



# Case training

**ESADE Alumni**  
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## Initial thoughts ...

- > Why do you decided to attend an outstanding MBA? Which was the main goal?
- > How could the ESADE MBA help you in your professional career?
- > Are you prepared to demonstrate your capabilities to any employer?

## Session goals

- > Cases belongs to our day-to-day work, so let's train how to deal with (and success!) cases
- > Success in your case interviews !
  - Improve your case development skills
  - Test your capabilities in a real case interview simulation
  - Agree on that additional effort from the “candidates” should be done to success in case interviews !

# Session content

<b>Description</b>	<b>Time</b>
<b>1</b> Introduction to case interviews	40 min
<b>2</b> Real case interview simulation #1	40 min
<b>3</b> Real case interview simulation #2	40 min

# Session content

## Description

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- 1** Introduction to case interviews
- 2** Real case interview simulation #1
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# How can we help enterprises ... at the end, they need you !

In all leading companies,  
people are more than  
valuable assets, they are  
the main source of  
competitive advantage...

... so in a recruiting  
interview both sides  
should enable a win-  
win environment, to  
obtain the best of each  
part

# Interview main goals

## COMPANY PERSPECTIVE

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- Evaluate the candidate in all possible perspectives
  - Personality
  - Analytics and structural thinking
  - Problem solving and business sense
  - Communication skills
  - Languages
- Create an attractive impression

**... at the end: fit with the new position and company !**

## CANDIDATE PERSPECTIVE

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- Have the opportunity to demonstrate your capabilities in a challenging, positive environment
- To deal with interesting/ fair cases
- Improve understanding of the company and the differentiation values from its competitors:
  - Market approach, work culture, organization, career, climate, etc

**... at the end: transfer easily all your potential and capabilities, and find good chemistry**

# Skills required: round candidate wanted, both hard and soft skills

## ANALYTICAL SKILLS (HARD)

- Specialized business knowledge
- Quantitative skills
- Structured though
- Results orientation
- Intellectual curiosity
- Languages

## SOCIAL SKILLS (SOFT)

- Presence
- Empathy
- Communication skills
- Perseverance
- Convince



# You never get a second chance to make a first impression

- To Do list before attending an interview:
  - **Search and process public company** information: product and services, locations, competitors, etc (obtain internal if possible)
  - Search for last **news, events**, etc
  - Prepare **your list of questions** regarding the company, clients, sectors, competitors, career development, etc
  - Review (and remind) your CV and **prepare some smart answers** to typical questions
  - Observe a proper **dress code, presence**

# Be prepared to deal with different type of interviews ...

## Behavioral interviews

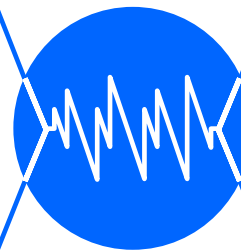
- Assumption: past performance is a good **predictor** of future performance
- Answers could be prepared, reflecting (or not) your competencies

⇒ **Looking backward**

## Case interviews

- Assumption: real business case solving is an **evidence** of outstanding analytical competencies
- Answers are spontaneous, reflecting your current capabilities

⇒ **Looking forward**



# Cases help to stress skills in real-time

## Why Cases are used

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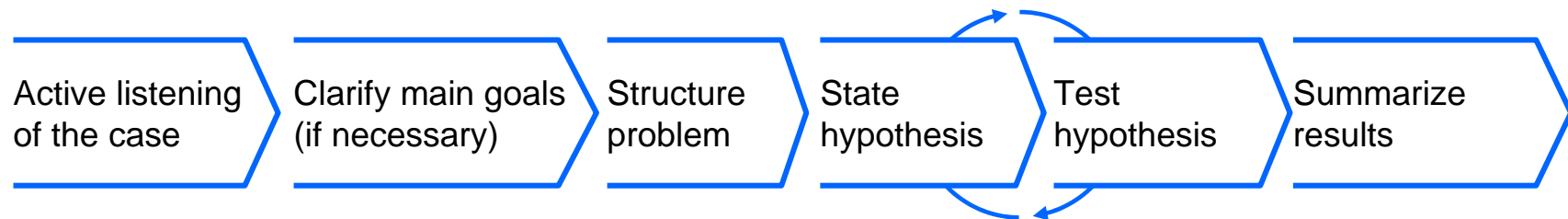
- To place the candidate in a situation unfamiliar to him
- To test for specific capabilities
- To attract the candidate through the challenge
- ... and sometimes, to give a flavour of the kind of work that the position will develop

