

# PUBLISHER'S CHOICE LEADERSHIP CASES



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## CASES IN LEADERSHIP

Prepared on: 3-Oct-2022

W27712

### **Meta: A New Direction To Leadership**

*Arpita Agnihotri; Saurabh Bhattacharya*

On October 28, 2021, Mark Zuckerberg, founder, chief executive officer, and chair of Facebook Inc. (Facebook), announced Facebook's name change to Meta Platforms Inc., reflecting his vision for the company's transition to metaverse technology. At the same time, Facebook was plagued by multiple scandals related to a data privacy breach, the spread of misinformation on the social media platform, employee whistle-blowing, and surveillance-style marketing and advertising. Trust in Zuckerberg's leadership was diminishing. Zuckerberg controlled 58 per cent of Facebook's voting shares, and stakeholders, critics, and regulators were calling for distributed leadership. How could Zuckerberg restore trust in his company and his leadership? What did he need to change to become a more effective leader?

**Learning Objective:** The case is intended for undergraduate- and graduate-level courses in leadership, human resources management, and organizational behaviour. The case deals with the founder-CEO dilemma and explores the criticism of Zuckerberg's power obsession as well as Facebook stakeholders' lack of trust in his leadership. The case presents students with an opportunity to understand the factors that power the desire of founder CEOs. The case further encourages students to explore the leadership traits that founder CEOs should possess in order to be perceived positively and trusted by stakeholders. After working through the case and assignment questions, students will be able to do the following:

- Evaluate how introverts excel in the social media industry.
- Examine the sources of power that founder CEOs have and the strategies they use to retain power.
- Explore why founder CEOs want to hold on to their power.
- Critically analyze sources of effective leadership.
- Understand the need to balance the commercial and ethical aspects of doing business.

**Publication Date:** September 29, 2022

**Discipline:** Organizational Behaviour/Leadership; Human Resource Management;

**Issues:** sources of power; ethics; leadership; founder-CEO; introvert; power; social media; leadership traits;

governance

**Industry:** Information, Media & Telecommunications;

**Setting:** United States, Large organization, 2021

**Difficulty:** Undergraduate/MBA

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W29729

### **Rogers Communications Inc.: The Battle for the Board**

*W. Glenn Rowe; Abbas Khambati*

In 2021, Rogers Communications Inc. (Rogers), one of the largest telecommunications companies in Canada, suffered a leadership crisis amid conflict between members of the Rogers family controlling the company. A decision by board chair Edward Rogers to oust chief executive officer Joe Natale triggered a chain of events that pitted Edward Rogers against his mother and two sisters (all board members). The company's complex governance model, which consisted of a dual-class share structure and the Rogers Control Trust representing the majority shareholders on the company's board, made it unclear who had effective decision-making power. In the light of this uncertainty, investors owning Rogers Class B non-voting shares had to decide whether to hold on to, sell, or purchase more shares.

**Learning Objective:** The case can be used in undergraduate- and graduate-level courses to integrate themes relevant to leadership, decision-making, and improving governance in an organization. It illustrates how founders may structure trusts and holding companies to hand down powers to future generations, as well as how those powers may lead to ineffective governance in the future. After working through the case and assignment questions, students will be able to do the following:

- Deliberate on the use of various trusts and holding companies to separate and distribute powers.
- Better understand dual-share structures and how such structures may influence corporate governance.
- Analyze how trusts put in place by founders may lead to ineffective governance.
- Discuss the impact of family dynamics on organizational governance.

**Publication Date:** August 22, 2022

**Discipline:** General Management/Strategy;

**Issues:** dual share structure; family ownership; corporate

governance

**Industry:** Information, Media & Telecommunications;

**Setting:** Canada, Large organization, 2021

**Difficulty:** Undergraduate/MBA

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W28432

### **Goldman Sachs: Are You Burnt-In or Burnt-Out?**

*Hayden Woodley; Julia Leonard*

In March 2021, a group of junior investment banking analysts at the Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., an American multinational investment bank, told senior management that they were suffering burnout from having to work 100-hour weeks. Nearly a year since the start of the pandemic, this workplace culture crisis heightened the importance of senior leadership prioritizing employees' mental and physical health. In addition, it drew attention to the importance of person-organization fit and to the changing labour market. A top-ranked undergraduate business student recently received a full-time job offer from Goldman Sachs. After learning of critical incidents of employee burnout at the firm, she was considering whether the company culture aligned with her values and whether she would be a good fit there.

