

[ABP] ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS PROBLEMS

Introduction

In life, as in business, we face a wide array of problems and situations, which require us to take action.

Some problems are relatively straightforward. These can generally be solved by taking a series of well-defined actions. A flat tire in an older model automobile is a good example: If you carefully follow the steps in the owner's manual and have a spare, you will usually be able to continue with your journey.

In business, most problems are not as structured. They often involve economic, technical, and human issues and can be quite complex. By definition, they do not have a unique, "correct" solution. A same or similar solution at different points in time or at different stages may produce very different results leading to equally attractive or desirable outcomes. There are no guarantees and risk is often a key part of any choice of action.

Solving such unstructured problems is much of what managers do, and their ability to solve them is often what sets apart great managers from the rest.

Analysis of Business Problems offers a six-step method for dealing with unstructured problems:



This process is robust in the widest variety of management problems, and it has made an impact on thousands of executives and MBA students from around the world.

Also, the six-step process is a useful tool to help you most out of the a unique process of case-based learning. It is a comprehensive way to prepare most case studies and helps participants wrap their mind around the case method and then fully engage in the learning process.

Objectives

To identify unstructured problems and master the six-step problem solving process in order to:

- Improve an analytical perspective in problem solving;
- Build a “call-to-action” attitude which contributes to the development of “realistic” action plans;
- Incorporate business, organizational, and personal level criteria within the analysis.

Content

Primary content of this course is the six-step process for making decisions. We will explore it in detail by analyzing case studies and real-life situations.

Cases describe different circumstances of various companies. Their complexity will gradually increase as we move from cases of relatively straightforward problems, criteria, and alternatives to more complex ones, with multiple problems, unclear criteria and different types of alternatives. We will focus on analysis of simpler problems in order to meet the challenge of restructuring problems that are more complex to get to a realistic solution.

Methodology

Analysis of Business Problems is a case-based course presented in a blended learning environment. A combination of virtual campus tools and experiential learning will take you through a set of activities towards the mastery of the six-step process.

Activities of this course include:

- Sessions: online, face-to-face, Q&A (13,5hrs)
- Team discussions (9hrs)
- Homework (40hrs)

Evaluation

Participation: 60%

Submitted work: 40%

Participation evaluates your contribution during residential weeks and in online sessions.

- Aim to demonstrate the depth of your preparation and quality of reasoning.
- Make clear comments, stay on topic and help add depth and breadth to the class discussion.
- Keep conversation coherent and structured.

Submitted work will not be graded on a particular solution put forward; by definition, there is no one right answer to unstructured problems.

- Demonstrate clarity and depth of thinking.
- Collaborate and share thoughts with each other in real and virtual classrooms.
- Showcase your own work: support your ideas and provide your analysis.

Competences

Basic Competences

CB6. Possess and understand knowledge that provides a basis or opportunity to be original in the development and / or application of ideas, often in a research context.

CB7. The students know how to apply the knowledge acquired and their ability to solve problems in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their area of study.

CB8. The students can integrate knowledge and face the complexity of formulating judgments based on information that, being incomplete or limited, includes reflections on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgments.

CB9. Students know how to communicate their conclusions and the knowledge and ultimate reasons that support them to specialized and non-specialized audiences in a clear and unambiguous way.

General Competences

CG1-To explain and discuss business situations in a rigorous, effective way using both formal and informal procedures, and providing relevant information to support their observations and conclusions.

CG4-To understand and apply the mechanisms that generate an atmosphere of cooperation, communication, and trust among the members of a team organization.

CG7-To distinguish and categorize relevant information effectively for business decision making.

CG14-To interpret the global context in order to analyze and judge the threats and opportunities facing the organization.

Specific Competences

CE1-To apply a structured, rigorous analysis process of business situations that encompasses all the dimensions of the business (personnel, strategy, finance, etc.) and concludes with the preparation of a reasonable, feasible action plan.

CE2-To write organized, concise, and clear executive reports for analysis and decision making in business situations.