

**Teaching with the Case Method**

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**Teaching**

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**60-minute symposium,  
roundtable, or workshop  
(Room 412)**

**Abstract 2013-272**

**11:15 AM**

Nearly a century ago, the faculty at the Harvard Business School developed what was originally known as the “problem method,” or what is commonly known today as the “case method” (Corey, 1998; Garvin, 2003). The case method involves teaching through a discussion of a real-world, or simulated real-world, case studies, where the class of students collectively identifies the most effective solution to the problems presented in the case (Clawson & Haskins, 2006). In contrast to traditional classroom delivery formats, the case method allows students to rehearse and refine their critical thinking and decision making skills through solving complex problems (Mauffette-Leenders, Erskine, & Leenders, 2005; McDonald & Milne, 1999). Additional benefits of the case method include:

- Promoting active student learning through an interactive classroom environment
- Modeling sound decision making processes
- Linking theory and practice in the sport industry
- Enhancing skills such as persuasion, creativity, and oral and written communication

The case study method has also been established as a viable method to ascertain data that is the basis for research articles, where scholars have established the case study approach to be an effective method by which to achieve learning for broader application and to develop theory (Woodside & Wilson, 2003; Eisenhardt, 1989). Woodside and Wilson (2003, p. 497) note, for example, that “deep understanding of the actors, interactions, sentiments, and behaviors occurring for a specific process” results from the case study approach.

Teaching with case studies presents unique challenges for instructors, as the instructor’s role is often different in a case discussion than in lecturing or other delivery formats (Clawson & Haskins, 2006). According to Barnes, Christensen, and Hanson (1994), instructors’ primary responsibility with the case method is not to teach, but rather to encourage learning. In this regard, the instructor is a facilitator of learning as discussion leader.

Because the role of instructor is different when teaching with case studies, instructors face challenges they may not be experienced with or have received formal training in. This workshop will serve to address many of those challenges, including topics such as:

- Selecting case studies
- Creating learning objectives with the case method
- Preparing for the case discussion
- Leading a dynamic discussion of the case, including strategies for opening the discussion, keeping the discussion alive, and summarizing upon completion
- Using alternative case discussion formats
- Involving industry professionals or case personalities
- Evaluating case studies
- Assessing student participation and performance

The workshop will be led by three sport management educators with extensive experience in utilizing the case method to promote learning. The intended audience is instructors new to the case method attempting to diversify their pedagogical techniques as well as those more experienced with the case method looking for strategies to improve their case teaching. Topics to be covered include those listed above, with extensive opportunity provided for open discussion with audience members.

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### References

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- Clawson, J.G.S. & Haskins, M.E. (2006). *Case method: Fostering multidimensional learning*. In J.G.S. Clawson & M.E. Haskins (Eds.) *Teaching management: A field guide for professors, consultants, and corporate trainers* (pp. 119-140). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Eisenhardt, K.M., (1989). *Building theory from case study research*. *Academy of Management Review*, 14 (4), 532-550.
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- Mauffette-Leenders, L.A., Erskine, J.A. & Leenders, M.R. (2007) *Learning with cases* (4th ed.). London, ON: Ivey Publishing.
- McDonald, M.A. & Milne, G.R. (1999). *An introduction to the case method*. In *Cases in sport Marketing* (pp. 3-9). Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.
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