



JGSM Consulting Club

# Case Interview Preparation Program



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# Program Overview

## Elements of the Case Interview Practice Program

- **Individual Research and Practice**
  - Individual resource folder
  - Consulting club library
  - Interactive cases online
  
- **Presentations and Workshops**
  - Introduction to case interviews
  - Live demonstration of how to crack a case
  - Understanding and using strategy frameworks (skill-building session) with faculty or Consulting Club executive
  
- **Case-Interview Practice Teams**
  - Teams put together
  - A mentor available on demand
  - Regular check-ins and extra tips on cracking cases

## Time Commitment

The case interview practice program will give you a significant advantage both in your school work and in your interviews. However, it is important to be aware that participating in the program involves a time commitment. In order to get the results and see an improvement, you need to commit to doing the work and attending practice meetings. This is important not only for yourself but because you will be making a commitment to the other members of your practice team.

Participating in this program will mean attending all the workshops (which will be held mostly on Fridays) and attending the practice meetings organized by your team. *What you put in is what you will get out of the program – We recommend **practicing about 2 hours per week or three cases per week, on average.***



## Program Overview

The following is an overview of the workshops in the Case Interview Preparation Program. The order and timing of the events may vary because we need to fit in with the schedules of the alumni and faculty speakers. We will keep you updated as changes happen.

Dress for all events is *business casual*.

Please come to each event prepared by visiting the website of the presenter so that you know about their company and can ask informed questions. Please make sure that you review the frameworks in the Vault manual before each workshop in order to get the most out the demonstrations.

The program will include the following sessions. The sessions will be lead by either consultants or Rice Faculty.

### Introduction to Cases

- Content:**
- What is a Case Interview?
  - How do you approach case interviews?
  - What are the firms looking for?
  - What does a good case interview look like?
  - How should you practice?
  - Practice Cases - Application of concepts

### Basic Frameworks: Economics and Accounting

- Content:**
- Basic Concepts and Frameworks
  - Cost-benefit Analysis
  - Internal vs. External Market Factors
  - Fixed vs. Variable Costs
  - Opportunity Costs
  - Basic Overview of Financial Statements
  - The Balance Sheet
  - The Income Statement
  - The Statement of Retained Earnings
  - The Statement of Cash Flows
  - Practice Cases - Application of concepts

### Financial Factors

**Content:**



## JGSM Consulting Club

- Net Present Value
- The Capital Asset Pricing Model
- Practice Cases

### Key Facts and Brainteasers

- Content:**
- Economic Facts
  - Demographic Facts
  - Basic Rules of Calculation
  - Physical Facts
  - Practice Brain Teasers

### Strategy Frameworks

- Content:**
- Ka
  - PIE - The next generation of Porter's Five Forces
  - SWOT Analysis
  - The Seven S Framework
  - Product Life Cycle Curve
  - Strategy tool/framework Chart
  - Value Chain Analysis
  - Core Competencies
  - Benchmarking and "Best Practices"
  - The 2x2 matrix
  - The BCG Matrix
  - Practice Cases - Application of concepts

### Marketing Frameworks

- Content:**
- The Four P's
  - The Three C's
  - Market Sizing
  - Demand and Supply
  - Breakeven calculations
  - Benchmarking
  - Practice Cases - Application of concepts

**Operations****Content:**

- Six Sigma
- Process mapping
- Practice Cases

**M&A Cases**

- Determining the Drivers of Value for an Acquisition
- Target and Market Assessment
- Data Gathering and Analysis
- Application of concepts

**The Perfect Case Interview (repeating)****Content:**

- Putting it all together
- How to start off strongly
- Demonstration of how to crack a case
- What the interviewer is looking for
- How to get “unstuck”
- Smart questions to ask



# Case Interview Practice Teams

## **Case practice team one**

Bernard, Harold (1)  
Brown, Kimberly (1)  
Chu, Abraham (1)  
Shih, Andy (1)

## **Case practice team two**

Gerecht, Paul (1)  
Weihs, Tyson (1)  
Rudy Gonzalez (1)  
Yen Cao (1)

