

### What is a case interview?

It is an interview method designed to:

- test your analytical ability
- test your ability to think logically and organize your answer
- observe your thought process
- test your tolerance for ambiguity and data overload
- assess your poise, self-confidence, and communication skills under pressure
- see if you are genuinely intrigued by problem solving
- determine if it is a good “fit” for you

### How should you prepare for a case interview?

1. Become familiar with business frameworks, which can help you structure your thought process. Some commonly used frameworks include:
  - Porter’s 5 Forces: Barriers to Entry, Bargaining Power of Buyers, Bargaining Power of Suppliers, Availability of Substitute Products, and Level of Competition Among Firms
  - 3 C’s: Cost, Customers, Competitors (Capacity sometimes added as a 4th C)
  - 4 P’s: Product, Price, Place, Promotion
  - SWOT Analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
  - Profit = Revenue - Costs: revenue is a function of price and volume; costs can be divided into fixed and variable components

Note: Frameworks may or may not be appropriate for the case you are given. Be careful not to force a framework onto the problem. However, a general understanding of the various frameworks will help you address appropriate issues within the case.

2. Some questions require you to make assumptions. The idea is not that you have the right answer to a question (for example: How many romance novels are sold each year in Canada?) it is your thought process they want to see. You should also be familiar with:
  - Population of Canada and the U.S.
  - Men & Women represent what percentage of the population?
  - Average life expectancy
  - People per household
  - Number of households
  - % that have cable, VCR, DVD, PC, Internet
3. Research and practice case interviewing in order to become more familiar with the process. Case examples are available at various consulting firm websites:
  - The Boston Consulting Group  
[http://www.bcg.com/careers/interview\\_prep/interview\\_prep\\_splash.html](http://www.bcg.com/careers/interview_prep/interview_prep_splash.html)
  - McKinsey & Co.  
<http://www.mckinsey.com/aboutus/careers/>  
Click on Prepare for the interview

- Mercer Management Consulting  
<http://www.mercermc.com/join/interview/hammerjack/p51.asp>
  - Monitor Group  
<http://www.monitor.com/cgi-bin/iowa/ideas/index.html?record=11>
  - Strategy publications
4. CAPS also have resource materials in their Career Resource Centre such as:
- The WetFeet Insider Guides: Ace Your Case
  - The Vault Guides to Case Interviews
  - Case in Point: Complete Case Interview Preparation by Marc P. Cosentino, 4th Edition
5. Brush up on your math skills. Errors most commonly occur with the zeros. 100,000 turns into 10,000 or 1,000,000.

**CASE INTERVIEWS continued...**