

## Creating your very own case study!

Due by \_\_\_\_\_

The case, *Wendy's mixtape: WeBeefin' makes (air) waves*, provides a good format to follow as you create your case study. You don't have to use all the same subheads. And, note the whole Wendy's case is about 2 pages, so keep that in mind as you prepare your case of 7-9 pages.



### Case Overview

The first part of your case study is a brief overview. As you'll see in the Wendy's case, this sets the foundation with a brief bit of background, what the company set out to do, and a brief indication of the results. If the organization/person employed 1 or more agencies, be sure to ID it/them.

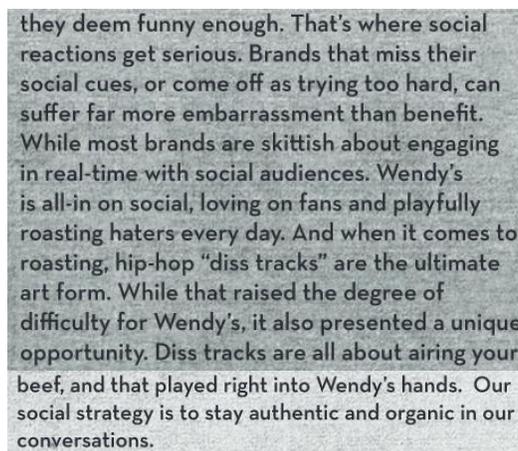
Overall, this section provides the basic facts. It likely will be about 30% of your case, so that you may focus predominantly on assessing how well the organization/person did.

Ideally, you will identify an overarching goal, as well as a brief description of the organization or person. If it's someone or something well known (like Wendy's), it's not necessary to go into a great deal of detail. But, in this case, it might have been useful to include its rank or market share compared to competitors.

[https://apps.prsa.org/SearchResults/Download/6BE-02D23628/o/Wendy\\_s\\_Mixtape\\_WeBeefin\\_Makes\\_Air\\_Waves](https://apps.prsa.org/SearchResults/Download/6BE-02D23628/o/Wendy_s_Mixtape_WeBeefin_Makes_Air_Waves)

### Research insights, brand analysis -

Continuing with the Wendy's mixtape case. This section provides a few details about the audience - both demographic and psychographic - which helps inform how the company would proceed with its campaign. Notice the last sentence, too, in which the company reiterates how the social media strategy shouldn't stray from its authenticity brand focus. For your case, describe and critique the secondary and primary research the organization/ person conducted - if those details are not available, you may indicate what research you recommend.



## Onto the planning – strategies and tactics

### PLANNING

Our PR strategy is to amplify that voice. Because “Wendy’s is a brand for people like me,” the voice has to stay true to our audience, all the more important when connecting to the hip-hop community, where authenticity is everything. Our fans don’t typically appreciate advertising, so we needed to create a cultural phenomenon that would fit seamlessly with our social voice while breaking out big time in the larger media landscape. The brand wasn’t just sponsoring a mix tape. Wendy’s was the musical artist. Wendy’s worked with up-and-coming rap artists to understand their creative inspiration, and to replicate that in our mixtape strategy. And while our anonymous rappers were hard at work on the music, our team created authentic-to-Wendy’s-and-its-audience messaging and imagery. The title *webeefin?* – paid homage to Wendy’s “Fresh Never Frozen” beef mantra. Cover art included a unique, and recognizable aspect of Wendy’s branding: the square beef patty. Subtle branding combined with a visual nod to a legendary Notorious B.I.G. release was designed to draw interest and credibility to the album – as a piece of music, not an ad. Those efforts helped frame the PR team’s media outreach. With zero dollars in the budget for media buys, PR had to be the behind-the-scenes player in launching publicity and support for the campaign.

The planning section identifies the type of voice (maybe a pun?!) that Wendy’s wanted to project.

The case explains what their audience(s) expect of Wendy’s – you will want to see if the organization/person you develop your case about is true to their brand or if the plan strays from those foundations.

So, in addition to describing the strategies and tactics that the organization/person employed, you should offer your critique as to how in tune the organization/person was based on the strategies and tactics selected.

This is also a good place to refer to a relevant **theory** that helps explain the organization’s/person’s efforts.

## Just do it!

### EXECUTION

In classic diss track mode, *webeefin?* aired its beef with arch rivals McDonald’s and Burger King. Tracks like “Rest in Grease,” “Clownin” and “4 for 4\$” went right to the meat of its detractors: You number one? That’s a joke/ Why your ice cream machine always broke?/ Why your drive-thru always slow/ Why your innovation can’t grow? The EP launched organically at midnight on March 25 and was tweeted by Wendy’s that morning. The EP was loaded into more than 20 streaming music services, but no media was placed to push customers to stream or download the music. With the album gaining steam on social, the PR team flipped the switch to amplification, enlisting contacts at influential urban and pop culture outlets including Hypebeast, VIBE, and Hip-Hot Wired.