## Skills tested

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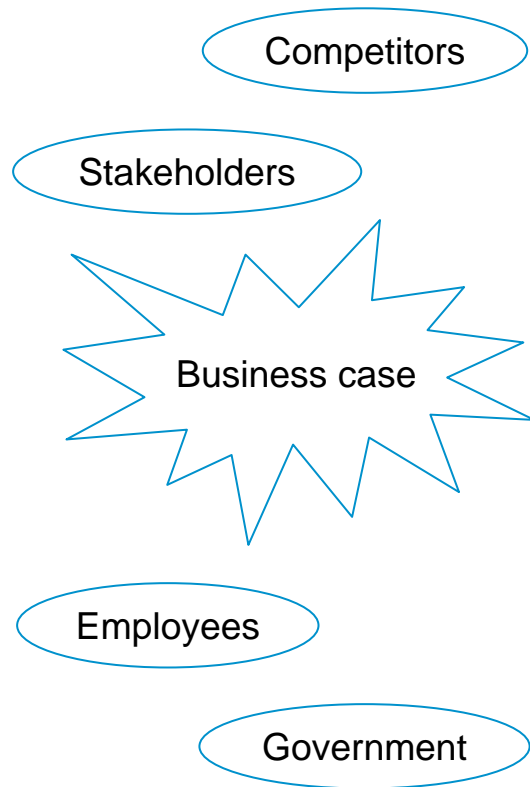
- Analytical capability
- Ability to synthesize
- Problem structuring
- Common sense
- Creativity
- Self confidence

# Cases development phases



- Interviewer is less interested in particular answers or details than in:
  - how the candidate propose to structure the case (steps and results expected)
  - how would gather and analyze the facts
  - How would come to a conclusion

# How to structure a case: breadth & depth



## STEP 1: Breadth – Key case areas

Finance	Marketing	HR	...
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That's commonly called "the big picture"

## STEP 2: Depth – Key topics per area

Finance	Marketing	HR	...
> CAPEX	> Portfolio	> Turnover	> ...
> ROI	> Substitutes	> Climate	> ...
> EBIT	> Promotions	> Development	> ...
> ...			

That's commonly called "business issues"

# Some well-known frameworks are used to solve business cases ...

## Business case types

- Competitive strategy

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- Marketing

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- Profitability

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- Organizational

## Potential frameworks

Porter's 5 forces, SWOT

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3/4 Cs, 4 Ps, Product (BCG) Matrix

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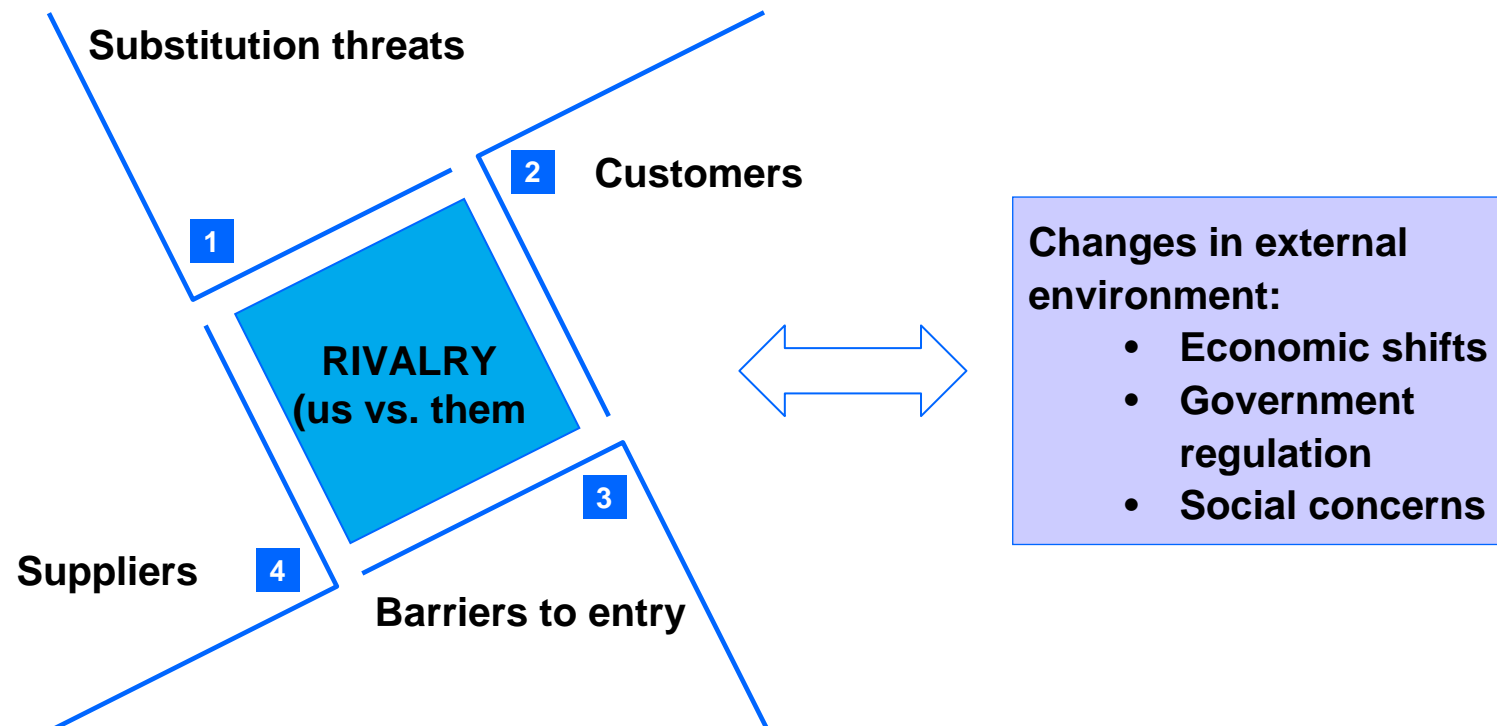
Profit = Revenue - Costs  
Revenue = Price x Quantity  
Cost = Fixed Costs + Variable Costs  
... others ...

