doing: Options should define the critical choice that the client must make among alternative possible directions. To be maximally useful to the client, these options should be (a) plausible, (b) fundamentally different, indeed mutually exclusive – just as one cannot simultaneously pursue two different compass headings, and (c) collectively exhaustive – you shouldn't

leave the client wondering if you have overlooked another major option that's better than the ones you have identified. In practice, you should make sure that your list of options includes the ones likely to be under discussion within the client organization: by explicitly addressing these options, you will be helping your client reach a reasoned consensus.

Having articulated these Options, your next task is to justify your recommendation of one of the over the others with reasoning that could convince a skeptical client. This is the USC-CT step: "*C: Choose the solution(s) that has the potential to be the most effective.*" The key to convincing the client is to recognize that there are lots of points of view in the client organization (and in the class) on how to overcome their Root challenge and thereby resolve their Key issue: your job is to convince us that the strategy option you recommend is the most likely one to achieve success. The best way to do this is as follows:

* First you need to identify a common set of **Criteria** against which to evaluate the options. A broad range of strategic and operational considerations are potentially relevant, but it is up to you to come up with a small set of key criteria. Use as few as possible to avoid getting lost in the weeds. And make sure they are as independent as possible, otherwise you are implicitly double-counting when you come to scoring the options (see below). You need to justify your choice of criteria: you can often do that by referring to the priorities implied by the organization's basic mission and business strategy. In identifying the criteria, it often helps to consider what it is about each Option that makes it attractive to its proponents. On the other hand, however, if your argument is going to be convincing, your criteria and their relative important should be ones that proponents of all the options are likely to agree on. So, for example, if you were trying to choose a restaurant for dinner with your friends, and the options were China Wok, Sushi Dan, or Chez Panisse, a criterion of "great Chinese food" would be less useful than "great tasting food": you might disagree on how to score the options, but would likely find it easier to agree on the relative importance of great tasting food and convenience (see below, on weights).

* Then you should take each criterion one at a time, and show how your options compare on that criterion. Start by identifying qualitatively each option's **pros and cons** on this criterion. The evidence you need to make this assessment is probably scattered in the case study—it is not usually "pre-digested" for you like it would be in a textbook. You should be able to **score** the options relative to each other for this criterion. Usually a scale of 1-4 suffices if you have three Options. (If you use a wider scale, such as 1-10 or 1-100, you risk (a) giving a false impression of the precision of your analysis, (b) encouraging unproductive debate over minor differences, and (c) implicitly giving one criterion more effective weight than others because it has a great variance of scores.) Keep in mind that you are not trying to conduct a real quantitative analysis: you are just using numbers to make your qualitative arguments more explicit. **Note:** if your options are all genuinely plausible, then you should not end up with scores for one option that are inferior to another option on *all* your criteria: that would imply that the first option is, in reality, not a serious option at all. **Note too:** you should not include as "cons" to any option factors that could be controlled by a smart implementation plan

* To add up these scores in a convincing way, you need a set of **weights** for these criteria that reflect their relative importance to the organization. You need to explain why these weights are the most appropriate. To preserve the qualitative nature of the reasoning in that analysis, use simple weights: 1-4 should suffice if you have three Options, and 1-5 should suffice for four Options. Again, you are trying to maintain the qualitative nature of the reasoning and avoid having to justify small differences that you can't defend (e.g. between a weight of 25% and 30%).

* Multiplying scores by weights, you can create a **weighted score** for each Option and use these to rank-order the Options from best to worst. **Note:** putting numbers to these weights and scores is a great way to clarify your thinking; but the numbers will not convince your client: in your presentation voice-over

and your Notes, you need to explain in more intuitive, qualitative language the rationale for your conclusion, and the numbers are here only to help make more explicit your reasoning.