Once we seeded these key influencers, we busted the story out into mainstream outlets like USA Today, Thrillist, and the ad trades. By the time Lara Spencer was rapping Wendy’s beats on Good Morning America – a Pop News segment we secured – *webeefin?* had hit critical mass and No. 3 on iTunes Hip-Hop charts. Within 48 hours, *webeefin?* had skyrocketed up the Hip-Hop charts. Fans took to the internet to celebrate the mixtape by posting reviews, filming original content talking about the music – even filming themselves blaring the music while at the drive-thrus of the competitors mentioned in the lyrics. For fans who wanted a deeper dive into the lyrics, we featured lyrical annotations on Genius.

This section of the Wendy’s mixtape case provides specifics about how the plan was implemented – what tracks were included, some of the lyrics, when the mixtape was launched, the role their influencers played, and some of the reactions appearing on social media. Notice that Wendy’s had both the basic mixtape as well as extras for die-hard fans.

For your case, you may include screengrabs (with URLs!) of the visibility garnered by the organization/person to show how events/actions played out ... both the positive and the negative.

Note that this case focuses solely on the positives. That’s good, but it can be helpful to also show any shortcomings, even in the good-news cases (and certainly with the screw-up cases!). No one is perfect; perhaps there are lessons learned the come from the case.

## How'd it go? Time to evaluate

### EVALUATION

Not only did webeefin? deliver the brand message in a hugely shareable way, it broke into the music charts, broke out into pop culture, and earned mad respect from the hip-hop community and social media watchers. Or as (INFLUENCER AT :56 ON SIZZLE REEL) incredulously exclaimed: "a fast food company has better bars than actual professional rappers!"

- Mentions of Wendy's in online conversation **increased 660 percent in the 24 hours** after webeefin? was released.
- Listeners **streamed 76 years' worth of webeefin?** across streaming platforms.
- The music reached **No. 1 on Spotify U.S. and Global Viral charts**, beating out eight-time Grammy winning artist Rihanna.
- It also charted on nine other countries' viral charts and reached **No. 3 on iTunes Hip-Hop charts**.
- Fans' video content in reaction to webeefin? was **viewed more 3 million times in the first week**.
- @Wendys Twitter launch tweets generated another **14 million impressions** with an engagement rate of 17.7 percent, seven times our engagement rate benchmark.
- Hip-hop royalty such as Sir Mix-A-Lot, T-Pain and Tory Lanez joined the conversation praising webeefin? So did major hip-hop culture publications such as Billboard R&B/Hip-Hop Music, XXL Mag, Genius and Complex
- **800 million earned media impressions in 10 days** from 215 placements including top-tier national outlets such as Forbes, USA Today E! Online and Daily Mail. We made webeefin? a part of pop culture.
- webeefin? was also **featured on national TV** including "Good Morning America" and on CNN HLN and CNBC channels.

Welcome to the evaluation section! Any good plan or campaign provides information on how to determine if the goals and objectives were met.

The Wendy's case provides a good bit of detail on responses to its campaign – it obviously has a system in place to track whether/how its material is picked up and by whom.

One thing missing – and it's something cases often miss – is the tone of responses. Was the 660% increase in online conversation supportive of Wendy's efforts or critical? Most likely a mix. What about those 14 million Twitter impressions? Also the earned media?

I'm fairly confident that Wendy's not only tracks these data points, but also determines whether responses are needed, and if so, what those responses should be. Happy customers probably appreciate a thank you. It may take a bit more strategizing to determine how to respond to unhappy or unimpressed folks.

## Appendix

The Wendy's case doesn't have many examples, likely due to space constraints, but you have more leeway on length and should include visible evidence of the highs and/or lows of your case.

Your case should also include a **Reference list** – is MLA your preferred citation style? Or is it APA? **Please define** that in your initial synopsis.

Checklist and rubric follow ...

<p><b>-To Do List</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. Make a To Do List</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Check off the first thing on the To Do List</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3. Realise you have already completed 2 things on the list</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4. Reward yourself with a nap</li> </ul> 	<p><b>Grading Checklist For MEJO 531 Midterm Case Brief</b></p>	<p><b>I made a huge to-do list for today. I just can't figure out who's going to do it...</b></p> 
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Due by \_\_\_\_\_ | Submit on Sakai – Assignments

I will use this checklist to assess the effectiveness of your case brief. The information provided below for your case synopsis and analysis are not outlines of how to structure each section. You decide an appropriate flow of information to effectively present and assess your case.

**Format:**

- 11- or 12-point type, 1-inch margins, single-spaced **AND** 1 space between each paragraph.
- Likely to be 7-9 pages in length (excluding Works Cited, Title Page, and visuals) – this is an estimate. The goal is to be thorough yet succinct.
- Include page numbers
- Title page with a catchy title (help me stay engaged!), your name and the date.
- correct use of MLA or APA style for in-text citations and reference page
- You may use subheads, photos, screengrabs, charts, lists, etc., as you deem appropriate. Be sure visuals are appropriately labeled and cited if you did not generate them. Note that they will not affect recommended page length.

