



Accounting

NIO Inc.: Currents of Revenue **New!**

An investor in NIO Inc. (NIO), an electric vehicle (EV) manufacturer based in China, contemplated the role NIO played in the EV market in China and the world, as well as the differences between NIO's business model and the business models of other EV makers. Specifically, NIO had built and operated a network of battery-swapping stations and often included complimentary swaps with vehicle purchases. Also, NIO was able to sell a car without a battery pack as long as the customer paid for a subscription service. Further, to fund the venture, NIO and other entities had established Wuhan Weineng Battery Asset Co. Ltd., which owned the batteries that were leased out under the battery-as-a-service (BaaS) model. The investor realized that it was important to understand the implications of these streams of revenue and how they affected NIO's stock valuation.

Agrawal Kitchenware Distributors: A Miscellany of Inventory Problems **New!**

A recent master of business administration degree graduate, had discovered a problem with inventory management in her family's business. Agrawal Kitchenware Distributors (Agrawal), a wholesaler and distributor of kitchenware items, appeared to be well-off according to its financials, but when she had toured the company's warehouse, she discovered several problems with the inventory, and there was no management system that could identify, track, or resolve the inventory problems. Because Agrawal was a family business, the changes needed to be acceptable to both brothers who owned and managed

the business, and the changes needed to be fairly simple to implement and maintain. What inventory management technique would be suitable in these circumstances?

Juliette's Lemonade Stands Notable!

Juliette is a young entrepreneur, and she has the idea of starting two lemonade stands for the upcoming summer and getting her younger brothers to work them. The businesses must plan for launch, operate during the season, then determine financial performance and key metrics to assess success. Which brother did a better job managing the business? The case introduces key accounting and financial statement and performance measures in an intuitive way, is interactive and engaging, and can be used with a variety of audiences, as discussion can span from basic financial statement construction and analysis to more complex issues around accrual accounting, revenue recognition, cash flow timing, and the interaction among financial statements.

Kangaroo Tail Winery Limited (A) Notable!

Two Australian entrepreneurs, Anna Amphlett and Andrew Ferris decided to start a new venture to produce, market and distribute high quality premium wine in Tasmania, an island off the southern coast of Australia. Amphlett and Ferris developed a business plan for a winery business based on a new brand to be called Kangaroo Tail. Amphlett and Ferris were retired executives each with more than twenty years of experience at Constellation Brands Inc. and Treasury Wine Estates. After a year of experimentation Amphlett and Ferris finally settled upon a blend that yielded wines with the right aroma, taste, and color. They negotiated a loan requiring them to provide the bank with a business plan and projected financial statements. They are unsure whether the wine operation will be a profitable use of their capital.



Entrepreneurship

Montreal Community Contact: What Will Happen After Me? New!

In July 2020, the founder and manager of Montreal Community Contact (Contact), a bimonthly community newspaper, was considering strategies to ensure the survival of his business. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that he was sixty-three years old, he worried about what the future of the newspaper would look like if anything were to happen to him. Contact had been running for almost thirty years and had a loyal readership within the Black community in Montreal and a loyal cadre of advertisers, but online media was threatening the newspaper industry, and each year the business just managed to break even. The business's owner now felt it was important to secure the long-term survival of the newspaper. How should he improve the stability of Contact while evaluating future avenues for the business?

Ravel Law: Unraveling an Entrepreneur's Decisions New!

Founded in California in 2012, Ravel Law Inc. (Ravel) was a legal tech start-up that developed groundbreaking legal analytics products. In 2017, Ravel's co-founder and chief executive officer (CEO) was deciding between two very different paths to take the company—a decision that would shape Ravel's future and ultimately determine how the CEO would exit the company. One path would lead Ravel to an acquisition or sale, and the other would allow the company to further develop its technology and eventually lead to an initial public offering (IPO). Should the CEO sell Ravel now and harvest its existing value, or should he hold on to the company and raise money to build internal capital for a future IPO? As the leader of Ravel, the CEO had to weigh the benefits and costs of fundraising for

a third round of investor money against the benefits and costs of selling Ravel. While doing so, he also had to consider what would bring the most value to Ravel's stakeholders as well as satisfy his personal interests in the venture and in an exit.