* Finally, you should **test the sensitivity** of the resulting Option-ranking to plausible alternative estimates of the weights. (I recommend you focus on alternative *weights* rather than alternative *scores*, because in principle it should be easier to get consensus on the scores, and the real disagreements in the client team are more likely to be over the relative weights of different criteria.) Here is where the benefits of a formal, quantitative decision-analysis reveal themselves: it can show whether reasonable people using reasonable but different weights would reach different conclusions. If your solution is not “robust” against such disagreements, close scrutiny of the analysis will help you differentiate between the “real issues”—where disagreement would change the final conclusion—and the “non-issues”—where disagreement doesn’t matter to the final ranking. The best way to do this is to ask: what weights would proponents of the other Options (the ones you are *not* recommending) propose if they were making their best case? Then you can discuss the relative plausibility of these weights compared to your preferred weights. This analysis should be summarized on a slide—but I recommend you find a way of presenting your results qualitatively, i.e. without recourse to quantified data: here too, numbers rarely convince anyone, so you should use them only (a) to clarify your own thinking and (b) to buttress the credibility of your qualitative reasoning: leave the quantitative analysis itself in an Appendix slide.

Now, having described and justified the “compass heading” you are recommending, you can move to implementation planning, where you provide your client with a detailed “itinerary” that will enable them to implement your recommended strategy. This is the USC-CT step: “*T: Translate your solution(s) into an effective implementation plan.*” Depending on the case, you may not have enough data to develop this part of your presentation in much detail, but here is what this section would ideally address:

* First, you should identify the likely **hurdles**—the factors within the control of the organization—that would face your client in pursuing your proposed strategy, and suggest some **countermeasures** your client could use overcome these hurdles.

* Second, you should also identify the **risks**—the factors outside the client’s control—confronting your strategy, then show the **countermeasures** that could mitigate these risks, and if they can’t be mitigated, how the client should proceed if these risks do materialize.

* Synthesizing this analysis of hurdles and risks and their respective countermeasures, you should propose a **sequenced and timed implementation plan** that answers the questions: what are the key steps to be done today, next week, next month, next quarter, and next year, and who should be responsible for these activities. This plan will be far more useful if you support it with some reasoning—i.e. explain why you recommend this sequencing and timing rather than another.

* Note that your Recommendation will be relative to a certain timeframe. Your implementation plan will focus naturally on what the client needs to do *within* that timeframe. But the Implementation section is also a section of your report where you might want to address longer-term issues, *beyond* that timeframe, that you believe the client will need to address.

* Finally, to convince the client that your recommendation is practical, you should consider the overall “bottom-line”—the **costs** as well as the **benefits** of your plan of action. Reports often forget this elementary consideration! It’s a nice way to wrap up the presentation.

Note: you may not have enough information to ground all the details of your Implementation plan in the case data. In that eventuality, it is often helpful to work with some plausible assumptions and show us what the plan would look like. At a minimum, you will have provided the client with a template (“straw-man”) that they can build on.

Note too: your Implementation plan probably has many facets, and it is often useful if you devote a slide to one particularly high-leverage component. The goal here would be to pinpoint the main challenge facing implementation of your recommended Option, and then to propose a way of addressing it. Obviously, you won't have time to argue in any detail for this analysis, let alone to discuss alternative ways of addresses it; but even without that, this slide can considerably augment your presentation's value. If the plan of action involves, for example, a new reporting structure for the organization, you might include a detailed organization chart for the new structure. Or perhaps effective implementation involves training: in that case, you might show us a course outline for the training module. Or perhaps it involves a leader explaining to this organization the rationale for a new strategy: you might include a video that you create with your team, where one of you acts the CEO articulating this message. In this way, you can make more concrete the implications of your plan, and show that you have anticipated some of the detailed action planning that it will require.

Your goal is to deliver to your client as much "value" as possible—that is, deep insights that they will not have had themselves. So this project is about "peeling the onion"—going deeper into the underlying causes and thereby identifying action recommendations that are more likely to have more substantially positive effects.

To achieve this goal, your team's work will need to proceed in a highly iterative way. You will typically find that you need to revisit and revise your characterizations of the key issue and the root challenge when you get into the strategic options and implementation. Plan on working through several iterations of your presentation, since each time you work through it, chances are good you will uncover new ways to define the Critical Issue, different Options, other Criteria to consider, new Implementation hurdles.

As a result of the need for this iterative process, you will not be able to neatly divide up the work of preparing your report among your team members. Whereas in other classes you can often delegate specific parts of a project to specific team members, here team members will need to work collaboratively, in face-to-face discussion. You will be able to divide up the work of laying out the PowerPoint slides, but the content will need to be developed collaboratively. Organize yourselves and plan your work schedules accordingly.

