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## IS 628: Computer-Based Information Systems

### Case Brief Guidelines

### Spring 2016

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You are to prepare and turn in to the instructor, a brief of your case. I have prepared some case brief guidelines that you may follow. You are not required to follow these guidelines, but I will be expecting the find at a minimum the material described here. Within the case brief you need to address each of the [case questions](#) for your case. The case questions are provided for to help focus and perhaps guide your study and analysis of the case. In the brief, you may answer the questions directly, by stating and answering the question in the brief; or, you may do this indirectly, by including the content of your answer in your brief.

Structure the Brief into three sections:

- Overview
- Analysis
- Suggestions/Recommendations

### Overview

In this section, you should describe the setting of the case. You should identify the key players and describe the organizational context of the case (what type of organization, how large, etc.). This section should include a description of the current crisis (if one is apparent in the case documentation) and the issues related to the case. The section shouldn't exceed one fourth of the brief. Please keep in mind that I am the audience of the brief and as such, am familiar with the case. Therefore, I recommend that you limit your discussion in this section to only those things that have some bearing on, or contribution to the crisis—even if that relationship has not yet been addressed yet in the brief and will be discussed later. That is, the later sections of the brief should not contain information “new” to the brief, which is not already stated in the overview section. You should focus on background, issues and topics that you are addressing in the later sections of the brief.

Note that you should present this information from as objective a perspective as possible. That is, focus in the “what” of the case; not the “why.”

### Analysis

To begin this section, you should add any further description that you feel is necessary to articulate your view of the central crisis. Then, you should move on to delineate the chain(s) of events that led to the crisis. Now that you have described *how* the crisis occurred, you may describe *why* the events occurred. You should identify critical junctures and the decisions that led the players down the path towards the crisis.

The material in this section will vary by case. But one thing that you should do is to relate the issues of the case to concepts and principles from the relevant chapter of the text (and other chapters and outside materials in the case of “A” presentations) to the interdependency of information systems with other organizational complexities.

With this section you should be judging the decision(s) of the players that led to the crisis and describe the contribution their decisions had towards the crisis. You may also interject this section with knowledge gained from your own experiences. This is the section in which you should subjectively evaluate the case, acting primarily as a Business Analyst. As you progress through the course, you’ll be able to relate IS principles and concepts more completely.

### **Suggestions/Recommendations**

Having determined what the principle issues and players of the case are and how they contributed to the crisis, as well as having identified the cause(s) of the crisis, what do you suggest they do? If you were brought in to help the players in the case, can you suggest a way that they can get themselves out of their predicament? You will likely also want to provide suggestions to prevent this type of problem from reoccurring. You should focus on what is needed to fix the problem and prevent similar crises. You should not continue to rehash what went wrong.

I suggest you avoid rash statements here such as, “Fire everybody.” Also, your recommendations should remain within normal limitations; that is, you should consider your suggestions within reasonable economic constraints for the organization in question.

The authors selected these cases in large part because they reflect fairly typical real life situations (and indeed, they are reports of real life events), not because they are particularly sensational. As managers you will likely encounter situations reminiscent of these cases. Working with them, you should become aware of the types of events that lead to IS decision woes and hopefully avoid the problems the players in these cases encountered.

One thing to be sure to include is your “take away” from the case. That is, what did you learn—what is it you know better about IT management in business now than before you analyzed the case—that you didn’t know before.