Cafézia Coffee: Brewing Entrepreneurial Success Notable!

In the summer of 2020, the co-owner and manager of Cafézia Coffee Inc. (Cafézia), a small entrepreneurial venture located in London, Ontario, was considering several strategic options to capitalize on the growth of the business during its first year of operations. In addition to maintaining the status quo at Cafézia, the manager was considering investing in new packaging and in a website redesign, as well as partnering with a food and beverage industry distributor or broker. She was also considering buying out the other owners of the business so that she would own it outright. The company needed further growth in order to reach profitability, so she would need to make a decision quickly to ensure Cafézia's continued success.

Givewith: Harnessing Social Impact from Everyday Business Activities Notable!

Paul Polizzotto, a serial social entrepreneur, believes that his new technology startup idea, Givewith, will enable businesses to tie social impact giving to their everyday business transactions, and thereby open up the floodgates to more resources for social and environmental change. Fundamental to the viability of Givewith is what Polizzotto calls "Social Value Economics", the construct that attaching social impact giving to a business transaction can increase its value – through enhanced brand, more satisfied employees, and higher Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) ratings. With his employment contract meeting coming up the next day with CBS, the media conglomerate, Polizzotto has to decide whether or not to pursue Givewith and whether to launch it as an independent startup or as a corporate venture. The first part of the case examines Polizzotto, the entrepreneur, especially his entrepreneurial competence and motivation. Established frameworks are utilized to understand and analyze the components of entrepreneurial competence and the drivers of motivation for entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship. Next, the case focuses on Givewith's viability and potential as a business, which in large part depends on the validity of Social Value Economics and Givewith's ability to facilitate transactions economically and effectively. The main decision centers on whether Polizzotto should start Givewith, and whether he should do so as a startup or as corporate venture. Students are given the opportunity to integrate all of their analyses of the case, including Polizzotto's entrepreneurial competence and motivation, validity of Social Value Economics, and viability of Givewith, to arrive at their recommendation.

Truebird - An AlleyCorp Venture Notable!

In December 2018, Kevin Ryan and Wendy Tsu faced an important decision - to finalize the CEO candidate for Truebird, an innovative, automated coffee caf concept. Like many of AlleyCorp and Ryan's companies, Truebird started with the observation of an unmet need - an inability to get good coffee at a reasonable price without a wait. Ryan's track record as a serial entrepreneur included companies such as MongoDB, Gilt Groupe, Zola, and Business Insider. The commonality across AlleyCorp's diverse businesses was a systematic process to ideation, led by Wendy Tsu, and an emphasis on the early Co-founder/CEO. Over the years, Ryan had refined his process of identifying the most appropriate person to serve as CEO. Two strong candidates had been shortlisted for the CEO position at Truebird. Unlike

traditional approaches that used the reference check as a safety net, Ryan and Tsu considered reference check interviews as a stronger indicator of on-the-job performance. How should they structure a reference check process that would allow a complete understanding of each candidate? What questions should they ask when they found people who had worked with, or for, each of the candidates?



Finance

Singapore Airlines: Raising Capital During COVID-19 New!

On March 26, 2020, Singapore Airlines was reeling from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. To raise badly needed capital, it announced that its shareholders would be offered S\$5.3 billion worth of rights shares and S\$3.5 billion of rights mandatory convertible bonds, both of which would be reflected as equity on its balance sheet. Should shareholders take advantage of this offer or not? To make this decision, investors had to analyze the airline's reasons for choosing this form of equity financing, the impact of this capital-raising exercise, Singapore Airline's valuation, and the role of sovereign wealth funds in equity financing. Investors would have to decide the appropriate response to the rights issuances.

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Tulaberry Plaza: Leasing Decisions in Commercial Real Estate Notable!

