**FORMAT FOR WRITTEN CASE ANALYSIS**

Sections of the Analysis (in order):

* Executive Summary
* Problem Definition
* Analysis of Alternatives
* Plan Development

Executive Summary

This section should define the problem, state the chosen alternative, and briefly explain why the chosen alternative is the superior alternative. The Executive Summary should not contain background material from the case. Write the Executive Summary for your audience – the executives of the company. They are, of course, well-informed about the situation. This section will usually be only 2 or 3 paragraphs in length.

Problem Statement and Statement of Alternatives

Adequately and appropriately defining the problem is the key to the case analysis. A problem definition should be framed as a decision to be made. Therefore, “sales have fallen off” is not a properly defined problem. The problem should not be defined so narrowly that good alternative courses of action are not considered. Therefore, “should we increase advertising” is too narrowly defined to result in a thoughtfully considered decision. The problem definition should contain three key elements: decision objectives; success measures; and decision constraints. For example: how can we maintain our quality brand image (objective); and regain our lost market share (success measure); given limited funds for advertising and sales promotion (constraint)?

This section should identify the alternative courses of action to be investigated. This section should also list the major dimensions, or states of nature in a decision theory framework, of the decision (i.e., those factors on which the choice of an alternative will largely depend). These states of nature are uncertain and, for the most part, are uncontrollable: competitor actions, consumer needs and response, and turns in the economy are examples. The potential payoff of any alternative depends on the “true” state of nature. This section will most likely be about 1 page in length.

Analysis of Alternatives

This section may contain qualitative as well as quantitative analyses. In a decision theory sense, this section seeks to calculate the expected payoff of each alternative. Therefore, you must sift through the case information to find those pieces of information relevant to the decision to be made. Here, you are really constructing the states of nature, estimating probabilities of the state of nature, determining cell payoffs, and calculating the expected values of each alternative. It is proper to place actual calculation, exhibits, etc. in the appendices and simply refer to your findings in the body of the paper. This section will ultimately identify the chosen alternative strategy or course of action. This section will normally be 2 to 3 pages in length.

Plan Development

Once the alternative strategy is selected, you must develop a plan for its implementation. Basically, this involves specifying the marketing mix to be employed. This section will be 1 to 2 pages in length.