**Learning Objective:** The case is designed for undergraduate- and graduate-level courses on human resource management, organizational behaviour, and leadership. After working through the case and assignment questions, students should be able to do the following:

- Apply organizational culture theory to understand how organizational culture leads to employee stress.
- Gain an understanding of the challenges facing strategic human resource management.
- Explore the balance between incentives/rewards and work-life balance/employee well-being.
- Leverage person-organization (culture) fit concepts and theory to inform strategic decision-making.
- Consider the external macro factors (e.g., the pandemic, generational changes) that impact human resource management and leadership strategies.

**Publication Date:** August 12, 2022

**Discipline:** Human Resource Management; Organizational Behaviour/Leadership;

**Issues:** burnout; human resource management; organizational culture; strategy

**Industry:** Finance and Insurance;

**Setting:** United States, Large organization, 2021

**Difficulty:** Undergraduate/MBA

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W28018

### **We Can Work It Out: Managing a Dual-Career Family**

*Mirit Grabarski*

Ivan and Lana Kuznetsov are a dual-career couple and parents to four young children. Having immigrated to Canada from Russia in 2012, they are both in the process of rebuilding their careers. Ivan already has what can be considered a successful career, with local credentials, experience, and a good professional network, but he is not quite satisfied and considers making a change. Lana's career in Canada is in its early stages. As a recent college graduate, she is only beginning to realize her dreams and is working in an entry-level part-time position. When Lana receives a full-time job offer that will require her full attention and energy, the couple need to decide whose career to prioritize, as one of them will have to focus on the family. Over a person's lifetime, multiple career choices are made that are also related to their other life roles. Each spouse has different reasons and motivations for the vocational choices they make that affect both of their actions throughout their lives. In a situation of conflicting goals, where both spouses cannot work full-time, and one of them has to make a sacrifice, each option has potential benefits and risks.

**Learning Objective:** The case can be used in career planning courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels in the context of work-life balance and career management. It is also suitable for equity, diversity, and inclusion courses that focus on personal career decisions, such as women in leadership. After working through the case and assignment questions, students will be able to

- discuss current career theories and concepts: dual-career families and the Kaleidoscope Career Model (KCM);
- analyze career goals and how they change during the course of life, discuss objective and subjective career success; and
- discuss the role of cultural and historical context and gender roles in career development.

**Publication Date:** August 12, 2022

**Discipline:** Organizational Behaviour/Leadership; Human Resource Management;

**Issues:** career management; work-family

**Industry:** Other Services;

**Setting:** Canada, 2017

**Difficulty:** Undergraduate/MBA

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W28514

## **Bumble: Taking on Tinder, One Woman at a Time**

*Daniel Clark; Imge Kaya-Sabanci*

After a year filled with the highs of entrepreneurial success and the lows of personal hardships, Whitney Wolfe was considering starting a new venture—a social media platform aimed at creating positivity for women online. Wolfe was meeting with Andrey Andreev, the founder of Badoo, one of the world's most popular dating services, to discuss her new venture idea. However, Andreev was disinterested in starting a social media platform and dismissed her new venture idea. But he had wanted to work with Wolfe for some time, so he instead suggested starting a new online dating service focused on women. Wolfe had to make a decision. Should she turn down Andreev's suggestion and start her own business, or should she pursue his idea of creating a new online dating service focused on the needs of women? If so, how should this new service differ from the numerous current products flooding the market?

**Learning Objective:** This case can be used in courses and modules that cover innovation, entrepreneurship, and gender and leadership in business at the undergraduate and graduate levels. After completion of this case, students will be able to

- consider individual differences (e.g., gender, age, needs) as a source of innovation inspiration and opportunity identification;
- learn how to identify and innovate to meet specific needs and remain within required constraints;
- discuss gender stereotypes and how they influence what services women may find acceptable versus those that are more suitable for men;
- consider what experiences women are exposed to in online dating in comparison to experiences that men face; and
- discuss the unique, dynamic, and highly competitive world of online dating.