In January 2019, Benedict Clarke needed to address the vacancies at retail shopping center Tulaberry Plaza. The rise in online shopping forced Tulaberry's anchor tenant into bankruptcy and weakened the outlook for retail more generally. Clarke must devise a plan that presents the most logical and profitable way forward for the shopping center. The case asks students to make leasing decisions from the perspective of the property owner, Clarke, giving them an appreciation for both the quantitative and qualitative factors that influence optimal leasing decisions.

Cordlife Group: Valuing the Business of Life Notable!

It was the 28th of February 2012, and Joshua Shen, an investment associate with a large banking group, found himself saddled with a project that blurred the lines between his professional and personal lives in an unexpected manner. His Chief Investment Officer had sent to him a fact sheet on a proposed private placement subscription to the shares in Cordlife Group for a private banking client, and tasked him to prepare a valuation report on the company so that he could decide whether to recommend the private placement to the client.

Cordlife was not your typical firm: instead of selling everyday consumable goods and services, it was an umbilical cord tissue bank, in the business of life itself. Joshua was familiar with the company: he and his wife had just banked their first-born's cord cells with them. But, more often than not, a good product does not necessarily mean a good company, and a good company does not necessarily mean a good stock. How does one value such a business? Should he recommend the investment to the client, and on what basis?



General Management/Strategy

Tony's Chocolonely: Taking On "Big Cocoa" and West African Child Slavery in the Supply Chain New!

On February 16, 2021, Slave Free Chocolate removed Tony's Chocolonely (Tony's), a chocolate company based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, from its "Ethical Chocolate Companies" list due to Tony's association with Barry Callebaut, a cocoa processor associated with child slavery in West Africa. Tony's, a B Corp-certified company whose founding mission was to eradicate child slavery from the cocoa supply chain, had to address its public removal from the list immediately to maintain the company's credibility. How should the chief executive officer of Tony's respond to the removal?

Ford Motor Company: Struggle in India New!

In April 2021, the giant US automaker Ford Motor Company was facing a decision regarding its Indian operations, which were struggling. It had brought in a new global chief executive officer—its fourth in the past decade—who was tasked with making this choice. The company could remain invested in India, either operating on its own or in a joint venture. It could also decide to manufacture for export or choose to exit the Indian market entirely. Ford Motor Company had to decide on an international corporate-level strategy, all while considering the factors influencing the changing Indian market and the rise of new technology. What would be the best path forward for the automaker?

The Signals of Big Oil: ExxonMobil Stumbles New!

In the summer of 2021, an Exxon Mobil Corporation (ExxonMobil) executive was secretly recorded dismissing climate science that his company had publicly supported. ExxonMobil is a vertically integrated business with decades of financial performance to consider. Recent activity at the organization including activist investor action to change the board of directors position coupled with years of confusion over climate science creates a complex situation with multiple stakeholders. By comparing ExxonMobil's performance to Apple Inc. (Apple) and other technology companies, it provides context for the moment of the crisis and asks readers to consider how to manage the communication complication. Students are challenged to consider nuance in their arguments and balance short-term shareholder returns with longer-term organizational pursuits.

Disney's Entry into the Streaming Battle New!

As of 2019, Netflix is the market leader in the streaming space, spending \$17 billion per year on original content. Its award-winning content coupled with its technology of delivery and its highly successful recommendation algorithm in which over 80% of subscribers trust are the current gold standard. While Disney+ and Netflix will certainly be competitors, the market is shaping up into a battle for the single-screen as a person can only consume the content from one-screen at a time. This means that any content consumed in this manner, including Fortnite and other video games, is a competitor. It will be interesting to watch how consumers choose to balance all the options at their disposal. Instructors will note that this analysis does not account for COVID-19, as that was an unexpected event. The case is set in 2019 without the foreknowledge that the pandemic will occur.



Information Systems

Wilderness Safaris: Leveraging Technology for Impact New!

