Case Interview Secrets

"With Victor's help, I went from not knowing anything about consulting to securing offers from McKinsey & BCG."

—MIHNEA MUNTEANU, University of Michigan



CASE INTERVIEW SECRETS



A FORMER MCKINSEY INTERVIEWER
REVEALS HOW TO GET MULTIPLE
JOB OFFERS IN CONSULTING

VICTOR CHENG

FOUNDER, CASEINTERVIEW.COM

Case Interview Secrets: Cracking the Code to Consulting Success

Landing your dream consulting job often hinges on one crucial hurdle: the case interview. These intense, pressure-cooked sessions test not just your analytical skills, but your problem-solving prowess, communication style, and overall composure. Feeling overwhelmed? Don't be. This comprehensive guide unlocks the case interview secrets that will transform you from a nervous applicant into a confident, successful candidate. We'll cover everything from understanding the framework to mastering the art of structured thinking, helping you ace your next case interview.

Understanding the Case Interview Landscape

Before diving into specific strategies, let's establish a clear understanding of what you're facing. Case interviews aren't designed to trick you; they're designed to assess your ability to tackle complex business problems using a structured and logical approach. Consultants are hired to solve problems, and the case interview is their audition.

Types of Case Interviews:

Market Sizing: These cases ask you to estimate the size of a particular market, requiring strong numerical reasoning and logical deduction.

Profitability Improvement: Focuses on identifying areas for improvement in a company's profitability. Expect to analyze financial statements and identify key drivers of revenue and cost. Business Strategy: These cases involve broader strategic decisions, such as market entry strategies, mergers and acquisitions, or new product launches.

Operations Improvement: These cases tackle operational inefficiencies, focusing on processes, supply chains, and production.

Knowing these types allows you to tailor your preparation and approach.

Deconstructing the Case: The Framework Approach

The key to conquering case interviews lies in a structured approach. Don't just jump into calculations; establish a clear framework to guide your thinking. A typical framework might include:

1. Clarifying the Question:

This crucial first step often gets overlooked. Ask clarifying questions to understand the problem fully. What are the key objectives? What information is available? Don't be afraid to ask for clarification – it shows initiative and attention to detail.

2. Structuring Your Approach:

Develop a logical framework to analyze the problem. Common frameworks include Porter's Five Forces, SWOT analysis, and the 4 Ps of marketing. Choose the framework most appropriate for the specific case. Outlining your approach upfront demonstrates your structured thinking.

3. Data Collection and Analysis:

Gather and analyze the data provided. Don't be afraid to ask for additional data if needed. Use your framework to guide your analysis and identify key insights. Show your work; demonstrating your thought process is as important as reaching the correct answer.

4. Synthesis and Conclusion:

Synthesize your findings and draw a clear conclusion. Present your recommendations concisely and confidently. Your conclusion should address the original question and offer actionable steps.

Mastering the Art of Communication

Technical skills are only half the battle; effective communication is paramount. Practice communicating your thoughts clearly and concisely.

Active Listening:

Pay close attention to the interviewer's questions and cues. Ask clarifying questions to ensure you fully understand the problem.

Structured Communication:

Present your thoughts in a structured and organized manner. Use visual aids like diagrams or charts to support your explanations.

Confidence and Clarity:

Speak clearly and confidently. Even if you're unsure of the answer, demonstrate your thought process and show initiative.

Beyond the Framework: Practice Makes Perfect

No amount of theoretical knowledge can replace practical experience. Practice is crucial for mastering case interviews.

Practice Cases:

Work through numerous case studies. Start with simpler cases and gradually increase the complexity.

Mock Interviews:

Conduct mock interviews with friends, mentors, or career counselors. This allows you to receive constructive feedback and identify areas for improvement.

Resources:

Utilize various resources such as case interview books, online courses, and case interview coaching services.

Conclusion

Cracking the case interview isn't about innate brilliance; it's about mastering a structured approach, honing your communication skills, and practicing diligently. By implementing the case interview secrets outlined above, you'll significantly improve your chances of success and take a crucial step toward your dream consulting career. Remember, preparation, practice, and a confident demeanor are your most powerful weapons.