## **Case practice team three**

Bennett, Matthew (2)  
Curry, Eric (2)  
Manford, Justin (2)

## **Case practice team four**

Varghese, Siby Abraham (2)  
Wan, Maureen (2)  
Eggleston, Trisha (2)

## **Case practice team five**

Washington, Lavon (3)  
Akiwumi-Siriboe, Anna (3)  
Streeter, Mark (3)

## **Case practice team six**

Fischer, Benjamin (3)  
Ochoa, Margaret (3)  
Shallwani, Asif (3)

## **Case practice team seven**

Dibos, Daniel (3)  
West, David (3)  
Winkler, Shawn (3)

## **Case practice team eight**



Bade, Zameer (3)  
 Simon Doyle (3)  
 Akins, Brian (3)

### Case practice team nine

Spence, Kaley (2)  
 Keys, Louisa (2)  
 Shields, Ben

## Program Mentors

### Mentors

Gerhard Golden	<a href="mailto:gerhard@rice.edu">gerhard@rice.edu</a>	President
Harold Hadnott	<a href="mailto:harold@rice.edu">harold@rice.edu</a>	VP Finance
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# Case Interview Competition

The Case interview competition will have three rounds and then the final competition. In each round the teams will be tested on a case. All teams will be tested on the same case. Teams will need to sign up for a time slot to do the case. Teams must NOT speak to each other about the case. Teams will be given a raw score of 1-100 points.

The final round will include the winning team from each of the three rounds and the highest scorer amongst the remaining teams.

The dates for the competition will be sent out shortly. Get practicing soon!!!



# How to Run a Practice Session

Running and participating in a case interview practice team is both hard work and a lot of fun. You are guaranteed to get a lot better at applying the strategy, finance, marketing and economic concepts you are learning in class. In order to get the most out of the experience there are a few things that it is useful to do.

## Success Tips

- 1** Make sure all team members can contact each other easily. Exchange email, phone and instant messenger information. Set up a distribution list
- 2** Arrange to meet at least once a week at a regular time each week (and a regular place). Do it at a time that suits everyone and stick to it! We suggest that you do not make it a time right before a class when people are likely to feel pressed to finish homework or reading
- 3** Block out 2 hours
- 4** Set up the meeting time as a recurring appointment in Outlook with a reminder before it so that you do not forget.
- 5** Do one short brain teaser (market sizing examples are really good to practice) and one longer case for each meeting
- 6** Work through the case together with one person being scribe on the whiteboard. Do not be intimidated if you do not know where to start. Pick a framework you think might work, write it up and start working through it methodically.
- 7** You are likely to have to make lots of assumptions and fill in missing bits of information as you go. This is fine. Just make sure your assumptions have a logical basis.
- 8** Be aware that it may feel awkward the first few times. Before you know it you will pick up speed and be cracking cases with the best of them. If you feel you need help then ask for a mentor.

**Good luck and Have fun!**

# How to Crack a Case

The following list is a compilation of advice from a number of websites and manuals. It also reflects the experiences of the Consulting Club executive. It is by no means a comprehensive list, but if you do all these things, you will do well. These techniques apply equally to cracking a case in a practice session and to acing a case interview. After all, your practice sessions should be as close as possible to an actual interview in order to be good preparation.

## Tips for Cracking a Case

- ✓ Put your paper landscape format in front of you to take notes. It is easier to write and draw diagrams and makes it easier for the interviewer to see what you are doing also
- ✓ As soon as you hear the case question ask yourself: ***“What Changed?”*** Use that to focus you in on the questions to ask and the framework to use to start.
- ✓ Think aloud – talk as you go. Let the interviewer follow your thought process so that they can see that you are approaching the problem methodically and so that they can help you.
- ✓ Write everything down! Especially calculations and assumptions. It will help prevent stupid mistakes and you will be able to remember everything for the summary at the end.
- ✓ Don’t be afraid to ask questions
- ✓ Be methodical. Decide which framework you are going to start with, write it down, and then start to work your way through it piece by piece.
- ✓ Follow the interviewer’s lead. If they say don’t worry about something, ignore it, you are on the wrong track. If they say “we’ll come back to that” make sure to mark it on your page so that you will be able to find it later. They will remember!
- ✓ Set up your thinking/ options/ recommendations for action as a 2x2 matrix if possible/
- ✓ Always sum up at the end.