As concerns the **oral presentation** itself, here are some guidelines:

- * I will hold your presentations to a **15 minute time-limit**. This may sound draconian, but it is not unlike many real-life situations where the time accorded you to make your case is typically very short. More importantly, this time limit forces you in your preparation to get to and keep the focus on the most critical issues.
- * In analyzing the case, please rely **only** on data included in **the syllabus materials** (case, readings). This will put your team and the rest of the class on an equal footing. You may, however, use whatever conceptual or analytic tools you choose, wherever they come from. (Note however that if you want to introduce these other tools, you will need to explain and justify them to us, your client.)
- * It is often interesting to see what actually happened after the case time-frame (e.g. what the company did and how it worked out): you will have up to **5 extra minutes** if you want to summarize the results of research you have done on that. But remember: the body of your presentation (the first 15 minutes) needs to be convincing to your client (the class) knowing only what we know in the case time-frame. What actually happened is unknown to them at that time. So do not include that "what happened" material in the main presentation – later in the class session, you can tell us about it.

- * You should work to ensure that your presentation develops its arguments in a logical sequence. You will need to make each slide “count”—making a clear point that contributes to the line of argument leading to your recommendations.
- * Your presentation materials (slides) should be clear—neither too wordy nor too sparse. Consult the standard references on how to lay out visually intelligible and pleasing presentation slides. Ideally, your slide titles should consist of assertions (not just describe the topic of the slide).
- * Please also include **Notes** (using the Notes page option in PowerPoint): these should not be your entire voice-over script, but should explain in bullet point form whatever is necessary beyond the slide itself to make the meaning of the slide clear to a reader who was not at your presentation (or who was at the presentation but, reviewing the handout later, finds they have forgotten the point you were trying to make).
- * You will probably find it useful to prepare some **Appendix** slides. These might explain some of the details of your analysis, or show your analysis of some issues that are interesting but not quite important enough to include in your 15-minute presentation itself. It is good to have these ready in case they are useful in responding to questions.
- * At the start of class, you need to provide me with a **printout of your Slides with their Notes pages** and your **Executive Summary**. B&W printing is fine—no need for color.
- * Please **number your slides**: this will greatly facilitate our discussion.
- * These Guidelines are particularly effective for ‘facilitation’ consulting rather than “subject-matter expert” consulting. Your team should engage with the class in that role—as process facilitators, attempting to bring the client team (the class) to a consensus about how to move ahead. Your goal is to lay out a chain of reasoning that you think the client can buy into—not to “sell” them on your recommendation. In the Q&A session, you should try to surface the key issues that remain to be resolved rather than defending your recommendation.

Grading Sheet for Case Notes and Consulting Reports

Case:

Team:

Each component is worth up to 4 points.

Stakeholder analysis

- * Have you identified the relevant stakeholders?*
- * Have you identified their main concerns relative to the client's critical issue?*
- * Have you identified their ability to influence the client's decision?*
- * Have you drawn a usable conclusion from this analysis and explained how it informs the rest of your analysis and/or recommendations?*

Score:

Root challenge analysis

- * Have you clearly identified a Key Issue facing the client?*
- * Have you identified an actionable root challenge that underlies that issue?*
- * Have you made a compelling case that this is indeed the root challenge?*

Score:

Strategic response

- * Have you specified the time horizon you are focusing on?*
- * Have you identified a good set of alternative solutions ("compass headings") for the root challenge? Are they plausible, mutually exclusive, and collectively exhaustive? Have you made each of them clear enough to permit their evaluation?*
- * Have you made explicit and justified the criteria you propose to use in evaluating these alternatives and the relative importance (weights) you assign to each?*
- * Have you analyzed these alternatives' pros and cons using these criteria, and justified the evaluation (scores) of each alternative on each of the evaluation criteria?*
- * Have you done a sensitivity test on this analysis to see if reasonable people would reach different results using plausibly different weights? Have you used this analysis to pinpoint where the key underlying disagreements might lie?*

Score:

Implementation plan

- * Have you identified the key risks in pursuing your strategy?*
- * Have you proposed specific countermeasures to mitigate these risks?*