FAQs

1. What are the most common mistakes candidates make in case interviews?

Common mistakes include failing to clarify the question, lacking a structured approach, poor communication, and inadequate preparation.

2. How long should I spend preparing for a case interview?

The amount of time you need depends on your background and experience, but dedicating several weeks, practicing regularly, is generally recommended.

3. Are there any specific frameworks I should always use?

There's no one-size-fits-all framework. Choose the framework that best suits the specific problem. Familiarize yourself with several common frameworks, such as Porter's Five Forces and SWOT analysis.

4. How important is the final answer?

The process is more important than the final answer. Interviewers want to see how you think and approach the problem, not just the end result. A well-structured approach and clear communication outweigh a perfect numerical answer.

5. Can I use a calculator during a case interview?

It depends on the firm and the interviewer. It's best to ask if calculators are permitted. In many cases, mental math and estimation are prioritized to assess your quick thinking.

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consulting books have, and tell you everything that you need to know in a clear and direct way. With this shortcut guide, you will: Understand and become proficient at the nine different parts of a case interview, and know exactly what to say and do in each step Learn the only framework strategy that you need to memorize to craft unique and tailored frameworks for every possible case scenario Gain knowledge of basic business terms and principles so that you can develop an astute business intuition Acquire the skills to solve any market sizing or other quantitative problem Uncover how to differentiate yourself from the thousands of other candidates who are fighting to get the same job you are Practice your case interview skills with included practice cases and sample answers Also visit HackingTheCaseInterview.com for a one-week online crash course to pass your upcoming interview.

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case interview secrets: Crack the Case System David Ohrvall, 2011 Crack the Case System is a complete training program, covering every aspect of the infamous case interview favored by top management consulting firms and a growing number of Fortune 500 companies. David Ohrvall's step-by-step approach combines practical instruction on structuring, analytics and communication, as well as insider tips and insights gained from training thousands of candidates. CTCS includes over 150 bonus videos on mbacase.com, 42 practice cases, homework and drills. About the author: David Ohrvall is the global expert on the topic of case interviews. A dynamic and sought-after speaker, he trains several thousand MBAs and undergraduates each year at premiere business schools around the world, including Wharton, Stanford, Harvard Business School, Chicago Booth, Duke's Fuqua School of Business, INSEAD, Oxford and Cambridge. David also has an extensive private coaching practice that has helped launch hundreds of candidates into consulting, venture capital, and a variety of industries. David is a former management consultant (Bain & Company), and a graduate of the Wharton School (MBA & undergrad). Learn more about David at www.mbacase.com.

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questions including framework questions, market sizing problems, profitability assessments, breakeven analysis, charts & graphs analysis, brainstorming questions, and other qualitative questions 15 full-length cases based on McKinsey, BCG, and Bain interviews Build business acumen across a variety of industries (e.g., technology, retail, healthcare, energy, finance, non-profit) and functions (e.g., strategy, operations) Efficient practice that can be done individually or with a partner Save yourself time by working through carefully crafted practice problems and cases that teach you a new concept, strategy, or takeaway each time Warfield's former students include undergraduates, MBAs, advanced degree holders, and experienced hires. They have landed job offers at top consulting firms, including McKinsey, BCG, Bain, Deloitte, L.E.K., Oliver Wyman, and Accenture as well as at Fortune 500 strategy groups. I felt really confident after my McKinsey interview - this book's cases prepared me perfectly! They were very similar to the ones I received in my first and final round interviews. -McKinsey Consultant, Wharton MBA Candidate I had very little time before my next BCG interview. This book provided me with plenty of practice that I could do by myself. After working through these cases, I felt excited going into my interviews. -BCG Associate, Experienced Hire These cases were much higher quality than those found in other case books. The explanations were detailed and thorough and I got to practice thinking like a true consultant. -Bain Consultant, Stanford Undergraduate Also visit HackingTheCaseInterview.com for a one-week online crash course to pass your upcoming interview.