**Synopsis of Case (30%)**

**About 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the paper – this is an estimate only. Use your best judgment and avoid a 3-volume set!**

- Did you efficiently state the important facts to give a reader enough of a background on the case? These include:
- Did you adequately describe the organization involved?
- Did you note the key stakeholders/publics involved?
- Did you adequately summarize the actual outcome of the case? If it's ongoing, indicate that.
- If available, did you describe research and evaluation? Since organizations often keep research and evaluation proprietary, you may not find many specifics, which you may state in the synopsis. And, you may make recommendations in your Case Analysis section.
- Did you identify objectives? If you did not have direct access to these (which is most often the case), say that. And, you may make recommendations in your Case Analysis section.
- Was there a key message or theme? Was it effective? Was it consistently used?
- What types of strategies were employed?
- What tactics were used? Briefly describe them.
- As you wrap up the synopsis: does a reader have enough info to properly understand your analysis that follows?
- Is it clear from your writing that you've applied terms you've learned from this class?

**NOTE:** Again, give me the **facts** in an efficient way here. Use your Case Analysis section to discuss how effective the choices of publics, messaging, programming or events, research, etc., were, without being redundant in subsequent sections.

## Case Analysis (70%)

**About 2/3rds of your paper - this is an estimate only. Use your best judgment and avoid a 3-volume set!**

- Did you critically analyze the case, adding your own insights?
- Did you discuss the adequacy of research and evaluation that the organization did? If you do not have research/evaluation data, discuss whether it appears that the organization acted in ways that reflect they know what would resonate with their key stakeholders/publics.
- Is there additional research or evaluation you would have recommended that the organization do?
- Did you dissect the organization's goals and objectives for the campaign or response? If you did not have direct access to these (which is most often the case), did you make arguments about what their goals and objectives should have been?
- Did you discuss what strategies and tactics worked, if anything, and why you think they were effective?
- Did you discuss what strategies and tactics didn't work, if anything, and how you might have changed or fixed the organization's campaign, response, etc.?
- Did you discuss whether the organization engaged efficiently with its publics? Did it use the most-effective communication methods (strategies and tactics) to best engage with these publics?
- Did you **compare** your case to at least one other?
- Did you include a **relevant theory** from which to build a foundation that explains what the person/organization did or should have done?

**Note:** Your opinions should be informed assessments, based on what you have learned about effective public relations. Use your own thoughts. What would you have done differently, or did they do a great job? Be thorough yet efficient and demonstrate to me your ability to think critically.

## Technique

- Is your writing succinct and clear? Did you include what's most relevant and leave out extraneous information that does not inform your analysis?
- Did you check your grammar, spelling, formatting and other written presentation techniques?
  - Tip 1: To check spelling, read the paper backward
  - Tip 2: Read your paper out loud, slowly – you're more likely to catch boo boos
  - Tip 3: Ask a friend to read it.
- Did you check your writing to make sure you did not patch write or – most importantly – you did not plagiarize?
- Did you use MLA or APA style correctly for your in-text citations and Works Cited page? **NOTE: Do not use citation-generating tools!!** They are infamously flawed.
- Extra credit** – e-visit the Writing Center for feedback on a portion of your paper (you pick). Ask the person who assisted you to send an email to me indicating what transpired.

**NOTE:** These kinds of technique errors will be looked upon harshly. Typos, poor sentence structure, and related issues will lower your grade to at least a “B” on the assignment (one full letter grade). More pronounced technique issues will result in a grade of “C” or lower (two full letter grades).

**Final Case Brief Grade Feedback Form**

**Name:**

**Case title:**

<b>Synopsis of case</b>	<b>Total value= 30 points</b>	<b>Score</b>
Clear description of organization(s)	5 points	
Logical progression of the event/issue/crisis based on facts	10 points	
Clear articulation of campaign components (e.g., research, goal, objectives, strategies, tactics, key stakeholders, evaluation)	15 points	
<b>Total synopsis score</b>		

<b>Case analysis</b>	<b>Total value= 70 points</b>	<b>Score</b>
Compelling critique of campaign components and accurate/effective application of terms	20 points	
Valid application of theory(ies)	5 points	
Effective comparison to another case	10 points	
Effectively incorporate your own insights within the assessment	12 points	
Relevant and reasonable recommendations based on what the organization did well, should have done, should do going forward	13 points	
Sufficient and applicable references for effective analysis	10 points	
<b>Total analysis score</b>		

<b>Technique</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Proper application of MLA or APA style for in-text citations and Works Cited	
Correct grammar, spelling, sentence structure	
<b>Total</b>	

Final score: \_\_\_\_\_