- * Have you identified the internal and external hurdles facing your strategy?*
- * Have you proposed specific countermeasures to overcome these hurdles?*
- * Have you laid out a timed sequence of actions that integrates these countermeasures and maximizes the likelihood of success and have you explained why you recommend this sequence and timing?*
- * Have you identified a particularly important implementation issue/solution and offered some insight into that aspect of your plan?*
- * If there are important issues that need to be addressed either in the shorter-term or the longer-term, have you identified them and proposed resolutions?*
- * Have you assessed the overall costs of implementing the plan and compared them to its benefits?*

Score:

Presentation

For oral presentations of Consulting Reports:

- * Is the Executive Summary effective communicating the main line of logic?*
- * Does the argument flow in logical way?*
- * Are audio-visual materials used to good effect?*
- * Are the Slides accompanied by Notes that adequately and succinctly explain any meaning that is not apparent on the Slide itself?*
- * Were you prepared for questions?*

For written Case Notes:

- * Is the expression clear?*
- * Is there a clear line of argument?*

Score:

OVERALL score:

Grading engagement

Class engagement has three components. Here is how I will grade each.

Case Notes

Case Notes must be posted to Blackboard's Assignments page before the beginning of the relevant class session. Each CN earns you up to 2 points, based on my assessment of quality and thoroughness. Late submissions will not be graded.

In-Class participation

Each class session earns you up to 2 points under this heading. I will use the following "anchors" in scoring your contribution to our discussions. I will also give you an opportunity to evaluate both mid-way and at the end of the semester:

Excellent (2 points): Contributions reflected exceptional preparation and an enthusiastic commitment to our learning experience. Had read the assigned material and had thought about it carefully. Embraced the opportunity to learn in our time together, brought out the best in others, and was open to subsequent conversations. Brought up questions that need to be further explored. Added considerably to the quality of the course experience for others.

Good (1.5 points): Contributions reflected an adequate preparation for class and commitment to our learning experience. Comments helped the discussion move forward but did not open new topics or pose difficult issues. Had read the material before class and given it some thought. Took advantage of the learning opportunities presented here. Added something to the quality of the course experience.

Weak (1 point): Attended class, but contribution reflected either weak preparation or an apathetic orientation to the learning opportunities presented. Comments did not build on or relate to flow of class discussion. Had read the material, but without much effort to engage it. On balance, added little to the experience of the class.

"Take-Aways"

Take-away notes are best done as soon as possible after class. For grading purposes, they must be posted on the relevant BB Discussion Forum by 5:00 am the day of the following class session. Late submissions will not be graded. Each TA earns you up to 2 points, based on my assessment of quality and thoroughness. My grading criteria are:

Coverage: The best TAs synthesize the key ideas that emerged during the discussion and from the readings. Weaker TAs focus on just a subset of those ideas.

Insight: Weak TAs list the topics we addressed. Good TAs pinpoint the lessons learned about those topics. The best TAs also suggest new questions that are raised by these lessons.

Connections: The best TAs link the lessons of this discussion to others earlier in the course. Weaker TAs don't make such connections.

Point of View: The best TAs reveal how the discussion has enriched your own thinking. Weaker TAs lack that personal engagement, or simply reiterate a pre-formed opinion.

Case Notes Template

Please fill in this template with your (succinct, point-form) responses and *post* it (do not *paste* it) as a *Word* document on the Assignments page of BB before the start of class.

Keep in mind that the sequence of questions here reflects a logical argument flow: so, do not “jump ahead” but take the argument one step at a time.

My name:
The case:
1. Who is your client? <typically one name>
2. Of the various issues facing the client, which is the critical issue you will address? <typically 2-3 lines>
3. Relative to this key issue, who are the main stakeholders your client must consider? What concerns do they have relative to the critical issue? How much influence can they exert in shaping to the client’s decision? <typically bullet points for each of 4-8 main stakeholders, with sub-bullets describing their concerns, motivation, and ability to affect the client>
4. What overall conclusion do you draw from this stakeholder analysis and how does this conclusion contribute to your argument? <typically 2-4 lines>
5. What is the root challenge the client must overcome to resolve this critical issue? Justify this diagnosis, succinctly. <typically 5-10 lines>
6. What plausible, mutually exclusive, and collectively exhaustive strategic options should the client consider for overcoming this root challenge? Describe them succinctly. <typically 3 options, with 2-4 lines describing each>
7. Which of these options do you recommend, and why is it superior to each of the others? <typically 10-15 lines>
8. What implementation issues should your client anticipate? How should they address them? <typically 10-15 lines>