

A photograph of the ASU Thunderbird building, a modern structure with a curved facade and large glass windows. The ASU logo is visible on the top left corner of the building.

THUNDERBIRD CASE BULLETIN

December 2023

For internal use only

Q4, 2023 Edition

Update from the Case Series Team

On behalf of all at the Case Series Team, we wish everyone across Thunderbird and ASU a safe and peaceful close to the year, sharing a special thank-you for the support received throughout 2023 that together celebrated and supported case writing. All of these efforts across teams have played a key role in some wonderful news that emerged this December—official notification that Thunderbird has been placed in the global Top 20 as part of the inaugural Case Impact Index. This ranking, which placed Thunderbird alongside the top management educational institutions in the world, had us ranked ahead of Wharton and Michigan (more details are below on the news of this wonderful Team Thunderbird milestone).

2023 has been a year of many other milestones and none of this would have been possible without the work of leaders across all our teams supporting case excellence for this year, and for many years before that, who set the foundation for the ranking. The global Top 20 accolade therefore rests on the shoulders of all, and for 2024 we look forward to continuing to work together to bring the best in all things case-related to our students, alumni, executives and corporations across our global community.

This year saw us host successful workshops, pioneer digital table case experiences for executive education and masters' students, and also successfully launch an elective on Case Writing that resulted in the launch of the vibrant Case Writing Student Club, emerging as among one of the largest and fastest-growing groups. Case excellence has gripped our students and on Friday, Jan. 5, as part of the Foundations program, a new immersion for all incoming students is planned at the Global Forum to help what may be a new record January intake start their Thunderbird journey on the best possible footing. The inclusion of this Case Series immersion session for Foundations is a result of the leadership of the Foundations and student teams reaching out to co-create and collaborate on a program committed to make all students feel welcomed and ready for our exciting

and rigorous programs that are often grounded in the case experience.

January continues an exciting set of programs with the next Faculty gathering to connect on Case Writing also scheduled for January.

On Friday, Jan. 12, the workshop, drawing on all faculty attending to exchange insights and engage, is set to begin at approximately 10:30 a.m. after the morning faculty meeting. It will run from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with lunch provided.

The tentative agenda includes:

■ Writing cases on AI (and using AI in case writing).

Focus on insights on writing cases on AI for your area, as well as insights on how AI can also serve to boost productivity in producing a case and teaching note.

■ Post-lunch session: Multimedia and Table Cases.

Learn best practices, examples and how to get started if new to this ecosystem. Come prepared to look at how Thunderbird is working to push the boundaries of case writing using new media and interactive pedagogical approaches. In-person attendance is encouraged, but there also will be a Zoom option. (Be on the lookout for a calendar invite).

2023 has ended on an amazing note, built on a year of effort across all teams, and 2024 is starting with an exciting set of workshops and activities. We are learning and growing each semester and look forward to more of your ideas and suggestions on how to continue to support excellence in case-writing. Please continue to share ideas for new cases celebrating our global outlook, commitment to diversity, and the frontiers of management, as this is key to us to continue to be recognized as a center of excellence at a global level in a very competitive market where standing out is never easy.

Thank you to all and may 2024 bring more successes to all our incredible teams as we work together to make a positive impact on the global management ecosystem.

**With support and thanks to all from the Case Series Team
Euvin, Mary, Arlene and Vignesh**

CASE SERIES LATEST NEWS

Thunderbird ranks 20th globally

The U.K.-based Case Centre's new Impact Index measures global reach and impact of schools' cases over the last academic year.

Officials at U.K.-based The Case Centre announced this month the world's top 50 schools as part of the Global Case Impact Index. Thunderbird managed to shine and emerged as part of the Top 20, alongside some of the biggest names globally—and ahead of Wharton and Michigan.

The U.K.-based Case Centre is the world's leading independent center of excellence or hub for all things case-related and serves as a leading light for all management schools in terms of distributing cases.

"As the independent home of the case method, we have, for many years, been asked which schools have the most impact with their case writing. After extensive and meticulous efforts, I am thrilled to unveil our inaugural Impact Index. This marks a significant addition to our recognition portfolio, playing a pivotal role in our mission to support and advance the case method worldwide," said Vicky Lester, CEO of The Case Centre.

