PREPARING CASES AND PREsentATIONS

The case studies are meant to illustrate and deepen the covered topics and are an integral part of the learning experience. As such they provide examples of particular business situations to which we will apply the concepts and analytical tools discussed in the lectures. The following is meant to assist you in preparing cases for class discussion and writing them up.

1. **Study groups.** Cases may be prepared in groups but

   (a) the *maximal group size* is 5; while you are responsible for forming groups they are supposed to be stable and you sign up for them;
   (b) all group members receive the same grade.

2. **Ground rules.** *Late submissions* will not be accepted for any reason.

   (a) At most 2 pages of *analysis*, and 6 pages of *technical appendices* typed in 12 pts with one inch margins. Discussion (starred *) cases only require a 2 page executive summary while technical appendices are at your discretion.
   (b) Writes ups are due at the *beginning of class* for which the discussion is scheduled. PowerPoint presentations need to be submitted ahead of class by email.

3. **Scope.** The case questions are meant to highlight important issues and guide your analysis toward the essentials. If you feel that they do not adequately reflect the issues and problems of the case do not hesitate to broaden the scope of the analysis. Obviously, you should make sure that you clearly state any other issues you address.

   (a) Do not fill up your precious space by needlessly regurgitating the case. However, since the reader can not be expected to know all the details and numbers you should provide the case's key elements as they relate to your analysis. You are responsible for including the right amount of facts and numbers in your analysis.
   (b) More importantly, you should defend an opinion by taking a position, arguing your case and providing specific recommendations how to solve the problems at hand.
   (c) Be brief and to the point!

4. **Analysis.** Several key aspects of good analysis, presentation and write-ups are

   (a) a clear understanding of problem and a coherent approach to solving it;
   (b) demonstration of an understanding of the relevant finance principles;
   (c) correct technical analysis;
   (d) creativity in defining, approaching and solving the problems at hand;
(e) clear identification of analytic shortcomings in the cases and their statements.

5. **Exposition.** A write-up should include

(a) introduction with your view of the problem(s) clearly stated;
(b) key assumptions that you have made;
(c) summary of technical analysis with methods used;
(d) recommendations and conclusions.

6. **Presentations.** The obvious objective of your case presentation is to convince your audience of your perspective and position. Each group will present several times depending on enrolment.

(a) Presenting groups just turn in a copy of their slides (hardcopy and email) and presentation materials.
   i. In line with corporate conventions you may wish to give your recommendations both in the introduction and at the end.
   ii. Be judicious in the choice of facts and numbers to be included in the presentation: while the report should contain tables, exhibits and other supporting documentation including your assumptions not everything needs to be presented to the "executive audience".
   iii. Try to convince the audience that you know the facts, numbers and analysis so that you can focus on convincing us that your recommendations and conclusions are correct.

(b) Be professional: plan your presentation, use visual aids such handouts, slides or a computer, divide the presentation among group members according to "roles", practice your delivery and, last but not least, have fun!

(c) **Format**: there are two different formats depending on whether we discuss a decision or an analysis case. In the first instance, there might be two opposing views to be argued in class as laid out in the case questions. So, *two* groups will present these two views (e.g., opposing factions on the board) with each presentation lasting about 15 min with 5 to 10 min questions, discussion and comments by the class. After a general discussion the class acting like a board of directors will *vote* on the corporate action to be taken. Depending on enrolment, a *third* group might then provide a synthesis of the case, the two points of view and the decision representing, e.g., an external consultant. In the second instance, presenting groups compete in analysis and recommendation on the basis of a common script (case questions).

(d) Attention to detail and correct technical analysis are even more important since your audience has also done the case and will be well prepared to ask probing questions.

7. **Class discussion.** Come prepared to class even when you are not presenting. Case discussion is essentially class responsibility. After discussing the basic issues faced by the decision makers you will present your analysis (individually or by group) and propose solutions. These, in turn, will be reviewed by the class and counterproposals discussed. You are strongly encouraged to prepare outlines for the discussion cases both as an exercise and to streamline the subsequent class discussion. There is no formal grade for discussions or participation; however, the general contribution to the class’ learning experience will be used as a tie breaker.