

Dynamic ENTREPRENEURSHIP

3rd ERENET Annual Meeting
18 September 2008

**PREPARATION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL
CASE STUDIES BY CEE ERENET
UNIVERSITIES
– SOME PRELIMINARY IDEAS**

Prof. Jerzy Cieřlik
Kozminski University, School of Management, Warsaw

Issues

- Case studies – clarifying key concepts
- Use of case studies in teaching entrepreneurship
- The need for an integrated approach
- Standard characteristics of the case
- Problems encountered while writing cases
- Teaching with cases
- Future actions within ERENET framework

Case Study Vs Case History (T. Cooney)

- Forward focused
- Usable at all levels depending on the case complexity
- Invites you into a role
- Typical assignment:
 - „If you were in Tom Jones' position in this organisation, what is your analysis of the situation described, and what action would you take and why?”
- Backward focused
- Useful early (1st years)
- And post experience (MBA?)
- Invites judgement – with reflection regarding own business

Case length

- No clear rules, but
- Approx. 10 pages plus annexes shall be considered as a good practice
- Use of shorter forms: mini cases, caselets
- The latter forms however fall rather within case history category

Using cases in teaching management and entrepreneurship

- Cases most often used in teaching management
- Particularly useful in addressing strategic issues in major global industries
 - Jack Welch's strategy to restructure AT&T
 - Strategic alliances between global players
- Standard teaching method in executive education
- Good cases can be purchased from several case distribution centres
- Use of cases in teaching entrepreneurship of recent origin but gradually expanding

Typical Case Layout (T. Cooney)

- Introduction / opening paragraph
- Organisation background
- Focus on the area of interest
- Examine specific problems / decisions
- Outline possible alternatives but.....
- Close

Some other rules

- Case should reflect the real story which cannot be „adjusted” to meet the course needs
- The company name can be disguised but clear identification preferred
- Copyright shall remain with the author(s)
- Need for formal clearance by the company

Need for an integrated approach

- Writing cases is a complex process, requiring specialized skills, careful preparation and good relations with companies providing information
- Teaching with the use of cases requires careful preparation of the course content, its organization but also technical facilities, like classroom physical layout, availability of boards, charts, screens, specific sitting arrangements, etc.
- Students should be ready not only to participate actively in the discussions but to engage in the intensive preparation
 - Individual preparation – reading the case but also the relevant literature
 - Small group discussion
 - Large group discussion

Author's experiences in using cases in teaching entrepreneurship

Using purchased cases reflecting western business environment

- Students considered case material as not being relevant to the Polish environment
- Students willing to discuss but without advance preparation
- Lack of adequate classroom facilities

Attempts to write cases

- Contacts with smaller companies established through family links of students
- Initial reaction of business owners quite positive but later ...
 - „So far we followed the low profile attitude”
 - „We are afraid that competition may use such information”
 - „The story is true but we want to polish it a little bit to improve our image”

Solution adopted in the textbook

Approx 60 mini case histories addressing the issues discussed in the specific (sub)chapters

- Typically 1- 1,5 page long
- Abbreviated versions of articles found in the Polish business press
- Reflecting Polish business environment

Fully developed „case” as the final chapter of the book

- 15 pages plus 40 pages appendices
- „Invented” case, however reflecting real situations identified in various companies
- Used to test the knowledge of students acquired during the course, including the textbook

Recommended actions

Proposition 1:

Let's participate in the case study competitions like that organized by the European Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ECSB)

http://www.ecsb.org/eng/news_&_events/case_study_competition/

Proposition 2:

For enhancing CEE exchange and cooperation we should focus on cases dealing with international entrepreneurship – cross border business opportunities in our region. In the future this could lead to student exchanges and cross border teaching programs

Useful resources

- **The Richard Ivey School of Business (Canada) „trilogy” by J.A. Erskine, M.R. Leenders, L.A. Maufette-Leenders**
 - Writing Cases (2001)
 - Teaching With Cases (2003)
 - Learning With Cases (1999)
- **Major Case Distribution Centres**
 - European Case Clearing House (ECCH)
 - Harvard Business School
 - Richard Ivey School of Business
 - Darden Graduate School of Business Administration
- **ECSB Case Study Competitions**
 - http://www.ecsb.org/eng/news_&_events/case_study_competition/
 - Page contains some methodological information on case writing
 - Contact Prof. Thomas Cooney

Contact

Prof. Jerzy Cieslik
Kozminski University, School of Management
Jagiellonska 59, 03-301 Warsaw, Poland

Tel. +48 502 030 030

E-mail: jerzy@cieslik.edu.pl

www.cieslik.edu.pl