PROBLEM ORIENTED CASE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines a new method for analyzing case studies. Case studies have been used as a pedagogical tool in marketing classes for many years and many professors feel that case studies are the best way for students to learn basic marketing principles. The problem oriented case analysis method is borrowed from veterinary medicine which has used this approach in teaching students and as veterinary clinicians for diagnosing medical problems in animals. The paper examines how the problem oriented case analysis method can be employed by students in marketing for case studies. The problem oriented case analysis offers the student a very thorough, organized, and accurate method for approaching a case.

The method presented in this paper has the advantage of a customized, structured format that the student can use that is problem-driven. The case analysis method is structured to guide the student through the case in a manner that forces them to examine marketing factors that may not be clearly evident in the case.

There are many case analysis procedures offered in the literature (Cravens & Lamb 1990; Dalrymple & Parsons 1995; Bernhardt & Kinney 1994; Kevin & Peterson 1990). The Problem Oriented Case Analysis (POCA) builds on these methods by incorporating a framework that can be utilized by the student to guide them through the analysis. The framework can be customized by the instructor to suit the needs of their class. This is similar to the veterinarian who adjusts the framework to the species of animal to be examined. The framework can be services oriented, product oriented, or generic.

The framework consists of a series of forms that are designed to force the student to analyze the case in a structured, systematic approach. The forms have specific marketing topics that must be addressed by the student for each case analyzed. If the specific topic is not important to the case it is merely checked off as having been considered but not relevant. If a topic is relevant then the student must discuss the relevance one the form. As more issues become relevant, problems emerge and are then refined. The student then must discuss possible causes for each problem and then make recommendations, give solutions, and present alternatives. Once the case is analyzed, the student must then write the case up in an instructor approved format. It is recommended that the instructor collect the POCA forms as well as the final case analysis work up to analyze the student's decision making process.