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templates, in addition to several sample Harvard Business School cases, help you apply the author's framework. Later in the book, Ellet shows how to write persuasive case-analytical essays based on the process laid out earlier. Examples of effective writing further reinforce the methods. The book also includes a chapter on how to talk about cases more effectively in class. Any current or prospective MBA or executive education student needs this guide.

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case interview secrets: Summary of Victor Cheng's Case Interview Secrets Everest

Media,, 2022-04-06T22:59:00Z Please note: This is a companion version & not the original book. Sample Book Insights: #1 The case interview is a unique interviewing format that firms such as McKinsey Company, Bain Company, Boston Consulting Group, Oliver Wyman, and others use. It is used to evaluate candidates with wide-ranging backgrounds. #2 The case interview is a trial run of the actual consulting interview. I learned that the most profitable skill I could learn while in school was not related to English, math, psychology, history, economics, or science. It was how to pass the case interview. #3 My experience as a job seeker and a consultant has shaped my perspective of the case interview. I've developed an uncommon insight into the case interview from having been on both sides of the table, and that's what I share with you here. #4 The case interview process is made up of seven parts. Part One provides a big-picture view of the process and the different types of evaluation tools used. Part Two covers quantitative assessments. Part Three discusses the fundamentals of tackling real case interviews. Part Four covers the primary frameworks you'll use to solve the business problems presented in the case interview. Part Five covers the traditional candidate-led case interview format. Part Six describes the other types of case interviews and how to handle them.

case interview secrets: Mastering the Case Analysis Alexander Chernev, 2006 Written by one of the top professors at Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management, Mastering the Case Analysis offers a systematic approach to analyzing business cases typically given in MBA job interviews. An overdue and much-needed aid to support students' preparation for case interviews, this book introduces an integrative framework for analyzing business problems and offers a detailed overview of the essential methods and concepts used in case analysis.

case interview secrets: Melania and Me Stephanie Winston Wolkoff, 2020-09-01 #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER What Melania wants, Melania gets. The former director of special events at Vogue and producer of nine legendary Met Galas, Stephanie Winston Wolkoff met Melania Knauss in 2003 and had a front row seat to the transformation of Donald Trump's then girlfriend from a rough-cut gem to a precious diamond. As their friendship deepened over lunches at Manhattan hot spots, black-tie parties, and giggle sessions in the penthouse at Trump Tower, Wolkoff watched the newest Mrs. Trump raise her son, Barron, and manage her highly scrutinized marriage. After Trump won the 2016 election, Wolkoff was recruited to help produce the 58th Presidential Inauguration and to become the First Lady's trusted advisor. Melania put Wolkoff in charge of hiring her staff, organizing her events, helping her write speeches, and creating her debut initiatives. Then it all fell apart when she was made the scapegoat for inauguration finance irregularities. Melania could have defended her innocent friend and confidant, but she stood by her man, knowing full well who was really to blame. The betrayal nearly destroyed Wolkoff. In this candid and emotional memoir, Stephanie Winston Wolkoff takes you into Trump Tower and the White House to tell the funny, thrilling, and heartbreaking story of her intimate friendship with one of the most famous women in the world, a woman few people truly understand. How did Melania react to the Access Hollywood tape and her husband's affair with Stormy Daniels? Does she get along well with Ivanka? Why did she wear that jacket with "I really don't care, do u?" printed on the back? Is Melania happy being First Lady? And what really happened with the inauguration's funding of \$107 million? Wolkoff has some ideas...

case interview secrets: Case Closed Sean Huang, 2020-11-27 Case Closed is an award-winning, detailed guide to acing the consulting interview. Other consulting prep materials are written by those who have been out of the industry for decades. Case Closed is the only guide written by former McKinsey consultants and interviewers who have been intimately involved in the interview process in the last 2 years. This authoritative resource covers some never-covered-before topics, including: How to write your resume to attract the attention of resume-graders and recruiters at McKinsey, Bain, and BCG Why the personal experience (fit) interview matters, what interviewers are probing for, and what types of experiences to prep How the interviewers evaluate your case performance: what matters, and what doesn't How to tackle non-traditional cases that interviewers may throw at you, which no canned framework from the typical case interview books can help with