**Publication Date:** July 08, 2022

**Discipline:** Entrepreneurship; General Management/Strategy;

**Issues:** gender; innovation; new business; sexual harassment; new product design; design driven innovation; dating; technology business; dating apps; social media

**Industry:** Other Services;

**Setting:** United States, Large organization, 2014

**Difficulty:** Undergraduate/MBA

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W27361

## **FunctionFox: Was Working Remotely the Best Choice?**

*Betty Jane Punnett*

FunctionFox Systems Inc. (FunctionFox) was a small company headquartered in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, specializing in project management and timesheet tracking software. Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing restrictions, FunctionFox decided to move to 100 per cent remote work in late 2020 and sold the building where its office had been located. In early 2022, when the pandemic appeared to be subsiding, the president of FunctionFox was considering whether the company should continue with fully remote work, return to in-person work, or find a hybrid mode. She had to consider the pros and cons of each alternative and prepare a recommendation for her colleagues.

**Learning Objective:** This case is intended for use in human resource management courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Students should be familiar with general management concepts and theories, including leadership, motivation, and team management, so that these can be considered in remote-work and hybrid contexts. The case could also be used in a course on team building and management. It discusses the pandemic and corresponding growth in remote work around the world and considers the challenges and benefits of remote work, focusing on management and human resource considerations. Working through the case and assignment questions will allow students to do the following:

- Understand the benefits and challenges of remote work and compare remote work with in-person work.
- Illustrate how both the individual and environmental context influences the success of remote work.
- Explain how management must change to adapt to remote work and discuss effective management styles and approaches in this context.
- Become familiar with the concept of a hybrid work environment and discuss ways of achieving a hybrid approach.
- Apply concepts about remote work to a specific situation and evaluate different alternative approaches from a practical perspective.

**Publication Date:** June 27, 2022

**Discipline:** Human Resource Management;

**Issues:** remote work, in-person, pandemic

**Industry:** Other Services;

**Setting:** Canada, Small organization, 2022

**Difficulty:** Undergraduate/MBA

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W27812

## AngloGold Ashanti: Navigating Pathways in the Face of Challenge

*Gerard Seijts; Vania Sakelaridis*

The chief financial officer (CFO) of AngloGold Ashanti Limited (AngloGold Ashanti), one of the world's largest gold mining companies, had for one year served as the company's interim chief executive officer (CEO). In the summer of 2021, she accepted an invitation to speak at a luncheon for young female business leaders in the mining industry prior to learning of the unsuccessful outcome of her attempt to secure the permanent CEO position. The company had just announced that a man and seasoned CEO from Colombia would be assuming the role. She now found herself struggling with how to best position her message of inspiration to the young leaders, given the personal impact of the outcome of the CEO search. As a values-based leader, she acknowledged the importance of delivering a message of hope to the aspiring leaders, as well as the importance of honouring her own values. The outcome of her application for the permanent CEO position had also left her with the decision of whether to stay with or leave the organization.

**Learning Objective:** The case provides an overview of the protagonist's road to leadership, including the key role that her upbringing, values, and leader character played in her progressive positions, and considers how these things might come into play in her decision-making as she deals with two main challenges. Working through the case will enable students to

- understand the key role that values play in leadership journeys, including the corresponding decision-making;
- learn about the impact that corporate glass ceilings can have on women in leadership who deal with disappointments, and about approaches to recovering from these;
- familiarize themselves with ways to help turn such experiences into learning opportunities and to move forward in mid to senior careers; and
- increase their awareness of the value that leadership character plays in enabling learning and subsequent success in progressive leadership roles.