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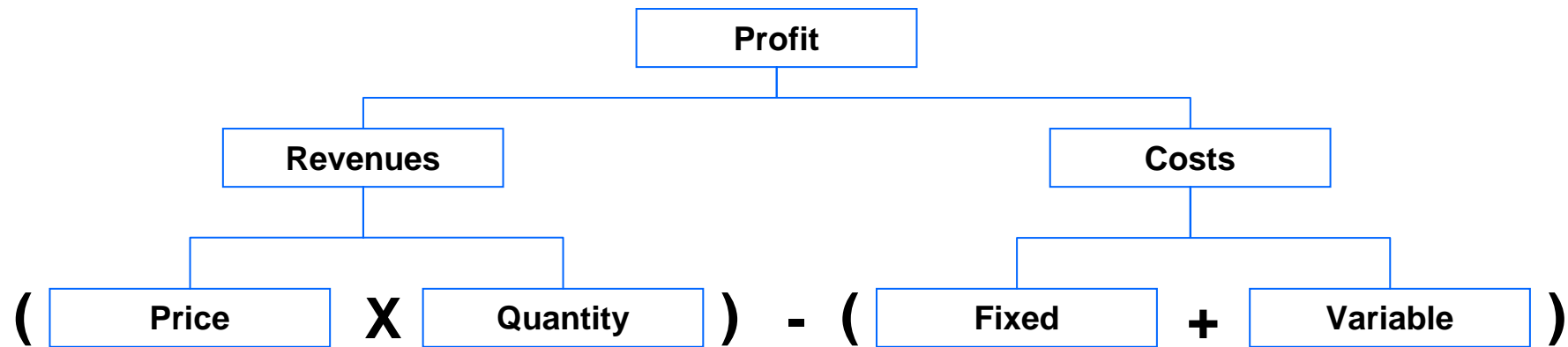
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# Competitive Strategy Framework

## Porter's five forces – external factors for competitive advantage



# Profit, revenue and cost framework



- > Price discrimination
- > Changes in pricing structure
- > Viability of pricing over time
- > Discounts or couponing
- > Competitor's pricing

- > Customer segmentation
  - > New/existing
  - > Loyal/switchers
- > Channel restrictions or temporary disturbances
- > Changing consumer demands

- > Admin and general services
- > Real state
- > Capital equipment
- > Depreciation and amortizations

- > Raw material
- > Incentives
- > Commercial and production labor
- > Energy



# Marketing framework: example

## Marketing Mix: 4 Ps

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### **Product:**

- > What are the product's differentiating attributes?
- > Why does the consumer purchase this product?

### **Place:**

- > How is the product distributed to consumers?
- > What new methods of distribution are coming available?

### **Promotion:**

- > What advertising medium is used to sell the product?
- > What is the most effective method of "getting the word out"?

### **Price:**

- > How is this product priced?
- > How are its competitors priced?