How to prep if you have 60 days, 30 days, or just 2 weeks before your expected first interview How to hack both in-person interactions and video interview interactions, in a time of COVID-19 The surprisingly good - and surprisingly bad - questions to ask your interviewer during Q&A How to master innovative, universally-adaptable case interview frameworks. Any candidate can regurgitate the frameworks from Case In Point or Case Interview Secrets; nothing there will wow an interviewer Countless example cases spanning profitability, new market entry, new product / growth, pricing, M&A, and even non-traditional archetypes Whether you are a current undergrad or MBA looking for an internship or full-time role, or an experienced professional, Case Closed is an investment into your professional future. Stand out from the pack with the latest, cutting-edge secrets to wow your consulting case interviewers. Sean Huang's former proteges span undergraduates, MBAs, advanced degree holders, and experienced hires. These students have landed job offers at top consulting firms, including McKinsey, BCG, and Bain; many have also used the structured thinking he has taught them to land roles at Goldman Sachs IBD, Google BizOps & Strategy, as well as at Fortune 500 strategy groups. Case Closed has been a lifesaver. It truly contains everything you need to know to ace your consulting interviews and Sean explains things in a clear manner that is easy to understand. After studying Case Closed, I landed my dream job at McKinsey and I've raved about this book to all my friends.-McKinsey New York full time offer, Wharton MBA I used to be intimidated by the notorious consulting case interviews. For anyone looking to get a job offer to a top consulting firm, Case Closed is honestly the best interview prep book (and I've read all of them). The case interviews in Case Closed were by far the best and most similar to the cases I got in the actual interviews.-Bain San Francisco internship offer, UC Berkeley Haas (undergraduate) In my panic, I read all of the case interview frameworks from different case prep books. And that ended up confusing me more because there were so many frameworks but no easy way to remember when to use what. Case Closed walks you through the interview process in such a great way that I started loving case interviews and landed the job. -BCG Boston full time offer, University of Virginia (undergraduate)

case interview secrets: *The Almanack of Naval Ravikant: A Guide to Wealth and Happiness* Eric Jorgenson, 2022-12 This isn't a how-to book, or a step-by-step gimmick. Instead, through Naval's own words, you will learn how to walk your own unique path toward a happier, wealthier life.

case interview secrets: Start with Why Simon Sinek, 2009-10-29 The inspiring, life-changing bestseller by the author of LEADERS EAT LAST and TOGETHER IS BETTER. In 2009, Simon Sinek started a movement to help people become more inspired at work, and in turn inspire their colleagues and customers. Since then, millions have been touched by the power of his ideas, including more than 28 million who've watched his TED Talk based on START WITH WHY -- the third most popular TED video of all time. Sinek starts with a fundamental question: Why are some people and organizations more innovative, more influential, and more profitable than others? Why do some command greater loyalty from customers and employees alike? Even among the successful, why are so few able to repeat their success over and over? People like Martin Luther King Jr., Steve Jobs, and the Wright Brothers had little in common, but they all started with WHY. They realized that people won't truly buy into a product, service, movement, or idea until they understand the WHY behind it. START WITH WHY shows that the leaders who've had the greatest influence in the world all think, act, and communicate the same way -- and it's the opposite of what everyone else does. Sinek calls this powerful idea The Golden Circle, and it provides a framework upon which organizations can be built, movements can be led, and people can be inspired. And it all starts with WHY.

case interview secrets: Measure What Matters John Doerr, 2018-04-24 #1 New York Times Bestseller Legendary venture capitalist John Doerr reveals how the goal-setting system of Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) has helped tech giants from Intel to Google achieve explosive growth—and how it can help any organization thrive. In the fall of 1999, John Doerr met with the founders of a start-up whom he'd just given \$12.5 million, the biggest investment of his career. Larry Page and