Headquartered in Botswana, Wilderness Safaris was an ecotourism operator that organized several camps and mobile safaris in Africa. Recently, Wilderness Safaris, and the industry in which it operated, had suffered from significant revenue loss because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although Wilderness Safaris had managed to remain operable, the pandemic had changed the industry's long-term landscape. The vice-president of Wilderness Safaris was interested in applying for an award designed to financially support organizations in solving wildlife conservation problems through technologies. She needed to assess and prioritize several technology innovations and communicate a clear strategy for balancing business profitability with social impact.

BNP Paribas Fortis: The "James" Banking Experience Notable!

In October 2015, three senior managers at BNP Paribas Fortis, the leader in retail banking in Belgium and a subsidiary of the BNP Paribas Group, were discussing how to take the bank's latest service, "James," to the next level and grow its customer base fivefold by the end of 2016. Launched in 2009, James was a unique investment portfolio advice service that substituted web conferencing technology for face-to-face interaction between advisors and affluent banking customers. An important feature of the James banking experience was that each customer mainly interacted with the same advisor, and was able to do so from virtually any location, outside regular office hours. The use of technology to build strong customer relationships from a distance proved beneficial for both the customers and the bank. Now the BNP Paribas Fortis managers had to decide how to expand James' customer base,

outpace the competition, and organize for growth. How could they grow the country's current base of nearly 20,000 James customers to 100,000 in just one year?

Netflix Inc.: The Disruptor Faces Disruption Best-seller!

Netflix Inc. (Netflix) had surpassed Blockbuster, the previous movie rental leader, before making the successful transition to digital delivery of video content. But despite Netflix's success, in 2017, numerous competitors, including both established, mainstream content producers and digital upstarts, were making it difficult for Netflix to recreate its earlier dominance. Critics pointed to Netflix's slowing acquisition of subscribers and accelerating debt levels. Netflix's chief executive officer was confronted with disruption from a variety of digital rivals. How should he respond? Should Netflix continue to try to be a content producer, competing with Hollywood's industry leaders? Should it form a partnership with other media companies to align everyone's incentives? Perhaps it could move into other media content areas outside of traditional entertainment. Further, there remained the question of how to treat its legacy DVD-by-mail business. As the incumbent firm, Netflix needed to respond to competitors and avoid a fate similar to that of Blockbuster.

XDel Singapore: Using Technology to Deliver Simplicity Notable!

Courier company XDel Singapore is not only involved in express courier and delivery services, but also e-commerce and last-mile fulfilment, international and cross-border deliveries, as well as mailroom and logistics activities. It has grown from a two-man operation in 1993 to a firm of close to 100 staff as at 2021, with its revenue rising from US\$26,150 in its first year of operations to US\$5.4 million in 2020. To enable the company to gain a competitive edge in the local logistics industry, XDel Singapore has invested heavily in information technology (IT) infrastructure. It has developed key technological innovations to improve its efficiency and productivity, which include the HOMES Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, its proprietary mobile app LUKE, and a website with enhanced capabilities. In addition, it has also switched to using the Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone system and adopted the use of the artificial intelligence (AI)-powered Springboard engine as part of its Vehicle Route Planning (VRP) system, while tapping on WhatsApp and Telegram messaging apps to communicate with staff and customers. Additionally, XDel Singapore has started to use data analytics to make better decisions on deploying staff and conduct route planning.



Management Science

Marico Ltd.: Distribution Network Optimization New!

On July 1, 2020, the co-head of the logistics and planning department at Marico Ltd., based in India, was reviewing reports on various issues related to stock inventory and warehousing. After studying the reports, he found that both lost opportunity and warehousing costs for the company were high. Compounding the problem was the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which had added pressure to the company's impending cost pressures. Initially, Marico Ltd. had thirty-three warehouses. However, after the Government of India introduced the Goods and Service Tax in 2017, various state taxes across the country were eliminated. The new law revolutionized the logistics industry and allowed Marico Ltd. to reduce the number of its warehouses to twenty-five. Could the company further reduce the number of warehouses without adversely impacting service levels?