# List of resources

## Consulting Club Resources On Reserve in BIC

The following resources are on open reserve at the BIC. Each item is available for 2 hours. We will add to the resource items on reserve as new items become available. Please let us know if you have an item that others may find useful, and we will make a copy available on the reserve.

Resource	Number of Copies
Kellogg Case Review	2
Kellogg Case Book	2
Wharton Case Book	2
Wetfeet Case Review	1
McKinsey & Co. Interview Preparation Notes	1
Ace Your Case – Wetfeet 1988 version	1
15 Questions More Practice to Help you Ace Your Consulting Case – Wetfeet 1997	1
Vault Guide to Case Interviewing 2002 – <i>looseleaf in a binder</i>	1
University of Michigan Case Book 1 – 2002	1

## BIC Information

### Contact

Business Librarian Peggy Shaw [pshaw@rice.edu](mailto:pshaw@rice.edu)  
713-348-6062



## Consulting Company Websites

All the major consulting firms have websites with excellent resources for practicing case interviewing. They contain:

- What to expect at a case interview
- What qualities the interviewer is looking for
- Tips for interviewing successfully
- Interactive case interview examples – **Make sure you go online and try these!**
- Information on the culture and expectations of the company
- Example of past work projects

### List of Consulting Company Websites

- McKinsey & Company [www.mckinsey.com](http://www.mckinsey.com)
- Booz Allen Hamilton [www.bah.com](http://www.bah.com)
- Boston Consulting Group [www.bcg.com](http://www.bcg.com)
- Accenture [www.accenture.com](http://www.accenture.com)
- IBM Business Consulting Services [www-1.ibm.com/services/bcs/](http://www-1.ibm.com/services/bcs/)

This replaces the old PriceWaterhouseCoopers MCS. The consulting services part of the company was recently purchased by IBM.

- A.T. Kearney [www.atkearney.com](http://www.atkearney.com)
- Cap Gemini Ernst and Young [www.us.cgey](http://www.us.cgey)
- Mercer Management Consulting [www.mercermc.com](http://www.mercermc.com)
- USC Consulting Group [www.usccg.com](http://www.usccg.com)

USC Consulting Group is an independent consulting firm with over thirty years experience and broad expertise in the area of operational effectiveness. We excel at process improvement, systems solutions, supply chain management, inventory control, continuous flow manufacturing, ERP optimization, quality improvement and preventive maintenance. Founded in 1968, they have offices in Chicago, Philadelphia, Tampa and Toronto

- Monitor Group [www.monitor.com](http://www.monitor.com)

The Monitor Group is a family of professional service firms linked by a shared ownership, management philosophy and assets. Each group company is dedicated to providing products and services which fundamentally enhance the competitiveness of clients.

- Bain & Company [www.bain.com](http://www.bain.com)
- Performance systems [www.performancesystems.com](http://www.performancesystems.com)



## JGSM Consulting Club

Performance Systems is a Texas corporation founded in 1988. Initially focused in the semiconductor industry, the firm has evolved and progressed to marketing innovative technologies in other high-tech fields. Currently serving over thirty companies, Performance Systems has been involved in the fields of semiconductors, computer hardware and software, medical devices, agritech, engineering, assistive technologies, e-commerce and security.

- Gartner [www.4.gartner.com](http://www.4.gartner.com)
- Deloitte Consulting [www.dc.com](http://www.dc.com)
- BearingPoint [www.bearingpoint.com/](http://www.bearingpoint.com/)

BearingPoint is the rebranded name of KPMG Consulting.

- Hewitt Associates <http://was4.hewitt.com/hewitt/>
- Towers Perrin [www.towers.com](http://www.towers.com)
- Marakon Associates [www.marakon.com](http://www.marakon.com)

Marakon's founders – three Wells Fargo executives and a distinguished finance professor – started the firm in 1978 with a simple yet powerful idea: that they could help large companies more effectively manage their businesses by combining developments in strategy consulting with innovations in corporate finance and investment management.