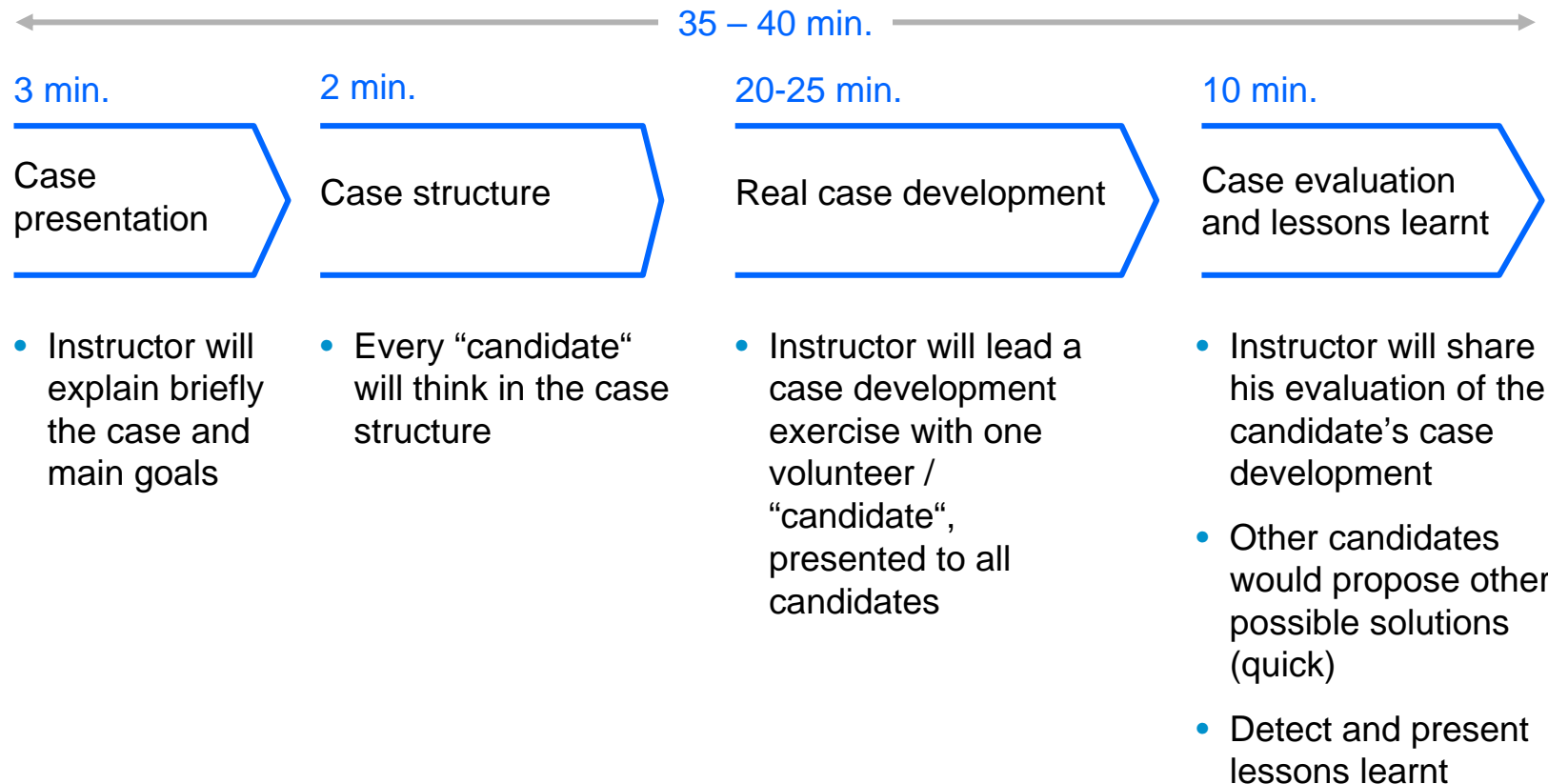
## ... but frameworks should be used properly, as a quick start enabler

- **DOs:**
  - Learn the frameworks, then forget them
  - Most cases won't fit neatly into a single framework
  - Use language that is specific to the case
  - Breadth first, then depth
- **DON'Ts:**
  - Don't force it - no point using a stud finder as a hammer!
  - Don't whip out the BCG matrix at a non-BCG interview!

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The most important thing is a structured, logical approach tailored to the problem

# Proposed methodology to develop cases today



# Session content

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- 1 Introduction to case interviews
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# Efficiency case: Manufacturing industry restructuring

## Case info

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- Manufacturing Co. Ltd has 20 plants around Europe, that produce construction tools (same products in all plants). Current market is declining in sales and the Executive Committee has decided to close 4 plants. You have been assigned to support the EC to evaluate, select and divest the 4 plants with lower level of overall cost efficiency

## Additional info

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- N/A

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# Brain teaser and Finance: Building price



## Case question

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- How much should our client pay for the “Agbar Tower” building, located in Barcelona?

## Additional info

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- 144.4 m height
- 34 floors (including offices, technical floors and auditorium floor), with a total of 50.600 sq meters
- 9100 parking lots

# Bibliography

## Case preparation books

- **Crack the Case**, by David Ohrvall
- **Case in Point: Complete Case Interview Preparation**, by Marc P. Cosentino
- **Ace your interview**, by Wetfeet Inc. Guides
- **Vault Guide to the Case Interview**, by Vault team



## Final session conclusions



- **Case solving skills, far beyond recruiting process, are required to succeed in your professional career ...**
- **... so it's worthy to spend some time structuring, integrating and solving cases !!!**

**Thank you  
and good luck !!!**

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