Google Cloud Platform: BigQuery ML New!

Google Cloud Platform offers BigQuery ML, a popular cloud computing resource for developing data models. This note provides information about creating, evaluating, and deploying data models with BigQuery ML.

Zillow Offers' "Volatile Error Rate" New!

In November 2021, Zillow announced that it was planning to shut down Zillow Offers, its iBuying program that leveraged its home value algorithm to quickly purchase homes for

later resale. Zillow made the announcement after its market capitalization dropped from \$48.35 billion in February 2021 to \$16 billion in November. Poor program performance in 2021 left the company with roughly \$500 million in losses due to an extensive inventory of overpaid homes and a 25% workforce reduction.



Marketing

Keep: Commercializing China's Mobile Fitness Unicorn New!

Recent years had witnessed the social phenomenon of the rise of Internet brands. Looking at Internet fitness unicorn brand Keep's brand commercialization process, Keep demonstrated the path of creation, product adjustment and upgrade, and brand extension logic of Internet app brands. Keep started as a single-tool app providing exercise content and data records, and gradually developed into a one-stop fitness and exercise platform by actively adjusting its brand goal, surpassing similar products to become the largest social platform for exercise in China. Keep then went through a bottleneck period where it had huge traffic but could not monetize it. Finally, Keep pursued commercialization, transforming into a comprehensive ecological fitness chain. Now, in April 2021, how would Keep respond to the competition and continue its strategic vision of providing a fitness ecosystem? Should its strategic focus continue to shift from online to offline? What should Keep's next steps be?

Hisense: Breaking Recurring Channel Conflict New!

Hisense Group Co. Ltd. (Hisense) was a leading manufacturing enterprise in the Chinese household appliance industry. In 2010, Hisense began to lay out its online channels. At that time, the same products had different prices in different channels, which caused fierce channel conflicts. To solve this problem, Hisense segmented online and off-line products and took a series of actions to help off-line channels improve efficiency and reduce prices. Therefore, Hisense successfully changed from having different prices for the same products to having different prices for different products. However, in early 2020 the new

model was challenged again, and channel conflicts soon reappeared. How would Hisense break the recurring channel conflict this time?

UNIQLO: Relaunching +J Collection New!

Fast Retailing Co. Ltd.'s UNIQLO brand (UNIQLO) was planning to relaunch +J, its collaboration with the legendary high-end designer Jil Sander in the fall of 2020; however, the COVID-19 pandemic began in March of that year, causing many consumers to spend less on clothes and more on essentials. Just like the first launch of the +J collection in 2009, this launch would once again happen during a global recession. The affordable street fashion brand faced a challenging decision regarding whether to reintroduce the higher-priced collaboration brand amidst this unprecedented situation.

Facebook's Predicaments: Incidental, Inadvertent, or Intentional? New!

By October 2021, the US social media giant Facebook Inc. had been dominating the social media market globally with the highest number of active users. It owned four of the biggest social media platforms—Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger, and Instagram. However, the company's history was marked by controversies ranging from ethical matters to social issues. The various crises it had faced to date included thousands of internal documents leaked by whistle-blower Frances Haugen, public criticism by former director Tim Kandell, and data breaches by Cambridge Analytica. These crises were symbolic of the anguish that various stakeholders were feeling. In the aftermath of these events, Facebook Inc. had to contemplate various key questions. Were the controversies destructive to the company, or were they adding value to its growth? Had the company taken the right actions to address its issues, or could it do more to make amends? How could the company prevent the recurrence of such situations in the future?

Yardstick: In Search of Segment and Strategy in The Education Industry New!

In May 2021, the founder of Yardstick Educational Initiatives Private Limited, a provider of experiential learning programs in India and the United Arab Emirates, was facing various business challenges. The company was started in India in 2008 but had been increasingly focused on the more profitable Middle East market since 2012. Attempting to stay current with technology advancements in educational products, it made considerable investments to develop new products and enhance its flagship learning product, the Yardstick Experiential Learning Program. However, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 caused a major setback for the company. Cash flow issues and reduced working capital were forcing the founder to decide which client segment to continue serving and which products to support. With only three months left in the peak sales season before the next academic year, the founder had to make important decisions.

