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Cases, slices of business life, focus on actual problems and decisions facing a company. Students are challenged to put themselves in the protagonist’s place and suggest business strategies, tactics, and solutions.

New Cases

Apple in China
China is Apple’s fastest-growing market, but the road to success has not been smooth. This case documents Apple’s journey on the road to success; the role that Tim Cook played on this journey; the basic dynamics of China’s telecommunications sector; and the obstacles Apple is likely to encounter on the road to its future there. 

Autopsy of a Data Breach: The Target Case
Target announced that its computer network had been infiltrated by “cyber criminals” who stole 40 million debit and credit card numbers as well as the personal information of some 70 million additional customers. The case presents the cybercriminals’ activities, the measures that Target had put in place to deter such attacks, its ill-fated response during the attack, and the impact of the breach on Target as well as on the retail industry as a whole.

E-Business Transformation in the Banking Industry: The Case of Citibank
Cloud computing promised the definitive technological solution for a bank-corporate integration model. The ERP vendor SAP was the first to experiment with a private cloud model and allow direct straight-through processing of each financial transaction sent from the ERP directly to bank middleware. Citi was the first bank to sign up with the project, but its competitors followed.

Innovation @ ENEL: From Monopoly Power to Open Power
Enel is an innovative Italian energy utility that is undergoing rapid change. Technically the company has enthusiastically embraced renewable energy under its new CEO. The company is also shifting its business model away from the traditional “cost plus” regulatory model toward a model built around a variety of value-add services. There are internal barriers to overcome, and new organizational structures are required to manage this change.

Intel in 2011: The Battle for the Mobile Handheld and Tablet Markets
Intel dominated the microprocessor market for personal computers but had essentially no presence in the cell phone, smartphone, or tablet markets. The case details Intel’s efforts to lower the power consumption of its chips to compete in the mobile market, which led to the launch of a new microprocessor—the Atom. In addition, this case highlights the different strategic visions of the hardware and software groups and the company’s marketing strategy in the mobile space.

Lumiére: Supporting a Virtual Workplace on the Cloud
Lumiére Business Solutions (Lumiére) had been using cloud technology to provide clients and employees 24/7 access to project progress and documentation. Clients appreciated that despite being a small firm, Lumiére was as competitive and quick to respond as any other big market research company. Given the trade-offs that Lumiére had made while choosing the cloud, would this technology continue to pay off in the future?
Nebula: The Fall of a Company
This case explores the rise and fall of Nebula Inc., a company that industry experts had originally predicted would become the market leader in the hybrid cloud computing market. In its early days, Nebula seemed like a guaranteed success and launched the first version of its product to great fanfare. This case examines how such a hot company, led by founders with impressive backgrounds and supported by some of the most noteworthy investors in Silicon Valley, got lost on the path to success.

RBC: Mobile Wallet
The Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) was facing managerial dilemmas due to the launch of a mobile wallet. RBC had developed a cloud-based application that differed from industry-standard SIM card-based payment methods. The EVP was evaluating areas of contrast between the 2 models as part of arriving at a decision. There was a likelihood that the cloud solution was disruptive. But would it become the dominant solution? Would it give RBC a first-mover advantage among its peers?

Surviving SAP Implementation in a Hospital
The Valle del Lili Foundation (VLF), a university hospital in Cali, Colombia, went from using paper for medical records and all associated clinical and administrative processes to managing everything electronically. VLF’s management team knew it had to achieve the buy-in of doctors and staff if it was to successfully implement this new system. This case documents how the hospital achieved this ambitious goal. In doing so, it illustrates how organizations can manage large-scale change processes.

WaterCo Customer Information and Billing System (A)
WaterCo’s new customer information and billing system, its largest information technology project ever, was over budget and very late. In the (A) case, the board of directors must decide what action to take with regard to management’s actions and the project contractor. This case is useful as a tool to explore governance issues at the board and senior management levels as they pertain to enterprise risk management and IT risk.

Popular Cases

Airbnb (A)
After widely publicized complaints of destructive guests and unreliable hosts, online apartment rental site Airbnb explores mechanisms to facilitate trust between guests and hosts. Flexible online reputation systems can collect and share information with ease, but Airbnb must decide which information guests and hosts should have to provide and how much flexibility each should have in selecting whom to do business with.

