

Emerging Markets Case Studies

Short Cases • Special Issue

Unlike traditional 8-10-page case study narratives, short cases in this special issue are between 2,000 and 3,000 words, can be read in 15 minutes; allowing an immediate classroom discussion around a single theme. Short cases include less data, background information, and exhibits, and are more focused on analysis in the classroom. Short cases develop a central protagonist facing a compelling management dilemma and contain a substantial teaching note, following the standard EMCS format for classroom use.

Emerging Markets Case Studies has so far published the following cases in the Short Cases Special issue, with more to follow in 2020.

'The Good Thymes' for a good time

Young, ambitious, in love with his native village "Kfarhouna", in Southern Lebanon, Mr. Fady Aziz, a branding specialist living in the capital Beirut, proposed in January 2016, in a friendly discussion, to the priest of the monastery of Saint-Georges to rent him an agricultural land. He aims to have a reason, at the end of the week, to go up in his village with his family. Skeptical to the idea, the priest accused him of "not understanding anything about agriculture" and challenged him to propose a valuable agricultural project likely to make him change his mind. M. Fady Aziz fought to meet this challenge which will allow him not only to reinvigorate his abandoned village but also to reconnect with his origins. He obtained the right to exploit a plot of land belonging to the Monastery of St. Georges. He had the idea of planting thyme and transformed his "hobby" into the outset of a long journey where his products crossed the borders, under a purely artisanal brand: "The Good Thymes".

Today, M. Aziz is facing a new challenge: would he be able to fulfill all these orders and remain faithful to the philosophy that led him to invest in his village without impairing the natural and artisanal aspect of his thyme?

Subject area: Strategy

Authors: Nayla Menhem, Liliane Elias Youakim and Aliaa Khoury

Location: Lebanon

The last breath of glassblowing?

The case series traces the attempts of Nisrine Khalifeh to save her family's ailing Lebanese artisan micro-enterprise that produces handmade glass blown jars, jugs and cups. Despite their unique traditional know-how in glassblowing, The Khalifeh struggle to survive since the early 2000s until today in a context of a growing concurrence by more competitive glass products. After each triggering event faced by the Khalifeh firm, Nisrine's exploits opportunities offered to her in an archaic business model approach that provides short business solutions. Nisrine seems not to realize that her business approach is just keeping her family business from dying today instead of tomorrow while keeping it on the verge of going under. Facing an additional dilemma, she is challenged to realize how competitive and sustainable the Khalifeh business model is, and which actions she should take to withstand the competitive threats. More sustainable business options exist to this traditional micro-enterprise which carries a strong growth rate potential if sustainable business models are developed and deployed using key tools and frameworks of strategic management analysis.

Subject Area: Strategy

Authors: Jana Badran, Amale Kharrouby, Abdel-Maoula Chaar

Location: Lebanon

Alison Bourne: Leading at Bergmann Engineering Works (SA)

The case highlights the challenges facing women in leadership positions in emerging economies and societies in transition like South Africa and explores the role that gender plays in the world of work. It focusses on the dilemmas faced by Alison Bourne, newly promoted to the CEO role at Bergmann Engineering Works (SA). The case shows that, despite the positive contribution resulting from the inclusion of women in organisations, women experience a multitude of obstacles. Some of the limitations highlight that women must work even harder to be perceived as legitimate leaders. These challenges come about despite research showing that the inclusion of women in the workforce improves company performance, enriches the knowledge base, and improves the decision making quality of company boards.

Subject area: Human Resources

Author: Linda Ronnie

Location: South Africa

Yuppiechef: From clicks to bricks – an omnichannel approach for a South African business

This case looks at Yuppiechef, a successful e-commerce business, and their move from “clicks to bricks” with the introduction of retail stores. Founder and CEO of Yuppiechef Andrew Smith shares the current business status and considers how to maintain the brand’s culture with the growth of retail and being an omnichannel pioneer.

Subject area: Marketing

Authors: Mignon Reyneke and Claire Barnardo

Location: South Africa

Dicoma Corporation: Challenges fo future growth

We explore the case of DICOMA corporation, a Costa Rican multinational enterprise with presence in 5 countries. Adrian Sanchez, who is Dicoma’s president, needs to craft an international strategy in order to increase the international sales in the foreign markets where the firm operates. The company may follow two paths. On the one hand, Dicoma can adopt the strategy of following its major clients in order to expand overseas, which will lead to the opening of operations in more countries, but making the foreign sales highly dependent on these type of partnerships. This has been so far the path pursued by Dicoma in its international

expansion. On the other hand, Dicoma can opt to focus on increasing commitments in the existing international markets where it already has operations by capturing new clients in those locations but scarifying the potential business opportunities to enter into other countries in partnership with its major clients.