**Publication Date:** April 21, 2022

**Discipline:** Organizational Behaviour/Leadership; Entrepreneurship;

**Issues:** career; leadership; CEO; CFO; female leadership; promotion; corporate; glass ceiling; resilience; character

**Setting:** South Africa, Large organization, 2021

**Difficulty:** Undergraduate/MBA

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W27694

## Defining Capitalism's Character: Tom Peters versus McKinsey

*Gerard Seijts; William Thomas Watson*

In early 2021, McKinsey & Company (McKinsey) agreed to pay US\$573 million to end US state-level investigations into claims that it had helped exacerbate the global opioid crisis. Tom Peters, an influential and highly respected management guru, was upset by how far his former employer had been willing to go in helping US drug maker Purdue Pharma LP increase sales of OxyContin, a narcotic-based painkiller that helped drive an opioid epidemic responsible for hundreds of thousands of tragic deaths. As far as Peters was concerned, there was no question as to whether what McKinsey did was wrong: it had ignored the "moral responsibility of business" by helping an unethical client maximize profit by aggressively promoting the wide-scale use of a highly addictive drug. In addition to asking why McKinsey was still open for business, Peters posed a previously unimaginable question: "At this moment in time, why would anyone want to go to work for McKinsey?"

**Learning Objective:** The case can be used in undergraduate-, graduate-, and executive-level courses or modules on corporate purpose, leadership, or managing careers. After working through the case and assignment questions, students will have the opportunity to do the following:

- Assess their moral compass and articulate their definition of corporate purpose.
- Consider the importance of developing clear principles for decision-making that link personal values and career aspirations.
- Consider whether, or under which conditions, they are prepared to bear the personal costs associated with not following one's conscience in decision-making.
- Discuss the issue of authenticity and hypocrisy in leadership.

**Publication Date:** March 25, 2022

**Discipline:** Organizational Behaviour/Leadership;

**Issues:** leadership; shareholder; stakeholder; character

**Industry:** Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services;

**Setting:** United States, Large organization, 2021

**Difficulty:** Undergraduate/MBA

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W25429

## **Bengaluru Airport: Crisis Leadership through a Pandemic**

*Somnath Baishya; Gita Bajaj*

Bengaluru Airport began an expansion project worth US\$2 billion in 2018, but by mid-2020 COVID-19 had severely impacted the aviation industry and reduced passenger volume at the airport by half. Although the airport's leadership team had detected the crisis early and taken swift action, with no cure for the virus in sight business continuity and staff safety were in jeopardy. The next board meeting was in August 2020, less than seven weeks away, and the pandemic threatened to derail the expansion plans. Among other pressing questions the leadership team had to address—including whether to continue with the expansion plan, reduce its scope, or delay it—was whether they had done enough throughout the crisis to inspire confidence.

**Learning Objective:** This case is appropriate for postgraduate-level management courses in crisis management, leadership, organizational behaviour, human resource management, communication, and strategy, and for executive education and corporate leadership programs for mid- and senior-level executives. The case offers the opportunity to integrate lessons on leadership, strategy, people dynamics, and crises in complex organizational settings.

After working through the case and assignment questions, students will be able to do the following:

- Recognize a crisis and the importance of sensemaking.
- Analyze the role of leadership during a crisis.
- Evaluate and manage risks associated with stakeholder well-being, business continuity, and reputational equity during a crisis and post-crisis.
- Design a crisis management plan to successfully lead an organization through and out of a crisis.

**Publication Date:** February 09, 2022

**Discipline:** Organizational Behaviour/Leadership;

**Issues:** work from home; CSR; crisis management; agile leadership; decision making; COVID-19; risk management; communication

**Industry:** Transportation and Warehousing;

**Setting:** India, Large organization, 2020

**Difficulty:** MBA/Postgraduate

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W25879

## **Google's Chief Executive: In Need of a Change Leadership Style?**

*Arpita Agnihotri; Saurabh Bhattacharya*

In 2015, Sundar Pichai was appointed chief executive officer (CEO) of California-based Google LLC (Google), and by December 2019 had also become the CEO of Alphabet Inc., Google's parent company. By June 2021, thirty-six vice-presidents out of 400 executives had quit Alphabet Inc., and Pichai faced criticism from the senior leadership team for his risk-averse decision-making style. Senior executives believed Pichai had made Google more bureaucratic in its operations, even though the company's size and market-based performance had improved under his leadership. In the face of this criticism, what should Pichai do? Should he respond to the criticism? Should he begin to make more risk-aggressive decisions?

