



Resources for a Full-Time Job or Internship Search

A case interview is a job interview with business content. You will interact with an interviewer to **analyze and solve case studies of business problems**. In about 30 minutes (depending on firms and interviewers), you will replicate the methods and practices real consultants use in projects to solve a business problem.

Interviewers look for the following skills:

They want to know you can start quickly, think on your feet, and not be flustered by ambiguity!

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- Good/active listening
- Engages with interviewer
- Asks insightful questions
- Skilled with both oral and written communication

PROBLEM SOLVING AND ANALYTICAL THINKING SKILLS

- Organizes information effectively
- Identifies relevant data and quantifies responses
- Shows comfort with complex and ambiguous problems
- Thinks logically
- Breaks problems into smaller segments
- States assumptions clearly

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- Remains relaxed and flexible
- Demonstrates poise, initiative, and confidence
- Defends without being defensive
- Thinks creatively under pressure
- Displays energy and enthusiasm

How to solve any case interview problem:

Cases help assess a candidate across multiple dimensions. Your answers should project clear thinking, practical judgment, and a professional attitude.

Apply this five-step approach while working through the case interview:

1. Listen to the Case

- a. Gather all of the facts from the description and take notes
- b. Identify the key client issue

2. Clarify the Problem

- a. Restate the problem and ask questions
- b. Pause to structure your thinking

3. Deconstruct the Problem

- a. Break down the problem into logical parts in a structured manner
- b. Identify potential hypotheses and framework

4. State and Test Hypotheses

- a. Develop one or more hypotheses and choose an appropriate framework
- b. Apply framework to test hypotheses

5. Summarize Findings

- a. Make your recommendation and present alternative scenarios if necessary
- b. Suggest recommendations to client and next steps

Sample frameworks:

- **Issue Tree:** Break down issue into key components so the problem can be effectively solved
- **Profitability Tree:** Assess profitability by breaking down components of revenue and cost
 - Profitability = Revenue (volume x price) – Cost (fixed costs vs. variable costs)
- **Market Entry Framework:** Use to determine whether a company should enter a new market
- **3 C's:** Customer, Company, and Competition
- **Porter's Five Forces:** Use to understand the dynamics of entering a new industry or assess the industry a company is already in
 - Bargaining power of suppliers, bargaining power of buyers, threat of new entrants, rivalry among existing competitors, and threat of substitute products or services
- **4 P's:** Use when launching a new product or reviewing positioning of an existing product
 - Product, Price, Promotion, and Place

Types of cases:

- **The Great Unknown:** Provides very little information and tests your ability to probe for additional details

EXAMPLE: Disney is considering buying Netflix. Should they?

- **Parade of Facts:** Provides a significant amount of detail, some of which is unnecessary

EXAMPLE: The client wants to break into the Asian markets, they have two unprofitable products, the CFO is leaving, and wheat prices are increasing. How do we increase profitability?

- **Market Sizing:** Asks a key question and requires a logical thought process and ease with numbers—know general numbers such as U.S. population (~320 million) or number of households (~120 million)

EXAMPLE: How many new cars are sold in the U.S. each year?

- **Brain Teasers:** Serves to test how well you think on your feet, and may or may not have a definite answer—are uncommon but solved in the same way as market sizing questions

EXAMPLES:

- How many golf balls would fit into a Boeing 747?
- How do you measure 4 gallons of water using only a 3 and 5 gallon jug?
- Is it better to be a truck driver on salary or by the mile?

To help you demonstrate your best thinking:

- **Take notes** and write down facts throughout—use a blank sheet of paper in landscape layout
- Be sure you **understand** the case question before proceeding
- Ask **specific questions**, but don't use them as a crutch
- **Develop and articulate** a framework and the initial hypothesis that you intend to explore
- Be careful **not to memorize** frameworks, and tailor your approach
- Take time to **compose** your thoughts—don't just start talking
- **Structure** your analysis into a clear, logical story—be thorough and organized
- Walk the interviewer through your thinking and explain your assumptions
- **Engage** the interviewer in a business conversation and remember that this is a partnership
- Maintain **enthusiasm** and keep a positive attitude

RESOURCES FOR INTERVIEW PREP:

Websites

- **Deloitte** (case interview prep and practice questions): caseinterviewprep.deloitte.com
- **Boston Consulting Group** (practice cases and tips for navigating interviews): careers.bcg.com/case-interview-preparation
- **MBACASE** (case interview training, videos, and more): mbacase.com/ctcs-case-lib
- **CaseInterview.com** (case interview handouts and videos from Victor Cheng): caseinterview.com

Books

- **Case in Point** by Marc P. Cosentino
- **Case Interview Secrets** by Victor Cheng
- **Crack the Case System: How to Conquer Your Case Interviews** by David Ohrvall