



Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants
Business Case Competition 2021
Smart Tips from Sub-degree Winning Teams (HK)

How to do research

- ✓ Consider different stakeholders of the respective industry and find out what their main concerns are.
- ✓ Explore the current trends of the respective industry on the internet. Try to include some of them in your business proposal. (e.g. *2020 Case - Catering Industry*: E-Commerce/Rely more on computer programs on operations; *2021 Case - Fashion Industry*: Automation/Sustainable Development/Smart City).
- ✓ List out all the problems and opportunities faced by the client. Do research on each of the respective issues. Observe how companies solve similar problems in the real business world.
- ✓ Make sure you understand your role (e.g. CPA firm, advertising company and think bank etc.) and the background of the client (e.g. the industry they belong to).
- ✓ Obtain a variety of sources, such as government reports and journals. Select the relevant information and make sure they are all reliable and useful.
- ✓ Read and analyze the case question carefully. Identify different issues included in the case.
- ✓ Some issues may not be expressed clearly and may be hidden from the case synopsis. Try your best to identify as many as you can. (e.g. *2021 Case*: conversation between the two managers implied the market situation and the concerns of the top management).
- ✓ Find some real-life statistics to support your ideas.

How to conduct a sound financial analysis

- ✓ Before determining a strategy, consider the financial viability. Make sure it is possible and realistic.
- ✓ Check your calculations a few times to avoid careless errors and mistakes.
- ✓ Do have a clear assumption before predicting revenues and costs.
- ✓ Read the financial reports of different companies from the respective industry. Take reference to the industry's financial statistics.
- ✓ Take advantage of the learned accounting knowledge and the accumulated resources.
- ✓ Present different data systematically with proper infographics (e.g. Pie chart for market share of different leading companies in an industry, Line chart/Table to compare the trends of a company in different years).
- ✓ When it comes to numerical analysis, explain the implications behind different ratios/results. Listing out all the calculations is meaningless as they are not useful for the readers (client) to take further business actions.



How to write a business proposal

- ✓ Be confident of your business strategies and financial analysis.
- ✓ Follow all the requirements from the submission guidelines carefully (especially margin and page limitation) to avoid penalties.
- ✓ Have a reasonable estimation by referring to the market trends and competitors' performance.
- ✓ Make sure the flow of your report is logical. Consider all the ideas comprehensively so that the content is well-established. Try to make it “reader-friendly” as it could impress reviewers and other readers.
- ✓ Mind the use of language:
 - Include some business key terms to maintain professionalism.
 - Use (but not overuse) formal styles (e.g. nominalization, passive voice, cautious languages)
 - Avoid informal styles (e.g. subjective or emotive languages, questions, contracted forms).
 - Be consistent with the language you use (e.g. American English, British English).
- ✓ Proofread your report before submission. Avoid making careless grammatical and spelling mistakes.
- ✓ The flow of content is flexible. You may take reference to the business proposals by previous winning teams, but there is no need to limit your work by closely following any templates. Adopt a framework that delivers your ideas most effectively.
- ✓ Use systematic ways (e.g. charts, tables, timelines) to present data and information effectively.

How to conduct a professional presentation

- ✓ “Practice makes perfect.” Practice your presentation more, as it could help you feel more confident when you present in front of the judges.
- ✓ Try to create a professional design of the PowerPoint presentation. This allows judges to have a better impression on your team.
- ✓ Instead of just reading your script, conduct your presentation with body language (e.g. eye contact, use of tones and gestures).
- ✓ Prepare for the Q&A session. Think about a list of questions that you expect the judges would ask and prepare the answers.
- ✓ Show your teamwork. (e.g. Make sure the presentation goes smoothly, help your teammates when they face difficulty in answering the questions in a logical way during the Q&A session).
- ✓ Be prepared about the logistics of the presentation. (e.g. passing the microphone and moving the slides).
- ✓ Try to memorize some key points and present them with a stronger tone.
- ✓ Watch the presentations of the finalist teams from previous years, which give you better ideas about the format and requirements of the presentation.



Other tips

- ✓ Do involve ethical concerns and environmental awareness for your strategies. They are very important for both your presentation and business proposal.
- ✓ Seek help from lecturers and listen to experience of seniors who have participated in the competition before.
- ✓ State your proposal view clearly, whether it's from the firm internally or externally. The synopsis every year may vary.
- ✓ Understand the strengths and weaknesses of each teammate to distribute tasks effectively.
- ✓ Watch the online seminars and check out the resources from the Institute's website, which are helpful for you to write the proposal.