The Chosen One: The Digital Distribution Dilemma at Fitz Games **New!**

In 2019, an entrepreneur and Ivey Business School graduate was facing a critical decision regarding how best to maximize the growth of his new product, The Chosen One card game. The entrepreneur had recently created and launched his Jewish-themed satirical card game in Los Angeles, California, after playing the adult-themed and highly popular Cards Against Humanity. Buoyed by initial small-batch sales, he secured deals to sell his product through various online and traditional retailers, but he had to decide how to grow sales and revenue. He had a limited marketing budget and was facing uncertainty regarding production quantities. There were various potential digital and physical distribution options for his product to maximize growth and long-term profitability. Each option had both benefits and drawbacks in terms of profitability, required marketing support, alignment with the target segment, access to consumer data, and production demands. The entrepreneur had to evaluate all options and choose the most suitable channels to distribute The Chosen One card game.



Organizational Behaviour/Leadership

MAGIS Infotech: Talent Management Concerns New!

In January 2020, the human resources (HR) head of MAGIS Infotech (MAGIS), a software solutions provider to banking and financial firms, was asked to come up with a set of new HR measures to resolve problems related to coordination between employees at MAGIS's two locations—in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, and Coimbatore, India. The Abu Dhabi location had all of the client-facing roles and support functions such as HR and finance, whereas Coimbatore had the back-end roles related to software development and testing. The HR head, located in Abu Dhabi, was responsible for HR matters for both the Abu Dhabi and Coimbatore locations. Within the next two months, MAGIS would recruit and onboard a large batch of employees to double the workforce at the Coimbatore location, which faced a lack of cohesion between employees at different levels. In addition, there was friction between the Abu Dhabi and Coimbatore teams. The HR head had to come up with HR measures to resolve these issues before the new employees were recruited.

Williams HR Law: Aligning Growth with Purpose and Values New!

The case highlights the challenges encountered by Laura Williams, founder and owner of Williams HR Law, a firm based in Toronto, Ontario, providing a full range of legal services on labour, employment law, and human resources (HR) matters. Demand for the firm's services grew exponentially in 2020 following the tragic death of George Floyd and due to the ongoing workplace challenges encountered during the global pandemic. Williams faced decisions regarding the best and most sustainable ways to address increasing demand. She had solidified her reputation in the marketplace as an “advocate-of-choice” and was mindful of ensuring that her growth decisions did not negatively affect her brand or impact the organizational culture she had proudly developed. She was committed to ensuring that her growth aligned with her purpose—to provide best-in-class legal

support that enabled clients to make informed decision-making and diffuse workplace issues before they escalated.

Toxic for Teens? Navigating a Career in the Social Media Industry **(A) New!**

This case is part of the Giving Voice to Values (GVV) curriculum. To see other material in the GVV curriculum, please visit <http://store.darden.virginia.edu/giving-voice-to-values>. Gia is an early-career data analyst at an industry-leading social media company. When she is asked to prepare a research report presenting analysis of user data, Gia is confronted with a challenge. After conducting thoughtful research and reviewing previous reports, she is troubled by data suggesting that her company's flagship product is negatively impacting young users. Her supervisor advises her that acting on these concerns is futile and may lead to consequences for her prospects at the company. Despite this warning, Gia wants to raise these concerns to her superiors, but she is unsure how to do so effectively.

This fictionalized case addresses ethical issues around social media, data, and young users, as well as strategies for early-career employees to voice concerns to superiors.

