

The Wall Street Journal Instructor Guide

An Overview for Management Professors
Fall 2018

About The Wall Street Journal's Instructor Guide

We developed this guide to help you maximize The Wall Street Journal as a resource for your classes. You'll be able to energize discussions and engage students with tangible examples of course concepts that your students can apply in the real world. In addition, with the help of faculty partners, we've curated a special collection of our most popular and thought-provoking articles across management. For each of these readings, we provide a summary, correlation to course topics, classroom applications and questions suitable for launching discussions and conducting assessments.

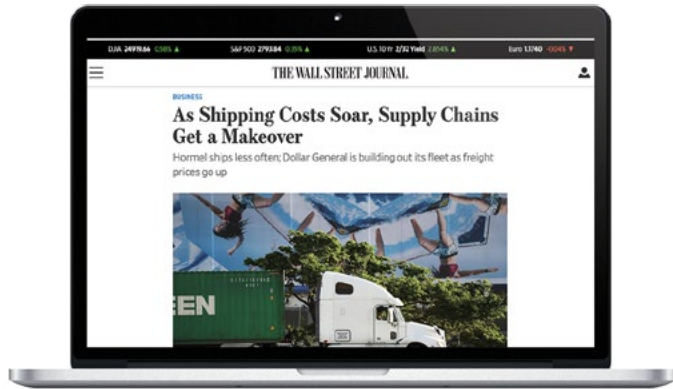
Here are some of the many ways to incorporate WSJ into your courses:

- **Course Readings:** Assign articles as required reading alongside your textbook sections. For best results, include assessment questions on quizzes and exams.
- **Discussion Launchers:** Use articles to spur classroom and threaded discussions in online and hybrid courses on core concepts and current events.
- **Extra Credit:** Allow students to read optional articles and answer assessment questions for extra credit.
- **Group Projects:** WSJ is a rich source of real-world topics for group research and presentation projects.
- **Research Papers and Case Studies:** WSJ features provide timely citations for research projects.

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As Shipping Costs Soar, Supply Chains Get a Makeover



Reporter: Erica E. Phillips and Jennifer Smith (6/17/18)

Reviewed By: Bradley Miller, University of Houston - Bauer College of Business

Topics: Cost Reduction, Logistics

Summary: Retailers and manufacturers are taking stock of their transportation costs and exploring alternatives as a capacity crunch in freight is driving up prices and causing shipping delays.

Classroom Application: Students will discuss the importance of managing transportation costs within an operation.

Questions:

1. Why are shipping and transportation costs increasing?
2. What are organizations doing to reduce transportation costs?
3. What additional Supply Chain costs are introduced by reducing the number of deliveries?
4. Graph your company's transportation and shipping costs over the past two years. Based on the article, what changes do you anticipate in the future? What is your company doing to minimize these costs?
5. Critique your company's plans to reduce transportation costs. What are the overall costs of these strategies? What costs increase as you work to lower transportation costs?

Why Companies Have the Urge to Merge



Reporter: John D. Stoll (6/16/18)

Reviewed By: Mark Lehrer, Suffolk University

Topics: Change Management

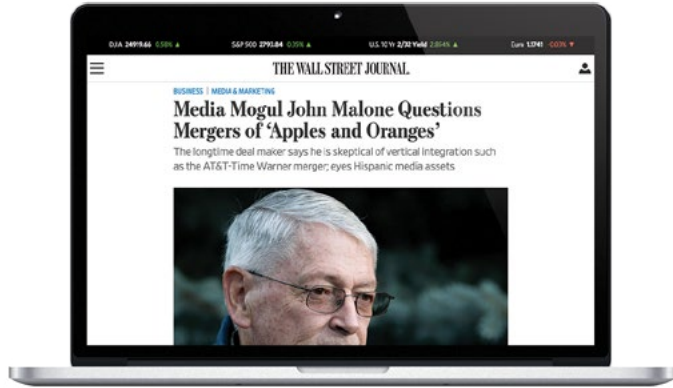
Summary: The merger of AT&T and Time Warner shows that it is no longer enough just to be #1 in your industry. Now, in an era when digital titans are redrawing the boundaries between industries, AT&T needs to transform into something entirely different: a media and entertainment powerhouse. In general, companies need to be able to reinvent themselves through their deals, pushing themselves into entirely new lines of business. An auto maker must also be a ride-hailing provider. A pharmacy also needs to be an insurer.

Classroom Application: The article is useful for making the link between change management and competition. Companies from pharmaceutical firms to grocery stores must now reckon with Amazon's ambitions to sell everything to everybody. Google is a phone company, a driverless car developer and an advertising giant. Netflix is a creator, curator and distributor of entertainment.