### Other Resource Websites

[www.vault.com](http://www.vault.com)

Vault is a one-stop job and internship hunting website. It is packed full of all sorts of useful information including guides on every industry you can think of; guides on interviewing, case preparation and resume writing; a job board; and company information. Jones Graduate School Students have access to vault guides through the CPC website. If you haven't had a look yet, check it out.

[www.wetfeet.com](http://www.wetfeet.com)

Similar to Vault, but with their own selection of guides and company information. Jones School Students can also access Wetfeet guides through the CPC website.

[www.jobjuice.com](http://www.jobjuice.com)

The company was founded by Wharton MBA's, who while at Business School provided their fellow students with powerful interview preparation tools for banking, consulting and marketing. All the knowledge and experience of the recruiting process and the particular subject areas was distilled into a practical and easy to use format - THEME CARDS. They are the ideal tool for jobseekers looking at careers in Consulting, Investment Banking and Marketing.



## JGSM Consulting Club

[www.consultingcentral.com](http://www.consultingcentral.com)

This website is a must have on your favorites. It has all the information you could want on economics, industry happenings and consulting companies. News is updated very regularly so this is the place to go if you want to “keep your finger on the pulse” of the industry.

[www.casequestions.com](http://www.casequestions.com)

This website is a goldmine of case interview preparation tips. Marc, the website creator, has fourteen years of experience with case questions. He has written well over a hundred cases, while coaching, preparing and training more than six thousand Harvard students and alumni. He has written four books involving cases and consulting. He has consulted with and designed cases for private sector firms, government agencies and nonprofits.

[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

This is the official website of the U.S. census. It has all the information you will need on demographics to use in case interviews.

[www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/)

Check this one out for global information, detailed country demographics and other useful bits and pieces.

<http://www.imchouston.org/>

IMC Houston is an affiliated chapter of the Institute of Management Consultants USA, Inc. ([IMC USA](http://www.imcusa.com)), the premier and oldest association in the United States supporting professionalism and ethics in management consulting, and the awarding body for the [CMC \(Certified Management Consultant\)](http://www.imcusa.com) certification designation. As such, IMC Houston caters to the career and business needs of professional management consultants of all types and circumstances, with an equal focus on involving and supporting business leaders in the evolving communities they serve.

[www.tcb-indicators.org](http://www.tcb-indicators.org)

The Conference Board is the best resource for economic facts and statistics. It has information on interest rates, business cycles, exchange rates and all things financial and economic.



# Essential Facts and Statistics

## U.S. Basic Demographics

Population	288 Million
Households	105 Million
People per Household	2.5

## U.S. Percentage Age Breakdown

18-24	18%
25-29	14%
30-39	23%
40-49%	26%
50-64%	14%
65+	5%

## Population of Major Cities in the U.S.

1. New York	8.0 Million
2. Los Angeles	3.6
3. Chicago	2.9
4. Houston	1.9
5. Philadelphia	1.5
6. Phoenix	1.3
7. San Diego	1.2
8. Dallas	1.2
9. San Antonio	1.1
10. Detroit	1.0



## Demographics of Other Countries

	US	Brazil	Western Europe	Russia	China	India	Japan
<b>Demographics</b>							
<b>Population 2001 (10<sup>6</sup>)</b>	288	178	482	144	1,306	1,047	127
<b>Population Growth (1991-2001)</b>	1.00%	2.70%	0.60%	-0.80%	0.92%	1.77%	0.26%
<b>Economic</b>							
<b>GDP 2001 (10<sup>9</sup>)</b>	9,040	772	10,733	367	1,114	506	5,652
<b>GDP per Head</b>	31,387	4,334	22,267	2,541	853	483	44,500
<b>GDP growth (1991-2001)</b>	3.30%	2.67%	2.16%	-2.04%	9.41%	5.97%	1.08%
<b>Corporate Tax Rate</b>	35%	34%	25%	24%	30%	48%	30%

## Metric – Imperial Conversions

1 in	2.54 cm
1 mile	1.6093 km
1 kg	2.2048 lb