Live Cases on Study Abroad with Peers

INTEGRATING THREE SIGNATURE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING METHODS

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The Live Case in International Business Study Abroad

Working in teams with peers from host country on a study abroad, students tackle a real business challenge. Students assume the role of consultants of TMTs. The challenge is analyzed from various angles, data is collected, debates follow, and a set of alternative recommendations are proposed and presented to participating company management.

Highlights from three different live cases during study abroad with peers in Morocco are highlighted here.
Integrating Three Signature IB Learning Experiences

- Study Abroad
- Cross-Cultural Teams
- Live Case Method
Step 1. The Fundamentals: Frameworks & Data Tools

Live Cases may require quite a bit of country, industry, and company knowledge, in addition to the unique particular challenge at hand.

Recommendations: Use Frameworks: Country: PESTEL, Industry: Porter’s 5 Forces, Company: SWOT analysis, 4Ps (non-BBAs)

In-country Data Collection: Observations, Interviews and Surveys
Step 2. Incorporate a Peer Component

On these live cases mixed teams with GSU & ESCA students work together on the case.

Research shows diverse and cross-cultural teams to be more effective in solving complex problem.

Challenge: It take longer for diverse, and cross-cultural teams to start working effectively.

Recommendations:

Start early!

Leverage social media ahead of time

Have teams work on an ‘introductory’ task (e.g. Team Name)
Establishing Cross-Cultural Teams: Meet & Greet
Step 3. Joint Company Visit & Issue Presentation

FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE

Recommendations:
Meet different managers & ask questions
Allow time to observe how work gets done at the firm when possible
Chat with employees when possible
Tour Facilities Where Possible
Engage multiple stakeholders where possible!

Keep in mind that different company stakeholders may have different expectations!
Step 4. Define the Problem

SET PARAMETERS & BOUNDARIES

Recommendations:

Encourage probing questions

The live case problem needs to be well articulated and defined

Set clear expectations for deliverables

Summarize the problem in a clear short statement
Step 5. Brainstorming

Recommendations:
Self-managed teams work best!
Avoid Groupthink.
Encourage the use of the 5-Whys!
May assign a Devil’s Advocate role.
Step 6. Field Work: Allow Ample Time for On-Site Primary Data Collection

Can be the most challenging part!
(e.g. Identifying main distribution channels/
May involve visit to key retailers & POS)

**Recommendations:**

Ensure interview questions are culturally appropriate
Work closely with host-country student peers
Time: Traffic / Socialization
Visit Retailers & POS (*FMCGs*)
Step 7. ...More deliberation & additional research! (Combining primary & secondary research findings)
Step 8. Present Findings & Recommendations

**Recommendations:**
Focus on key recommendations
Students select presenters
Step 9. Debriefing
Remember: to allow plenty of time for takeaways & reflections

SAMPLE STUDENT COMMENTS

“This was probably one of the most rewarding events of this trip. Us GSU students and our ESCA friends were able to help a well known tea company by giving our recommendations on launching a new product in a new category for Morocco. I was finally able to use what I learned in all those marketing classes to help give resolutions and suggestions. Hands down the best visit On this trip. Oh and we got some amazing mint tea!! ”

“This experience was one of the most challenging I have ever experienced in my academic career!”
Some time to socialize & enjoy the new friendships!
Looking ahead!

- Virtual Exchange/COIL?
- Virtual Live Cases...Why not?
- Assessment? Beyond students’ reflections...
- Other ideas?
Merci
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Thank you!