Subject Area: International Business

Authors: Armando Borda, Carlos Cordova and Juan Carlos Leon

Location: Costa Rica

Accident at Vidyalaya school: An ethical dilemma

This case brings out a dilemma faced by the school management of Vidyalaya School, Karnataka, India in responding to a notice issued by the State Government to pay a huge compensation and to re-absorb a teacher who was rendered physically challenged owing to an accident within the school premises. The case is set in the milieu of a self-financed, private education industry during the period 2013-2018. This is a case in “Strategy formulation” and “Ethical dilemma” involved in the field of education in India. A teacher was permanently injured and confined to a wheelchair in an attempt to rescue a child attempting to jump off the school building and end her life for having obtained low marks in a test paper.

The management is caught in a dilemma on the course of action they must take - to fight the case legally or to accept the demand on humanitarian grounds.

Subject Area: Strategy

Author: Jayadeva Prasad Moleyar

Location: India

Uber SA: Disruption of the local taxi industry?

Uber, a US-based multinational, provides a real-time technology platform to enable users to utilise ride-sharing with Uber drivers. This is an example of a “shared economy” or “collaborative consumption” business model, which has disrupted the status quo of the taxi industry around the world. Uber was launched in South Africa in 2013, creating many job opportunities but causing much reaction from the taxi industry and the authorities.

Subject Area: Strategy

Author: Geoff Bick

Location: South Africa

Hope Home: Early childhood education for social change

Andrea Meoño was the founder of Hope Home, a center for early childhood education in San José, Costa Rica. The goal of the center was to provide education and daily care to children of disadvantaged families, especially single mothers for whom it was a real challenge to maintain a permanent job to sustain their children and, at the same time, provide them with adequate care and attention. After five years of operating the center, Andrea had to figure out the best way to grow her business, ensuring financial sustainability while keeping true to her original purpose of helping vulnerable mothers by providing their children with excellent educational opportunities.

Subject Area: Entrepreneurship
Authors: Sara Benetti and Roy Zuniga
Location: Costa Rica

The nemesis who stood tall: A tale of governance and leadership

This real-life case study is based on a leading management institution of central India. The institute was quite successful in establishing its brand central India during 2011-2017 and is still going strong. The case here captures a change of leadership and the challenges/opportunities it posed to faculty and staff members. The case also intends to address the power struggle that ensued in later years of its functioning. The case is also about how the present leader would finally deal with it all.

Students would be able to generate insights in leadership style, power and politics, employee retention, organisational decision-making, and concerns in recruiting culturally fit employees.

Subject Area: Human Resources
Author: Arindam Saha
Location: India

The buyout at Tru-Foods For You

Often mergers and acquisitions fail because of the inability to either manage or consider organisational and people management issues. It has also been acknowledged that during a process of extreme change or transition, such as a merger and acquisition (M&A), employees view the past as a time of safety and security with the future appearing as uncertain and confused. This teaching case study highlights these challenges and the change processes imbedded in an acquisition. The acquiring firm is Marshall Foods, a well-established branded continental distribution company with a strong emphasis on nutritional whole food products based in South Africa, and the target firm is Tru-Foods For You, a small Cape Town online company that sold natural and organic foods. The case study explores the challenges faced by the Tru-Foods For You owner and staff as a result of the acquisition process. The case describes the background to the acquisition, the processes during this phase, and the resultant outcomes.

Subject Area: Strategy
Author: Linda Ronnie
Location: South Africa

Why buy new when used will do?

Jetcon Corporation's business model involved the importation of pre-owned cars from Japan for re-sale in Jamaica. It was a fiercely competitive business as there were over a hundred companies involved in this sector. There was also a vibrant new-car sector. Jetcon focused on importing mid to low price Japanese pre-owned models which were already common on Jamaican roads, and which would be affordable to the larger segment of buyers. Like most small businesses, it experienced difficulty raising financing in the amounts and cost that it required and this contributed to its decision to raise equity capital through an Initial Public Offer. It was the first used-car dealer to list on the Jamaica Stock Exchange.

Subject Area: Entrepreneurship
Author: Michael Robert Nicholson
Location: Jamaica