AirCanada: Flying High with Information Technology
By covering information technology (IT) management at Air Canada over 2 decades, this case illustrates the process of alignment between IT and business over time. At the time the case takes place, Air Canada has 2 key strategic objectives: operational excellence and customer proximity. IT now supported business through a hybrid structure and an innovation-based, “best of breed” sourcing strategy.
CareGroup
This case describes the circumstances leading to the 3.5-day collapse of a major hospital group’s information system capabilities. The case identifies technical reasons for the failure, management’s steps in dealing with the problem in the short term, and the long-term lessons they learned. The case is accompanied by a Video Short. \textit{Harvard Business School #303097}

Challenges in Delivering Cross-Agency Integrated e-Services: The OBLS Project
The Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Infocomm Development Authority jointly initiated and managed the implementation of a 1-stop business licensing portal called OBLS (Online Business Licensing Service) in the Singapore public sector. This case examines the process, technology, and people hurdles they needed to overcome. \textit{Journal of Information Technology #JIT017}

Harley-Davidson Motor Co.: Enterprise Software Selection
This case describes Harley-Davidson’s decision process for defining and selecting an enterprise-wide procurement software package and the institutional changes introduced as part of this process. It tells the story of Harley-Davidson’s approach in developing integrated business processes and information systems to meet the needs of a visionary procurement strategy. \textit{Harvard Business School #600006}

Intel Corp.: Bring Your Own Device
The information technology (IT) division of Intel had noticed a growing trend among the company’s employees to bring their own smartphones and storage devices to their individual workstations. Recognizing that Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) was not a passing fad but a growing phenomenon, the company decided to formally implement this initiative. As Intel prepares to formally roll out BYOD, they revisit the issue of ensuring security of corporate data stored on devices owned by individual employees. Also, how can Intel extract value from the BYOD and turn this initiative into a new source of competitive advantage? \textit{Ivey Publishing #W13035}

iPremier (A): Denial of Service Attack (Graphic Novel Version)
This case describes an IT security crisis and raises issues of risk management, preparation for crisis, management of crises, computer security, and public disclosure of security risks. \textit{Harvard Business School #609092}

Keda’s SAP Implementation
Although demand for enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems in China has been steadily increasing, many such implementation projects have ended in failure. Keda Industrial Co. Ltd. (Keda), a manufacturer of large-scale machinery in China, had successfully deployed its ERP solution. This case documents Keda’s ERP initiative from conception to its deployment and offers insights into the factors and practices that contributed to its success. \textit{Ivey Publishing #W11024}

Successfully Navigating the Turbulent Skies of a Large-Scale ERP Implementation
Enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems introduce changes on a larger scale than most other systems. This case shows the adjustment dynamic between an ERP system and the other components of the organization. Bombardier—a key player in the transportation industry—implemented new processes through the use of the system, changed the roles of its employees, created a different way of looking at the organization and its activities, and established new value indicators that helped crystallize the new behaviors. \textit{HEC Montreal Centre for Case Studies #HEC035}

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New Articles

The 4 Mistakes that Most Managers Make with Analytics
Firms are constantly exhorted to set strategies in place to collect and analyze big data, and are warned about the potential negative consequences of not doing so. This article explores why companies often sit on a treasure trove of data but do not know how to use it. Harvard Business Review Web Article #H02ZTL

Algorithms Need Managers, Too
Algorithms are powerful predictive tools, but they can run amok when not applied properly. To avoid missteps, you need to be explicit about all of your goals when formulating your algorithms, and you must consider the long-term implications of the data to make sure they’re not focusing nearsightedly on short-term outcomes. Harvard Business Review #R1601H

How Gaming Is Shaping the Future of Work
While most managers might frown on playing video games at work, it’s gaming that is driving much of the innovation in video, virtual reality, and collaboration technologies today. This article explores how that has important implications for how we work, especially with far-flung colleagues. Harvard Business Review Web Article #H02UTF

How to Know Which Digital Trends Are Worth Chasing
The rapid pace of change has put companies in the position of trying to decide which tech trends to invest in and when. All too often, much-touted “revolutionary” innovations offer only incremental benefits at best; at worst, they’re a costly distraction. The right technologies, however, can be incredibly valuable, driving customer satisfaction and possibly even providing a sustainable competitive advantage. Harvard Business Review Web Article #H02ZES

