

# Case Interview Questions

*Commonly used in the consulting industry, and increasingly in banking and sales/marketing interviews too, case interviews test a candidate's problem-solving and analytical ability. Below are sample questions and answers you may find in a case interview. Use these questions to practice on your own, only looking at the answers on the back after attempting each question yourself. Practice makes all the difference when it comes to answering case questions, and many sample questions can be found online and in the career library in 177 Roberts Hall.*

## **Brainteasers**

1. If you roll two dice, what is the probability the sum of the numbers you get is odd?
2. Imagine you are in a room with 3 switches. In an adjacent room there are 3 bulbs (all are off at the moment), and each switch belongs to one bulb. It is impossible to see from one room to another. How can you find out which switch belongs to which bulb, if you may enter the room with the bulbs only once?

## **Market-sizing questions**

1. How many pairs of boxers are sold in the U.S. each year?
2. How many drug stores are there in Manhattan?
3. How many gas stations are there in the U.S.?

## **Business case questions**

1. Your client manufactures hair products. It's thinking about entering the sunscreen market. Tell me if you think this is a good idea.
2. Your client is Magna Health, a health care company in the Midwest. It both insures patients and provides health care services. Magna currently has 300,000 patients enrolled in its plan. It has 300 salaried physician employees who provide a broad range of services to patients in six centers. These physicians represent a wide range of specialty areas, but not all areas. Magna does not own any hospitals itself, instead contracting services from several local hospitals. Magna is experiencing declining profitability and has hired you to help determine what is causing it and how Magna might fix it.
3. Your client is a U.S. defense contractor that manufactures the fighter jets for the British Royal Air Force. The company has produced the \$20 million fighter jet for the past 12 years. The British government has decided to put the contract out to bid, however, and to win the program, the client's purchasing agents have estimated that the company will need to cut its costs by 5 percent. It has asked you to help it reduce costs.

## **More Practice Questions**

1. Case In Point by Marc P. Cosentino, found in the career library at 177 Roberts Hall.
2. Vault Guide to the Case Interview (can be purchased for \$30) – free through CALS CDO library
3. WetFeet ([www.wetfeet.com](http://www.wetfeet.com)) has many case interview guides – Ace Your Case Guides – available in Barnes Hall Career Library
4. The following company websites are particularly helpful:
  - The Boston Consulting Group – [http://bcg.com/careers/interview\\_prep.html](http://bcg.com/careers/interview_prep.html)
  - Bain & Company - [http://bain.com/bainweb/Join\\_Bain/case\\_interviews.asp](http://bain.com/bainweb/Join_Bain/case_interviews.asp)
  - McKinsey & Company - [http://www.mckinsey.com/careers/how\\_do\\_i\\_apply/how\\_to\\_do\\_well\\_in\\_the\\_interview/case\\_interview.aspx](http://www.mckinsey.com/careers/how_do_i_apply/how_to_do_well_in_the_interview/case_interview.aspx)
  - Oliver Wyman - <http://www.oliverwyman.com/ow/4797.htm>
  - Capitol One – <http://www.capitalone.com/careers/hiring/interviewing.php?linkid=WWW>
5. CQ Interactive – link available in CALS CDO library.
6. Case interviews.com – sample case interviews with videos and testimonials.

## Answers

### Brainteasers

1. Answer:  $\frac{1}{2}$

2. Answer: Keep the first bulb switched on for a few minutes. It gets warm, right? So all you have to do then is switch it off, switch another one on, walk into the room with the bulbs, touch them, and tell which one was switched on as the first one (the warm one). Then the others can be easily identified.

### Market-sizing questions

1. Answer:

Assumptions:

- US population=300 million; Life expectancy=80 years
- 300 million/80 years = 3.75 million, round to 4 million
- Same number of people in each age group; 50/50 split between men and women
- Children ages 0-10 don't wear boxers

Age Group	Women	Men
10-20 (40 million ppl)	10% buy one pair of boxers/year=4 million boxers (40 million women x 10%)	75% wear boxers; buy 3 pairs/year= 45 million boxers (15 million men x 3 pairs)
20-30 (40 million ppl)		50% wear boxers and buy or receive as gifts 6 pairs/year = 360 million boxers (60 million men x 6)
30-40 (40 million ppl)		
40-50 (40 million ppl)		
50-60 (40 million ppl)		
60-80 (80 million ppl)		

Total= 4 million + 45 million + 360 million = 409 million pairs of boxers

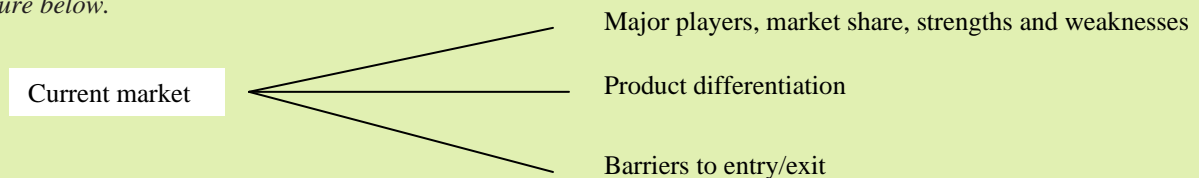
### Business case questions

1. Answer: (from Case in Point by Marc P. Cosentino)

Step 1: Determine the objective of entering the sunscreen market. Possibilities include to increase profits or beat rising competition.

Step 2: Analyze the current and future sunscreen market. What is the market size? Growth rate? Is the market in the emerging, mature, or declining phase of its life cycle? Who are the customers? What role does technology play?

Step 3: Investigate the market to determine whether entering it would make good business sense, following the structure below.



Step 4: Decide to enter the market or not. If you decide to enter the market, figure out the best way to do so, using the three options below.

