NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Cases in Strategic Management & Teaching Manual

A Thesis Submitted to the

University Honors Program

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements of the Baccalaureate Degree

With Upper Division Honors

Department of Management

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Date: 5/13
The purpose of this capstone project was to choose, edit, organize, and arrange eighteen graduate level strategic management cases and accompanying teacher's notes into a textbook and an accompanying teacher's manual that will be used by business students at the graduate level. The cases and teacher's notes were originally authored by graduate level business students from Northern Illinois University.

During the semester, Dr. King and I met a total of six times-three meetings in which I received batches of material and three in which I returned the completed material. Each batch consisted of 9-15 papers and I was required to choose six from each one that I believed to be the "best". Therefore, the total number of cases with accompanying teacher's notes chosen was 18. All
other decisions relating to the text were my sole responsibility.

The methodology used to determine which six cases were the "best" from each batch entailed the development of a worksheet that involved assigning points (1-10) to selected criteria for each paper submitted to me by Dr. King. The criteria used in the process of selection for both the cases and the teacher's manual included: length, level of interest, diversity offered to text, quality of questions, and overall quality of writing. Therefore, the maximum number of points that each case/accompanying teacher's notes combination could receive was 100 and the six highest total scores in each batch were selected. The criteria used was analyzed with the following considerations in mind:

Length- All things considered, it was believed that the length of the writing should be selected as a criterion since the lengths of each case/notes combination ranged anywhere from 15-100 pages (including pro-forma statements). It was then determined that the optimal length of each case should be 9-13 pages and the optimal length of each teacher's manual should be 8-10 pages. Therefore, writings that approximated these lengths were given the highest points.

Level of interest- This very subjective bit of criterion was mainly based on the excitement level of the writing. Papers deemed to be overly dry or repetitious received lower point assignments, while more interesting ones received higher ones.

Diversity offered to textbook- Point assignment for this criterion was based on several factors such as diversity of issues explored, diversity of core business operations, diversity of
business type (i.e. profit vs. nonprofit, small business vs. corporation, etc.), and any other factors that were believed to bring diversity to the writings.

**Quality of questions** - At the end of each case, questions about various aspects of the case are supplied. These questions were assigned points based on their overall quality. In most cases, the writings with the most questions had an advantage over the others since there were more questions from which to choose. Each case contains from two to four questions—with detailed answers in the teacher's manual.

**Overall quality of writing** - Factors considered important for this criterion were cohesiveness, flow, estimated reading level, and quality of graphs, charts and tables.

Once the six best cases/notes from each batch were chosen (based on total points), they were edited, organized, and arranged into what is believed to be publishable material. This required ensuring that the five criteria chosen for evaluating the cases were thoroughly covered.

Now that the project is complete, the text and accompanying teacher's manual will be typed and sent to a publisher. If all goes well, the text will be used by graduate business students at Northern Illinois University and elsewhere.

This capstone project aided my development as a student in many ways. It not only helped improve my critical thinking, decision making, and writing skills— but it also raised my level of understanding about some of the challenges faced by businesses today. Unfortunately, due to the extent of the project, I regret that I am not able to supply a photocopy of the work.
Although, a review of this project can be arranged by contacting Dr. Albert King at 753-6315.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Ronald C. McCloud

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