The More People We Connect with on LinkedIn, the Less Valuable It Becomes
Many users are beginning to discover that a larger number of social network connections may be less valuable than a smaller, more intimate circle. With an enormous collection of friends or followers on a network, you lose the benefits of intimacy, discoverability, and trust, all of which can work better when you have fewer connections. Harvard Business Review Web Article #H02VFB

Tesla, Autopilot, and the Challenge of Trusting Machines
In May 2016, a Tesla Model S driving on autopilot collided with a tractor-trailer and the owner of the Tesla was killed. Regulators are also investigating a nonfatal crash in Pennsylvania, in which a Tesla driver was using autopilot at the time of the accident. Their causes are uncertain, but these crashes have added urgency to the safety discussion around self-driving cars. How much trust should we place in the “smart” machines that increasingly surround us? And how can the creators of those machines help us answer that question? Harvard Business Review Web Article #H03067
The Truth about How Uber’s App Manages Drivers
Through Uber’s app design and deployment, the company produces what many would define as a managed labor force. Drivers have the freedom to log in or log out of work, but when they are online, their activities on the platform are heavily monitored. The platform redistributes management functions to semi-automated and algorithmic systems, as well as to customers. Harvard Business Review Web Article #H02SJN

What Would It Take to Disrupt a Platform Like Facebook?
Facebook has been able to control possible disruptive events that appear to pick off customers by buying the competition (like Instagram and WhatsApp). This article explores the disruptive effects of a different nature—from the supply side. Harvard Business Review Web Article #H02RDB

Will AI Companies Make Money?
Some companies have been avoiding signing deals with artificial intelligence (AI) firms because they think they can assemble the needed capabilities themselves at a much lower cost. In this article, Tom Davenport explores why commoditization is happening within AI. Harvard Business Review Web Article #H02ZT8

Popular Articles

Digital Ubiquity: How Connections, Sensors, and Data Are Revolutionizing Business
When Google bought Nest, a digital thermostat and smoke detector company, it was a clear indication that digital transformation and connection are reaching critical mass, spreading across even the most traditional segments and creating a staggering array of business opportunities and threats. The digitization of tasks and processes has become essential to competition. Harvard Business Review #R1411D

Information Technology and the Board of Directors
Unfortunately, most boards remain largely in the dark when it comes to IT spending and strategy, despite the fact that corporate information assets can account for more than 50 percent of capital spending. A lack of board oversight for IT activities can be dangerous. Companies that have established board-level IT governance committees are able to control IT project costs and carve out competitive advantage. Harvard Business Review #R0510F

Investing in the IT that Makes a Competitive Difference
Investments in certain technologies do confer a competitive edge—one that has to be constantly renewed, as rivals don’t merely match your moves but use technology to develop more potent ones and leapfrog over you. Harvard Business Review #R0807J

The Key to Social Media Success within Organizations
Although the use of social media can enrich a company’s culture and enhance its productivity, it isn’t a sure thing. Success with an online community requires a leader who can build emotional capital and who values community building as a means of creating economic value. MIT Sloan Management Review #SMR429

Making Advanced Analytics Work for You
This article offers a useful guide for leaders and managers who want to take a deliberative approach to big data, but who also want to get started now. By identifying the right data for their business, building analytics models that are tightly focused on improving performance, and transforming their capabilities and culture so that the analytical results can be implemented in all aspects of the company, managers can begin to use big data successfully today. Harvard Business Review #R1210E
The Manager’s Guide to IT Innovation Waves
The rapid advance of information technology means that a key task of the business manager is to cope with one wave of IT innovations after another. Managers need to distinguish carefully between the attention an IT innovation receives and actual adoption, implementation, and value gained from its use. *MIT Sloan Management Review #SMR409*

Mastering the Three Worlds of Information Technology
Executives have critical responsibilities when it comes to IT, but what’s most important is that they look beyond individual IT projects to the broader picture of how IT is likely to affect the organization. *Harvard Business Review #R0611J*

Putting the Enterprise into the Enterprise System
Tom Davenport provides a fresh, high-level perspective on enterprise systems that will help senior executives think rationally about their large-scale investments in this technology. While these systems offer tremendous rewards, the risks they carry are equally great. *Harvard Business Review #98401*

What Every CEO Needs to Know about the Cloud
Because criticisms of the cloud have received a lot of hype, many companies are hesitant to explore it. This article debunks commonly cited concerns about the cloud. Arguing that CEOs and senior managers need to take the lead on the shift to the cloud, the author outlines how companies can get started. *Harvard Business Review #R1111J*

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Online Courses introduce complex subjects and can be used in advanced undergraduate business courses, as prematriculation requirements for MBAs, or assigned as homework over a semester or year. Online Courses are available as complete courses or in sections.