She added, "Cases have a profound impact in many ways but often receive less recognition than other research outputs. The Case Centre Impact Index rewards schools who demonstrate unwavering commitment to case writing, and who strive to ensure the development and dissemination of top-tier cases within the business education community. I hope that the Impact Index will inspire schools to recognize the value of case writing and to invest in re-



sources to support their faculty in this important endeavor."

The Thunderbird Case Series wants to thank all across our ecosystem at Thunderbird and ASU, from leading faculty and partner teams, to students and alumni, who have supported and championed efforts to promote, publish, and share Thunderbird's rich history of supporting cases that celebrate our global value proposition, including a commitment to diversity and themes linked to cutting-edge topics.

All ranked organizations that published at least one case with The Case Centre during the previous academic year (Sept. 1, 2022 through Aug. 31, 2023) were eligible. The 2023 top 50 were taken from 439 eligible schools.

This recognition is based on many years of work by our leading faculty and teams focused on a commitment to case writing. In

2023, the continued publication of cases by world-class faculty on cutting edge topics, efforts to pioneer table cases and new approaches for delivery, faculty-led workshops dedicated to exchanging ideas on case-writing, an innovative course on the art of case writing (noted as being a standout initiative by the Case Centre team) and the launch of a successful Case Writing Student Club, were among factors that played a role in Thunderbird emerging in the top 20.

Thank you to the Thunderbird case-writing community past and present, as well as to the leadership of Thunderbird and all Thunderbird teams, for the relentless focus on the mission of the school, which was pivotal in helping Thunderbird stand out for the global ranking. Thank you to all for the efforts and may we continue to come together to make a positive impact on the global management ecosystem. ♦

GLOBAL MINDSET FEATURE

Building bridges, making connections

Professors, case writers and executives can use Thunderbird's Global Mindset Inventory to help prepare themselves and others to succeed.

Thunderbird School of Global Management Professor Mansour Javidan is no stranger to thinking globally.

With a Russian mother and Iranian father, Javidan grew up in a family where five languages were spoken and multiple religions were practiced. He was by turns confused and curious, wondering, for example, why some members of his family drank coffee for breakfast while others started their day with tea.

“So my passion and my interest in understanding cultures and understanding people’s reactions to culture is not just about my scholarly work, it’s my own life,” said Javidan, who serves as executive director of the Najafi Global Mindset Institute at Thunderbird. “This is part of my identity, not just as a scholar, but as a human being.”

Javidan’s passion for understanding others has fueled Thunderbird’s Global Mindset Inventory, a scientific instrument that measures individuals’ ability to successfully lead across countries and cultures. It can be a useful tool for businesses, business schools and even case writers and teachers.

Since the GMI’s debut in 2007, more than 70,000 individuals in many countries have completed it. Available in English, Korean, Span-

ish, French, Chinese and Japanese, the inventory can be taken as a self-assessment, a 180-degree assessment (individual evaluates self and supervisor assesses them) and a 360-degree assessment (individual grades self and direct reports; peers and supervisor evaluates the individual). It features 20 demographic questions and 50 questions designed to measure the three dimensions of global mindset—intellectual capital, psychological capital, and social capital.

Javidan explained, “Intellectual is the cognitive side, which means how much you know about cultures, history, business in different countries; psychological is about how passionate you are, how curious you are about people and ways of doing things in different parts of the world; and social is about how you behave when you’re dealing with people from other parts of the world.”

He added that the GMI will soon expand to measure another dimension, digital capital, and get a new name, the Global Digital Mindset Inventory (GDMI).

“It’s about your knowledge, your understanding and your

attitude toward digital transformation,” he said. “What does it take as a leader to facilitate digital transformation? What are the challenges? What are the consequences, both positive and negative, of digital transformation and how you manage that? And your own attitude toward radical high-speed changes that are going to be driven by digital transformation.”

Javidan said companies are spending billions of dollars investing in digital transformation, and they’re doing it at an unprecedented speed because they see potential for huge returns.

