The MCA presents:

Case Prep 301

Friday, July 4, 2014
Recall: Overview of a Case Interview

Throughout the case

- Initiative
- Communication
- Coachability
- Poise
- Tone, body language

It’s not just cracking the case – the soft skills you demonstrate matter too!
# Review: The stages of a strong conclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start of delivery</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Risks and next steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Can I have a minute to gather my thoughts?** | **Justify the recommendation with a brief synthesis**  
  - Includes facts you’ve discovered from the case | **Move to risks and next steps without being prompted**  
  - Shows you are thinking beyond the problem |
| **Quickly restate the problem**  
  - “In order to restore profitability next quarter, I would recommend...” | **I would recommend X because...**  
  - Reason A  
  - Reason B  
  - Reason C | **Adress key risks associated with your recommendation** |
| **Say what you will do upfront**  
  - Lead with action not analysis | | **Identify next steps required to confirm/implement recommendations** |
# Strong conclusions leave a positive impression

## Short and Sweet
- Aim for 30 seconds to 1 minute
  - Don’t revisit every detail

## Confidence
- Be confident with recommendations
  - Acknowledge you do not know all the factors
- Sound excited!

## Go beyond the recommendation
- Identify a way to mitigate risks

Next steps should be actionable on Monday morning
- Ex. A pilot program / survey

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Being succinct and impactful are learnable skills!
Soft skills the interviewers are looking for and how to shine

- Are they relaxed?
- Is the candidate open and collaborative?
- Is the candidate making eye-contact?
- Is their voice calm and natural?
- Are they sharing their notes with me?

“Do I want to work with this person?”
Case presentation: Try to do your work in “slides”

- Makes it easy for the interviewer to follow your thought process throughout the case
- A method that works for me:
  - 1 blank sheet for initial case facts and later insights
  - 1 blank sheet for structure
    - Transfer key takeaways from branches to insights sheet, so you can jump into your conclusion smoothly and quickly
  - 1 blank sheet for calculations
    - Transfer key numbers to structure sheet and/or insight sheet
The interviewer will be looking beyond your case skills

There may be several opportunities to interact with your interviewer outside the actual case. Be sure you are up to date on the news regarding the company. Here are some general rules of thumb:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fair questions</th>
<th>Topics to avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What types of business problems have you dealt with?</td>
<td>Anything you can Google or readily find on your own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What types of clients/industries have you found to be the most interesting?</td>
<td>Compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the most challenging aspects/biggest surprises/things you wish you knew?</td>
<td>Hours, weekends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I saw that your firm participated in program X, as I mentioned on my resume, I am passionate about education and was wondering if you could discuss further.</td>
<td>Specific client names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember, etiquette and positive attitude are key
Having structure outside of the case is vital (I/II)

What scares you the most about this job?

| A standard answer | “When starting any new job the people who have been there longer will have an advantage over those who are newly joining. These same individuals have been trained longer and are more knowledgeable on the processes involved with the job. The intelligence gap between associates and consultants concerns me. On average, people who have joined this are of work have much more business knowledge than I have and understand the theory well.” |
| Think further... | 1. How can you rephrase this?  
2. What could make this stronger? |
What scares you the most about this job?

1. They have had a two year head start
2. All have 4 years of business skills through undergrad
3. May not be willing to help me

Every question be answered in a structured way!
Several key stories can help you navigate through behavioral questions

| Leadership Story | 1. When have you shown initiative?  
| | 2. Tell me about a time you lead a team?  
| | 3. Tell me about a time when you dealt with conflict in a team setting |
| Communication Story | 1. Tell me about a time you convinced someone of something?  
| | 2. Tell me about a time you had to present an idea to a large group. |
| Interpersonal Story | 1. How do you deal with different personalities?  
| | 2. What do you think will be the most challenging part of the job.  
| | 3. Do you prefer to work in a team or individually. |

Leverage the Career Center to help you refine your stories
## STAR framework can be used to structure stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Brief description of the situation and context of the story</td>
<td>• Explain the task you had to complete highlighting any specific challenges or constraints</td>
<td>• Describe the specific actions you took to complete the task. These should highlight desirable traits without needing to state them</td>
<td>• Close with the result of your effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who</td>
<td>• Deadlines</td>
<td>• Initiative</td>
<td>• Quantifying results always helps!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What</td>
<td>• Costs</td>
<td>• Intelligence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Where</td>
<td>• Other issues...</td>
<td>• Dedication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How</td>
<td></td>
<td>• understanding</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Case prep resources

We’re here to support you as you tackle this challenge!

- MCA Website
  - Contains the MCA casebook and lots of mock cases and prep tips from other schools
  - [http://inside.rotman.utoronto.ca/mca/resources-members-only/](http://inside.rotman.utoronto.ca/mca/resources-members-only/)

- Victor Cheng
  - Frameworks, advice and help with mental math

- Your Peers
  - You cannot get “over the bar” without working together – you are not in competition with your peers!
  - If you are looking for case partners and can’t find one reach out to us, we can set you up with someone
What’s next: Timeline for fall recruiting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>Sept.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PRACTICE 20 CASES</td>
<td>Case Prep 301</td>
<td>3-4 CASES PER WEEK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Our next prep session will cover figures, figures, and more figures
- The goal of checking in during August is to make sure that you get additional feedback heading into the recruiting season.
- Find partners and get started!
Practice a Case: Breakout Rooms

### Giving a case
- During: Don’t give away key pieces of information without being asked
- During: If your partner is truly struggling, do help them along
- During: Push on “why” and “how”, ask follow-up questions

### Receiving a case
- During: Take notes and ask clarifying questions upfront
- During: Show your work and talk the interviewer through your assumptions
- After: Go over what you struggled with and focus on sticking points

Stick to a 25 minute timeline. If the candidate hasn’t gotten every step of the case with 5 minutes left, start to wrap up so they can at least offer a conclusion based on what they do know.
Thank you!
Questions?

Contact Us @ mca@rotman.utoronto.ca