Toxic for Teens? Navigating a Career in the Social Media Industry **(B) New!**

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Managing In Corporate Aviation: Averting a Hard Landing **New!**

This field-based case follows the fictionalized Elisa Stallings, the manager of CandyCo's Aviation Dispatch group (Dispatch) which manages the aviation assets for the international company. Students learn about the positive leadership style of Stallings, who believed in empowering employees and having frank, respectful conversations with her staff. Stallings's leadership approach and focus on improving efficiency seem to initially work well

as she encounters challenges related to Dispatch's culture and processes. Her successful track record leads to greater opportunities and challenges, however, when Stallings's boss asks her to take control of two other functions in CandyCo: Meeting Planning and Travel Services. Stallings could see the synergies among the three groups she was now managing and believed she could make great changes if she got the teams to work together, but personnel issues kept popping up. One of her employees had a temper problem, another was insubordinate, and a third was a talented worker who seemed unhappy in his role. Stallings had to decide how best to handle these three employees, but she also needed to balance three full groups of people if she wanted to create a cohesive team with a healthy workplace culture. Every puzzle piece had to fit together correctly, and the whole puzzle had to fit the CandyCo organization.

This case offers the chance for rich discussions around leadership, managing change, and cross-team collaboration in the context of corporate aviation. It offers role-playing opportunities for students.



Operations Management

Marico Ltd.: Distribution Network Optimization New!

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Circulr: Creating Sustainable Value from an Empty Jar New!

Ciculr was a start-up that provided a solution for consumer waste by collecting used packaging, washing it, and selling it back to the original brand and product manufacturer so that the packaging could be reused. Instead of building its own washing facility, Ciculr rented spare washing capacity from industrial kitchens. The company's co-founders had ambitious goals for Ciculr, but in order to achieve them, there were two essential issues that needed to be resolved. The first issue was that of incentivizing brands, manufacturers, and end-users to reuse their packaging. Disposable packaging remained extremely convenient for consumers, and Ciculr needed to develop a collection system that made it easy and rewarding for consumers to place their used packaging in Ciculr's collection bins instead of in the garbage can. The second issue was that of operational scale and configuration. If Ciculr were to successfully grow demand and supply over time, how would its operational system evolve to achieve the necessary capacity and capabilities? Could the use of third-party washing

facilities continue to be sustainable at scale? How would processes and policies evolve to gain competitiveness?

Product Development at StubHub: Don't Stop Believin' New!

Arnie Katz, chief product and technology officer at StubHub (SH), was helping to lead a contest intended to result in innovative and valuable new ideas. Product managers presented more than 100 new business initiative proposals to create new value for customers and provide additional revenue streams and differentiation opportunities. The secondary-ticket (resale) market in the United States was becoming increasingly fragmented, and SH was losing market share. It was imperative to move SH from being a trusted platform for conducting ticket-resale transactions to becoming an integral part of fans' experience of live events.

This case is intended to be used in conjunction with a technical note on product–market alignment (PMA): "Product–Market Alignment" (UVA-OM-1706). Katz and his teams conduct successive rounds of investigation and data gathering across the three dimensions of PMA: defining the customer need, identifying business value, and evaluating operational capabilities. This case also presents a bridge between high-level operations strategy and a more granular discussion of process capabilities. Agile software development is discussed. This case is suitable for operations-management classes focusing on Agile, scale-up, product and project management, emerging technology, and new product development. It can be used with a graduate, undergraduate, or executive education audience.

Blue Apron: Has the Supply Chain Disrupter Been Disrupted? New!

This public-sourced case set in early 2022 explores the meal-kit-delivery service Blue Apron, a pioneer in the rapidly growing market of alternatives to shopping for food, meal planning, and cooking. Founded in 2012 by three entrepreneurs, Blue Apron sought to give people an easier way to get meals on the table without resorting to takeout or delivery: a box filled with exactly the right amount of ingredients for making creative and interesting recipes.

