Introducing the USC Marshall/Greif Center
Entrepreneurship Case Collection

From the Spruce Goose to space capsules, from silent films to social media, Los Angeles—and Southern California as a whole—has been the launching point for innovations that have redefined industries and changed the world. The region has been an entrepreneurial hub and technological powerhouse, producing novel products and revolutionary business models that have transformed media/entertainment, aerospace, biotech, communications, video games, tourism and other sectors. The entrepreneurial economy is alive and well in Southern California, with the “Startup Genome” report tabbing the region as the number three startup ecosystem in the world.

The Lloyd Greif Center for Entrepreneurial Studies at USC Marshall is proud to announce its new case collection—teaching cases primarily focused on the firms and innovations emerging from Los Angeles and the extended Southern California region. Many of these entrepreneurs and innovators will change Southern California. Some will change the world. And they all must face the marketplace challenges, technological changes and managerial dilemmas confronting forward-thinking business leaders all over the globe.
Entrepreneurship Case Collection available through TheCaseCentre.org

The Greif Center’s case collection focuses primarily on entrepreneurial ventures and corporations pursuing game-changing innovations. The collection emphasizes industries in which Southern California is a leading global player: media, entertainment, consumer internet, fashion, health care, tourism, aerospace, cleantech and other sectors. The collection’s early offerings include:

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Abstract</th>
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<td>GoFit Foods: Selling the Sizzle</td>
<td>New product launch, sales channels, innovation, entrepreneurship</td>
<td>A new Socal-based healthy burger company is trying to line up its initial base of customers and develop its overall sales strategy. The founders, with experience as leaders at Taco Bell, Pizza Hut and Panda Express, must decide if they will abandon pursuing big restaurant companies in favor of emphasizing individual operators. They must also determine if they want to pursue a risky entry into the supermarket channel much earlier than they originally planned.</td>
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<td>Brainrush</td>
<td>Business model development, entrepreneurial strategy</td>
<td>Video games legend Nolan Bushnell launches a new education venture featuring radical ideas about neuroscience and gamification. He and his team must determine the best customer in the education value chain to pursue and decide if they want to integrate some potentially controversial features.</td>
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<td>Hive Lighting</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial strategy, product development, cleantech, market selection</td>
<td>This environmentally friendly theatrical lighting company has to resolve if it should emphasize a “green” message or a cost and light-quality message. The founders must also determine if they want to move beyond their initial niche in set-lighting and enter huge segments such as stadium lighting. Hive is also considering a 6-month sales and communications shutdown to strengthen its operation, a move that could cost it hard-earned momentum and recognition.</td>
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<td>Elemental Technologies: The Seed Investment Dilemma</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship, venture capital, ethics</td>
<td>A group of entrepreneurs pursues technologies that will allow much higher quality video transmissions via the Internet. After receiving seed funding from their former employer, they must assess restructuring the investment as they change their business model and capital requirements. The new CEO weights the merits of returning the seed funds to the former employer, taking into consideration logistical, legal and ethical/reputational concerns.</td>
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<td>Elemental Technologies: The Nvidia Strategic Investment</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship, venture capital, ethics, partnership strategies</td>
<td>The three-year-old venture must decide how to handle its relationship with an important strategic investor when new business opportunities and technology architectures begin to make their strategies diverge. The CEO also ponders how aligned his newer investors are to the goals of the founding team.</td>
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<td>Mindshare L.A.: Is this a Business…Or is this a Project?</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial goal-setting, professionalizing managerial approaches</td>
<td>Los Angeles’ hottest series of avant garde “mind-engaging” events has been both growing and struggling for over five years, gaining national attention for its cutting-edge speakers, but barely earning enough revenues to get by. How can the dynamic founder and his latest collection of volunteer executives turn this from a successful hobby into a real business?</td>
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<td>Surf Air Takes Flight</td>
<td>Feasibility, entrepreneurial strategy</td>
<td>The founding team of a novel subscription-based airline must assess the feasibility of its plans and make key adjustments. Largely inexperienced in the airline industry, the team must decide the business model implications of developing a mid-market vs “first class” level of service. The founders must also address significant risks concerning the location of their first operations base in Socal after local residents protest to local officials.</td>
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<td>Bloomberg Sports</td>
<td>Corporate entrepreneurship, “skunkworks” projects, brands</td>
<td>Two “intrapreneurs” champion an effort to leverage Bloomberg’s analytical and technological capabilities in sports, servicing professional franchises and fantasy sports participants. They must determine if they will move into new market segments and geographies where wagering functionality might be critical—testing the limits of the parent company values and brand.</td>
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Lloyd Greif Center for Entrepreneurial Studies
USC Marshall School of Business

Situated in Los Angeles, California, the USC Marshall School provides ready access to industries defining the new business frontier: biotechnology, life sciences, media, entertainment, communications and healthcare. As a prime gateway to Asia and Latin America, our location gives us a unique worldview and has resulted in an alumni community that spans 44 countries.

The Lloyd Greif Center for Entrepreneurial Studies is among the nation’s leaders in entrepreneurship education and research. Its faculty—a diverse mix of academics and entrepreneur practitioners—together offer undergraduate and graduate programs designed to help students acquire the tools, develop the skills, and cultivate the mindset central to organizing, launching, and managing successful new ventures.

Our entrepreneurship program has long been ranked among the best in the nation—#2 for undergraduates and #9 for graduates in the 2014 US News and World Report listing of top entrepreneurship centers.

CONTACT
Lloyd Greif Center for Entrepreneurial Studies
ATTENTION: Case Initiative
Marshall School of Business
University of Southern California
Bridge Hall One
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0801
T: 213-740-0641
E: greifcases@marshall.usc.edu

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