**Learning Objective:** The case is intended for undergraduate- and graduate-level courses on leadership, human resource management, or organizational behaviour. The case deals with the CEO's dilemma following criticism of his leadership style and the resignation of several senior executives from Google. The case presents students with the opportunity to understand factors that influence the leadership style of a CEO. The case further encourages students to explore whether radical innovation is possible in a large firm. After working through the case and assignment questions, students will be able to

- critically analyze whether the leader should respond to the criticism of his leadership style;
- evaluate the leadership style of a CEO and the reasons why CEOs develop a certain kind of leadership style;
- evaluate the challenges of both innovating and managing current operations in the organization; and
- examine whether CEOs of large companies should be aggressive and act fast in their decision-making.

**Publication Date:** February 02, 2022

**Discipline:** Organizational Behaviour/Leadership;

**Issues:** leadership style; risk; conservative; aversive; large companies; innovation; revolutionary innovation; evolutionary innovation; decision-making; organizational behaviour

**Setting:** United States, Large organization, 2021

**Difficulty:** Undergraduate/MBA

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W27042

## **Leadership Communication Competencies: A Foundational Building Block For Embodying Executive Presence**

*Kanina Blanchard; Lucas Monzani; Mary Weil*

This note introduces a leadership communication competencies framework as part of the embodying executive presence model. The model can be leveraged in the education and development of leaders seeking to improve their skills associated with having impact and influence, enhancing their persuasive capabilities, and their ability to inspire others.

**Learning Objective:** This note introduces leadership communication competencies (LCC) as a component of the embodying executive presence model or platform. The LCC provides for a systematic yet flexible model through which current and prospective leaders can develop and enhance their ability to communicate clearly, strategically, with impact, and with a focus on building a connection with their audience. Whether in person, mediated through telecommunications, or through the aperture of a camera, LCC offers a roadmap for those seeking to enhance their capacity to influence others.

**Publication Date:** January 28, 2022

**Discipline:** Communications;

**Issues:** communication, leadership, presence

**Setting:** Canada; United Kingdom; United States, 2021

**Difficulty:** Undergraduate/MBA

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9B21M005

## **Tender Greens: Can They Keep the 'Green' Promise in Beef Sourcing?**

*Marilyn Anthony; Neha Mittal*

In October 2015, the co-founder and chief executive officer (CEO) of Tender Greens faced his most difficult decision yet: should the company continue to pay a premium price for sustainably sourced beef, or should it switch to conventionally raised beef to boost profit margins and improve the company's prospects for national growth? Tender Greens, a thriving fast-casual restaurant chain in California, was ready to expand its operation to the East Coast with backing by equity investors. As the expansion plans grew closer, the CEO began to address the foreseeable supply chain issues that his company would face with the next level of expansion. The company had faced sustainably raised beef supply shortages before, but this time the CEO had more stakeholders to satisfy. He faced a dilemma, one that required him to weigh competing stakeholder interests, the company's stated values, and significant financial implications to arrive at the

best long-term outcome for the company. What would be the best way for the company to achieve scale while maintaining a commitment to food that was local, sustainable, and affordable?

**Learning Objective:** This case can be used in undergraduate-, graduate, and executive-level courses on supply chain management, strategic management, social entrepreneurship, ethics and corporate social responsibility, and operations management. The case is best used at the mid-point of a course or when students have gained an understanding of the basic supply chain concepts and can comprehend different supply chain issues that can arise when businesses grow and expand. After working through the case and assignment questions, students will be able to do the following

- List common supply chain challenges encountered as businesses grow.

- Understand how decisions can be made when multiple stakeholders are involved, each with their own unique perspective, and how a company can balance and assign relative importance to different stakeholder groups when making decisions.

- Assign values to the factors that influence procurement decisions, such as staying local or importing from foreign markets, the possible trade-offs in flavour and texture, and the quality or provenance that accompany such decisions.