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Using the story line of several family-owned businesses, this course teaches students how to apply math concepts to solve problems, analyze data, and predict outcomes. Covers the key mathematics concepts that students commonly use to solve quantitative problems in the MBA curriculum.

- Complete Course: #3350
- Algebra Section: #6004
- Calculus Section: #6006
- Statistics Section: #6007
- Probability Section: #6008
- Finance Section: #6009
Quantitative Methods
Set at a Hawaiian resort, this course teaches statistics from a management perspective. Students develop statistical models to help the hotel make better operational decisions. Covers the basic topics in statistical methods required for MBA-level coursework.

- Complete Course: #504702
- Regression Section: #6012

“The Online Course is useful for preparing masters students for their thesis research. The material is presented in a user-friendly manner as a case study with 3 tests and permits students to master the material at their own pace.”
—Online Course review from Harvard Business Publishing for Educators web site*

Spreadsheet Modeling: Excel 2013
This course shows students how to use Microsoft Excel 2013 as both a reporting tool and a modeling tool for solving business problems. It is appropriate for beginning and advanced users of Excel. Seat Time: 10–20 hours

- Complete Course #9052
- Introductory Section #9053
- Advanced Section #9054

Spreadsheet Modeling: Excel 2007 also available
- Complete Course #3252

“This is an excellent introduction Excel modeling course for those who do not have experience in Excel. The videos and case studies provide step-by-step details that allow students to practice as they learn.”
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Books
The Adventures of an IT Leader, Updated Edition with a New Preface by the Authors
This book provides a deep understanding of the role of IT in an organization as new CIO Jim Barton struggles through a tough first year, handling and fumbling all kinds of management challenges. Although fictional, the scenarios are based on the authors’ long experience working with real-life companies across industries and sectors.
Available as an eBook. Harvard Business Review Press #10018
Business Intelligence: Making Decisions through Data Analytics: Customer Intelligence
This chapter explores issues related to the analysis of personal data and its application in direct marketing. It also considers the use of business intelligence systems to analyze human behavior.
From Business Intelligence: Making Decisions through Data Analytics, Business Expert Press #BEP150

Full-Service Provider: An Atomic E-Business Model
An atomic e-business model examines the full-service provider e-business model, which combines the benefits of direct-to-customer and intermediary services. The authors illustrate this model at work in a case study of GE Supply Company.
From Place to Space: Migrating to eBusiness Models, Harvard Business Review Press #4948BC

The Laws of Disruption: Patent—Virtual Machines Need Virtual Lubricants
This chapter explores the history of patent protection for computers and software, notably its failures and hindrances. The author advocates the development of a new, more limited patent that would protect inventors without stifling competition.
From The Laws of Disruption: Harnessing the New Forces that Govern Life and Business in the Digital Age, Perseus Press #PER064

Looking Forward to Innovative Decision Support
This chapter compares 2 types of evaluation activities—formative vs. summative evaluation—to be carried out during and after completing a project. It also explores potential ethical issues associated with building and using DSS, the role of project champion, and the expectations in next-generation decision support.
From Decision Support, Analytics, and Business Intelligence, Business Expert Press #BEP183

The Next 100 Days: Realizing the Potential of Managing Data and Information as Business Assets
The author outlines a process for developing a 100-day panorama that provides a comprehensive view of the data and information required for a selected information change or a horizontal slice of the business.

What Constitutes the Right Data?
Instead of trying to capture all imaginable data (“big data”), businesses need to be smart about identifying what data will actually help them achieve their strategic goals. Managers can begin to determine how to access the right data by creating a map to document how information flows in an organization, which will show any breakdowns that currently require human workarounds.
From Building Successful Information Systems: Five Best Practices to Ensure Organizational Effectiveness and Profitability, Business Expert Press #BEP186

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