Questions:

1. Being the biggest on the block was once worth something in business, according to the author. Why is this no longer the case?
2. The author argues that companies need to be able to reinvent themselves through their deals. What examples does he give? What does he base his argument on?
3. How does this argument apply to AT&T's purchase of Time Warner? What will AT&T morph into? Why does it need to? Why is being #1 no longer enough?
4. Has the world really changed, in your opinion? Could it be argued that firms always had to transform themselves when merging? Is this old wine in new bottles? Is this hype? Why or why not?

Media Mogul John Malone Questions Mergers of “Apples and Oranges”



Reporter: Shalini Ramachandran (6/15/18)

Reviewed By: Mark Lehrer, Suffolk University

Topics: Vertical Integration

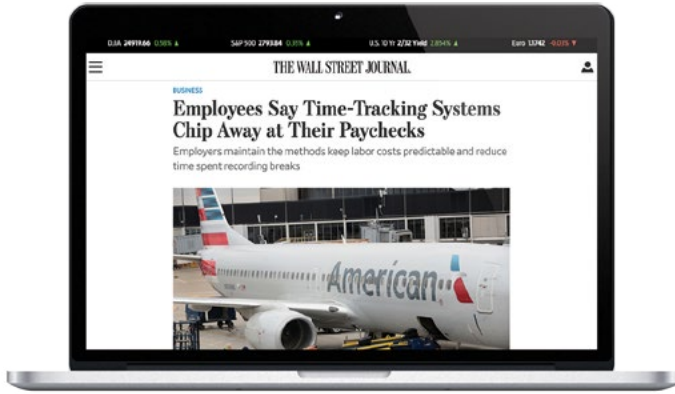
Summary: Comcast and AT&T have made audacious moves to become media distribution and content conglomerates, but John Malone, one of the industry's most powerful players, is skeptical of that approach and does not plan to follow suit. Malone said: "If you are just forming a conglomerate by putting everything in the same bucket, it eliminates your flexibility, you've got tax problems, regulatory problems and a lot of problems that these companies operating autonomously don't have."

Classroom Application: The class can discuss the pros and cons of creating vertically integrated content and distribution media companies. Rivalry looms in the background of such ambitions. These mergers are intended to create streaming products and obtain access to consumer data that will allow these firms to better compete against tech giants for advertising revenue.

Questions:

1. Who is John Malone? Why does he question the mergers taking pace in the media world? What are his objections?
2. Are these important points? If so, what is the rationale for these mergers? Why are they happening?
3. In fact, at the end of the day, do media companies really have any choice but to merge at this point? Is remaining specialized in content or distribution really a viable option in the longer run? Why or why not?

Employees Say Time-Tracking Systems Chip Away at Their Paychecks



Reporter: Bradley Miller (5/21/18)

Reviewed By: Bradley Miller, University of Houston - Bauer College of Business

Topics: Managing an Operation

Summary: Punching in and out of shifts is an omnipresent part of work life for many hourly workers at hospitals, factories and stores. Now some of them say companies are using time-tracking systems to chip away at their pay.

Classroom Application: Students will discuss the role of pay systems in creating positive organizational culture.

Questions:

1. Why do companies utilize software to calculate employee pay? What features of this software are attractive to companies?
2. How does the software described in the article calculate hours worked in the company's favor? How does it calculate hours worked in the employee's favor?
3. How important is it that a company track exactly how long an employee works? What is expected from an employee during a work day? How does pay and pay calculations contribute to work culture?
4. How are your company's employee hours worked tracked? Is this system accurate? How do you know?
5. How would your company culture change if you were to track hours worked more closely? How would culture change if your company were more lenient on hours-worked calculations? What are the side benefits of each policy?

The Best Way to Think About Probabilities



Reporter: Eugenia Chang (5/19/18)

Reviewed By: Bradley Miller, University of Houston - Bauer College of Business

Topics: Analytics, Statistics

Summary: How to deal with chance, from medical forecasts to elections.

Classroom Application: Students will evaluate the role of considering statistics when managing an operation.

Questions:

1. What is the danger of managing based upon averages?
2. What does “standard deviation” represent? Why is it important when managing an operation?
3. What is the difference between dependent and independent observations?
4. The article discusses the importance of numerical measurements in evaluating performance. Describe how your organization tracks and measures performance. What variables are included in these measures? How simple are the measures to track and understand? Do you feel that the current measures motivate your behavior? What changes would be needed to create a more robust measurement?
5. The article highlights the importance of being confident in the reliability of the statistics used when making competitive assessments. Does your company use statistics in its decision making (such as confidence intervals, tests of hypothesis, design of experiments, probability analysis)? What would be the benefits of utilizing some of these statistical tools in your organization? What would be the additional costs? Do you feel these actions are cost justified? Why or why not?