- Compare a centralized logistics model to a decentralized logistics model, taking into account the delivery times and the landed cost of a product.

- Understand the different problems and opportunities that arise when a company takes on social, environmental, and animal welfare responsibilities.

- Determine which features influence pricing and purchasing decisions among similar products.

**Publication Date:** February 11, 2021

**Discipline:** General Management/Strategy;

**Issues:** ethical sourcing; supply chain management

**Industry:** Accommodation & Food Services;

**Setting:** United States, Small organization, 2015

**Difficulty:** Undergraduate/MBA

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## The Essex Shipwreck: Leadership in the Middle of Nowhere

*Stephen Mathew; Charles Ebbers; Lucas Monzani*

On August 12, 1819, a crew set sail for the Pacific Ocean on a three-year voyage on the Essex whaling ship. On November 20, 1820, a giant sperm whale emerged from the ocean and critically damaged the Essex's starboard hull. The crew consisted of the captain, two officers, three boat steerers, and 13 sailors, most of whom lacked experience. While the captain and officers of the Essex huddled to plan their next move, the crew trusted the first officer to make the crucial decisions about using the ship's three remaining whaleboats for the long voyage home. Surviving the wreckage would not be an easy task; therefore, making the right decisions would be essential for survival. As the ship continued to take in water, the captain and officers had to decide who should go in each whaleboat, what direction they should take, and what provisions they should carry.

**Learning Objective:** This case can be used in undergraduate- and graduate-level courses or modules on leadership, organizational behaviour, and strategy. Given the wide range of the case, instructors from different fields might focus on one or two specific topics. For example, strategy instructors may want to focus on the theme of radical change, whereas leadership instructors may choose to emphasize the themes of leadership hubris and character. Leadership and organizational behaviour instructors may decide to focus on the case's themes of team leadership and team dynamics (i.e., group processes and emerging states). The case provides a simplified account of real-life events based on the wreckage of the Essex whaling ship, which may have inspired parts of Herman Melville's classic novel *Moby-Dick*. It serves as a metaphor to explore effective (and ineffective) ways to lead an organization through a crisis-management scenario. The case presents two leaders with divergent perspectives on how to manage the crisis before them. After working through the case and assignment questions, students will be able to do the following:

- Define four types of radical change in organizations.
- Assess the notion of leadership hubris and its negative impact on a leader's decision-making process, as well as the protective role that strength of character plays in resisting leadership hubris.
- Identify the challenges that radical change creates when resources are relocated.

**Publication Date:** November 26, 2020

**Discipline:** Organizational Behaviour/Leadership;

**Issues:** leadership; hubris; change management

**Industry:** Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting;

**Setting:** Chile; United States, Small organization, 1820

**Difficulty:** Undergraduate/MBA

## Viral Nation: The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Entrepreneurial Venture Sale Decision

*Simon Parker; Vania Sakelaris*

Viral Nation, a six-year-old company based in Ontario, was North America's leading influencer marketing company. In March 2020, as the global COVID-19 pandemic struck, the founders of the company were assessing their venture's future growth prospects. Having just received three competing acquisition offers for their company, they needed to make a decision: Should they accept any of the offers, and if so, which one? Or, should they instead continue to grow organically in an increasingly uncertain market environment?

**Learning Objective:** This case is well-suited to courses in entrepreneurship, marketing, and leadership at the undergraduate and graduate levels. After working through the case and assignment questions, students will be able to do the following:

- Define social influencer marketing, and explain how it can be monetized.
- Identify the factors that contribute to skyrocketing growth for a young start-up.
- Identify the issues entrepreneurs should consider when contemplating a trade sale.
- Identify the effects of unexpected macroeconomic shocks such as COVID-19 on complex business decision-making, highlighting the upside risks associated with such shocks.

**Publication Date:** November 26, 2020

**Discipline:** Marketing;

**Issues:** social influencer marketing; entrepreneurship; COVID-19; takeover; acquisition

**Industry:** Information, Media & Telecommunications;

**Setting:** Canada, Small organization, 2020

**Difficulty:** Undergraduate/MBA



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