The case follows Lydia Thomas, a third-year consultant at McKinsey & Co. who must offer a strategy recommendation for Blue Apron as the company struggles to turn a profit in an increasingly competitive food-delivery industry. Thomas learns that Blue Apron offered its customers a fun way to learn to cook, to try a new cuisine, and to save time at the grocery store and in the kitchen, all with the promise of healthy, seasonal, carefully sourced ingredients that wouldn't end up becoming food waste. Although Blue Apron experienced years of growth, in 2017, customers began to leave the platform and the business began to struggle. Even when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, prompting a huge surge in demand for food delivery, the rise of competitors and new industry disrupters such as HelloFresh, Uber Eats, and Instacart still had Blue Apron concerned about the viability of its

business model in the face of numerous threats. Even Walmart and Amazon were competitors in the evolving market. The case allows for a rich discussion around the food supply chain, the advantage of scale, and business-model innovation. Could Blue Apron continue to compete in the market it had helped to create?



Sustainability

Circulr: Creating Sustainable Value from an Empty Jar New!

Ciculr was a start-up that provided a solution for consumer waste by collecting used packaging, washing it, and selling it back to the original brand and product manufacturer so that the packaging could be reused. Instead of building its own washing facility, Circulr rented spare washing capacity from industrial kitchens. The company's co-founders had ambitious goals for Circulr, but in order to achieve them, there were two essential issues that needed to be resolved. The first issue was that of incentivizing brands, manufacturers, and end-users to reuse their packaging. Disposable packaging remained extremely convenient for consumers, and Circulr needed to develop a collection system that made it easy and rewarding for consumers to place their used packaging in Circulr's collection bins instead of in the garbage can. The second issue was that of operational scale and configuration. If Circulr were to successfully grow demand and supply over time, how would its operational system evolve to achieve the necessary capacity and capabilities? Could the use of third-party washing facilities continue to be sustainable at scale? How would processes and policies evolve to gain competitiveness?

Confecciones La Montaña: A Social Business for Peace Building New!

Confecciones La Montaña (CLM), a social business founded by former Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) combatants in rural Colombia, emerged out of the peace deal signed between FARC and the Colombian government in 2016. The business was part of the effort of former combatants to rejoin civilian life and help alleviate poverty in conflict-affected areas, thereby nurturing appropriate conditions to sustain peace in the country. However, the workshop had a limited productive capacity, which hindered its ability to grow, and, in 2021, the general manager had to determine the best way to increase capacity and ensure the sustainability of the business. Should

CLM outsource some of its manufacturing to others in the area, or should it support the development of other clothing workshops created by former combatants across the country?

Shakti Plastics: Enabling A Circular Plastics Value Chain New!

In February 2021, the managing director of The Shakti Plastics Industries (Shakti) was facing challenges related to the Indian government's announcement of a complete ban by 2022 on single-use plastic—a key item that Shakti had been recycling through technological innovations over the previous few decades. The company was eager to support the government's vision of enabling a circular plastics economy. However, changes in the regulatory landscape were likely to impact millions of people who were directly or indirectly employed in the unorganized Indian plastic waste sector. The time frame for plastic waste processors and manufacturers to adapt to the changes was short, particularly during the pandemic-induced resurgence of single-use plastic in the form of medical waste. Moreover, there were several other challenges, including price volatility of plastic waste, influenced by disruptive intermediaries in the supply chain; low awareness levels among consumers about waste segregation at the source; and a lack of eco-friendly alternatives to single-use plastic. Shakti needed to make decisions to maintain and advance its competitiveness in the plastic waste recycling sector, in line with the government's proposed vision for a circular plastic economy.

Bitaco Tea: A Taste of a Better World New!

Agricola Himalaya was a family-owned Colombian company, the national leader in the tea industry, and the owner of the only tea plantation in the country, located in the middle of a mist forest. In Colombia, owing to the labour costs involved in tea production, importing tea was less expensive than producing it locally, but if Agrícola Himalaya decided to import the tea, what would be the environmental and social impact of closing the plant and plantation? Agrícola Himalaya attempted to resolve this dilemma by entering the specialty tea market, launching a new product that was sustainable and organic, with a range of innovative blends and a premium price. However, after eight years, its Bitaco specialty tea line had not reached break even, and in March 2021 the chief executive officer faced a new dilemma: whether or not to continue with the specialty tea initiative.