

ACE THE CASE

Introduction to a Case Interview

What is a Case Interview?

In a case interview, you are presented with a challenging business scenario, often based in the real world, and asked to investigate and propose a solution. This probes a candidate's quantitative and qualitative skill set.

What is it measuring?

According to Oliver Wyman, a case interview helps the employer assess these skills:

- How do you approach unstructured challenges?
- Can you evaluate data and use it in your analysis?
- Can you think outside the box?
- Can you apply common sense to complex business problems?
- Can you ask the right questions?
- Can you communicate your ideas?

Top 5 Tips for Successfully Answering Business Case Questions

1. Take notes: Bring a professional padfolio and take notes so you don't have to ask your interviewer to repeat information. Turn the notepad to landscape orientation, as consultants use that layout in their presentation. Make sure your notes are clear and logical as they are usually collected and analyzed as part of your interview package at the end.

2. Ask Questions: Your interviewer will purposely leave out key details, and they expect you to ask sensible questions to gather necessary information. Therefore, not asking questions is a huge misstep. Keep in mind the context of the market, and gather any information you can about trends, the product, and/or the problem at hand.

3. Think Out Loud: Acting confidently and quickly is a key to success as the interviewer will assess you on your ability to think out loud in a rational manner. Practice this skill with friends or family on simple situations like evaluating which credit card to select over one another, or which product is a better value, and work on minimizing filler words like "um" or "ah." Maintain eye contact while speaking with the interviewer.

4. Listen & Create a Road Map: Asking questions is great, but make sure to carefully listen to the answers the interviewer shares with you and incorporate that into your analysis. Make your approach to solving the case clear and direct, by explaining the process step-by-step to the interviewer. Utilize frameworks and business concepts to organize your answer.

5. Summarize & Conclude: The time you have to explain your case is limited, and often-times the interviewer will cut you off before you had the chance to make your point. In consulting as in any area of business, time is money. Practice condensing your conclusion to a pitch that's a minute long or less.

Example Case Interview Prompt:

Our client is a company called Beverage Company (Bev Co). Beverage Company is a top five beverage producer in the United States and they've approached us for help and designing a product launch strategy. As an integrated beverage company, Beverage Company leads its own brand design, marketing, and sales efforts. In addition, the company owns the entire beverage supply chain which includes distribution to retail outlets, production of concentrates, and bottling the packaging. They have a considerable number of brands across both non-carbonated and carbonated drinks, 10 total bottling plants around the world including the US, and distribution agreements with most major retailers. Bev Co is evaluating the launch of a new product; a prepackaged iced coffee drink called Power Up. Power Up comes in five different flavors including one option that has a reduced sugar content compared to most other prepackaged iced coffee. The company expects the new beverage to capitalize on the recent trend toward flavored coffee drinks, and it has an objective to reach four million in profit in its second year of operations. Bev Co's vice-president of marketing has asked us to help analyze the major factors surrounding the launch of Power Up and its own internal capabilities to support the efforts.

If you would like to see a walkthrough of the above example please visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNdh65RIIVU>