Sergey Brin had amazing technology, entrepreneurial energy, and sky-high ambitions, but no real business plan. For Google to change the world (or even to survive), Page and Brin had to learn how to make tough choices on priorities while keeping their team on track. They'd have to know when to pull the plug on losing propositions, to fail fast. And they needed timely, relevant data to track their progress—to measure what mattered. Doerr taught them about a proven approach to operating excellence: Objectives and Key Results. He had first discovered OKRs in the 1970s as an engineer at Intel, where the legendary Andy Grove (the greatest manager of his or any era) drove the best-run company Doerr had ever seen. Later, as a venture capitalist, Doerr shared Grove's brainchild with more than fifty companies. Wherever the process was faithfully practiced, it worked. In this goal-setting system, objectives define what we seek to achieve; key results are how those top-priority goals will be attained with specific, measurable actions within a set time frame. Everyone's goals, from entry level to CEO, are transparent to the entire organization. The benefits are profound. OKRs surface an organization's most important work. They focus effort and foster coordination. They keep employees on track. They link objectives across silos to unify and strengthen the entire company. Along the way, OKRs enhance workplace satisfaction and boost retention. In Measure What Matters, Doerr shares a broad range of first-person, behind-the-scenes case studies, with narrators including Bono and Bill Gates, to demonstrate the focus, agility, and explosive growth that OKRs have spurred at so many great organizations. This book will help a new generation of leaders capture the same magic.

case interview secrets: The Adam and Eve Story Chan Thomas, 1993 This is the Book of the Century! At LAST someone - this time a basic research scientist - has come forth with proof of cataclysms, which are worldwide supersonic inundations such as Noah's flood. They were discovered by great men such as Andre DeLuc, Baron Georges Cuvier and Guy de Dolomieu, and have remained unsolved mysteries ever since. Now the author takes you through thrilling solutions of finding the process of catclysms, their timetable, and the derivation of trigger, a 20-year search. Truly, CATACLYSMS LEAVE NO ONE UNTOUCHED! He describes the next cataclysm in awesome detail plus the deterioration of civilization and the escalation of crime before the next cataclysm. It just so happens that the author's scientific prediction of the next cataclysm agrees with clairvoyants Nostradamus', Cayce's, and Scallion's predictions. Never before have facts been presented in such a spine-tingling, inspiring fashion; and never have so many secrets been unlocked in one book. This is the most stirring subject, written in the most intriguing, engrossing, and exciting style ever. You will remember this exceptional book for years! Available from: Bengal Tiger Press, Drawer 1212, South Chatham, MA 02659; Tel: 800-431-4590; FAX: 508-432-0697.

case interview secrets: Secrets of the Product Manager Interview Lewis C. Lin, 2017-02-17 Former Google Interviewer Reveals How to Get Multiple Job Offers Have an upcoming product manager interview? Perhaps for Google, Facebook, Amazon, or Uber? If so, find out secrets to getting multiple job offers with the world's #1 author on product management interviews: Lewis C. Lin. Secrets of the Product Manager Interview shares what to expect in your product management interviews and how to prepare. Collecting 10+ years of questions from his readers, clients, and workshop attendees, the author answers and reveals his interview secrets in a single book. The Ideal Companion to Decode and Conquer as well as PM Interview Questions Many of you enjoyed reading about the PM interview frameworks revealed in Decode and Conquer, including the CIRCLES(TM), AARM(TM) and DIGS(TM) Methods. And others enjoyed Product Manager Interview Questions for the 160+ practice questions. Secrets of the Product Manager Interview takes a different approach. It's not focused on frameworks or practice questions. Instead, it's everything you need to know about product manager interviews. You'll get his secrets on: What to expect at the interview The best way to prepare How to get the first PM job How to interpret interviewer feedback And more...

case interview secrets: Extreme Revenue Growth Victor Cheng, 2010-05 Victor Cheng deconstructs the management practices used by fast growing technology companies and adapts these practices for use in other industries. While most business books tout one new big idea that will magically solve all your problems, Extreme Revenue Growth provides a refreshingly different and

practical approach, combining many cross-functional practices to create a blueprint for explosive growth.

case interview secrets: The Recession-Proof Business Victor Cheng, 2009-04 Cheng, a former McKinsey consultant and marketing expert for the Fox Business Television Network, analyzes 12 U.S. recessions spanning 136 years to uncover why dozens of startup companies thrived during the economic chaos of their day.

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