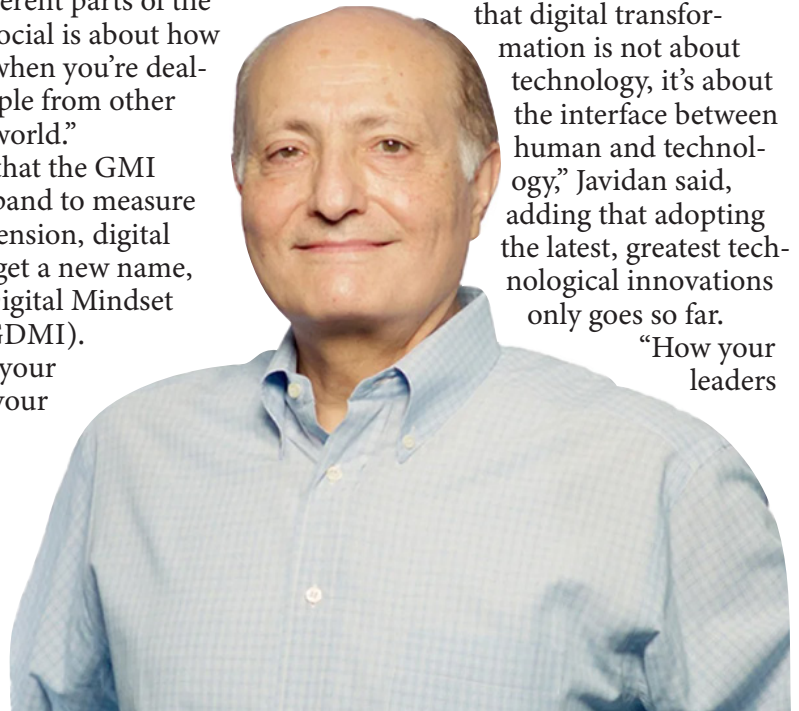
“But the human beings that are going to be involved and are going to be touched are going through some turmoil,” he said. “People are going to lose jobs, but there’s going to be even more opportunities, new jobs.”

Those new jobs won’t involve simply using new tech, though.

“Companies are learning that digital transformation is not about technology, it’s about the interface between human and technology,” Javidan said, adding that adopting the latest, greatest technological innovations only goes so far.

“How your leaders

PROFESSOR MANSOUR JAVIDAN is executive director of the Najafi Global Mindset Institute. The Global Mindset Inventory—soon to be expanded to become the Global Digital Mindset Inventory—measures an individual’s ability to successfully lead across countries and cultures.



GLOBAL MINDSET FEATURE

leverage that technology, socialize that technology, facilitate the implementation of that technology is the bigger issue.”

That’s where Thunderbird’s Executive Education programs come in: to help current company leaders understand the issues they face not just in digital transformation but also in operating on a truly global scale.

The focus on global mindset shines through in all aspects of a Thunderbird education.

“At Thunderbird our approaches, our degree programs as a whole, need to cover all the elements of global mindset, so when a student graduates from a Thunderbird degree program—doesn’t matter what program—all his or her profile of global mindset will be improved because of the different courses we’re offering, cases, experiences, projects,” Javidan said.

That preparedness will serve students well when they enter the workforce.

“We need obviously to make sure

that our graduates are technically competent and globally ready,” Javidan said. “The world that our graduates are walking into is a global world. It doesn’t mean they’re going to travel. That can happen, but it’s not the only thing.”

More likely, he said, is a new graduate working here for an overseas company like Taiwan Semiconductor Corporation.

“If you’re not globally ready, you’re going to be confused and frustrated, because the way the Taiwanese executives and managers make decisions and behave are very different from what you have learned in your U.S. upbringing. And the Taiwanese people are going to be frustrated and confused because the way that their American employees behave is not the same as their Taiwanese employees’ behavior.”

The GMI is a way to measure that readiness, and to help those who take it—employees and students alike—understand where they can change.

“Every element of global mindset can be improved,” Javidan said. “No baby’s born with a high global mindset. It’s a learned phenomenon.”

Some dimensions are harder to develop than others, of course. Psychological capital takes the longest to develop, because it’s an accumulation of years of experience, plus the individual’s personality.

“It takes more time to improve it. It takes more intrusive interventions—coaching, counseling—to influence. But it can be done,” he said.

The cases a professor chooses to teach can help expand global mindset—and so can the cases a professor writes.

Take, for example, a case Javidan wrote a few years ago about Johnson and Johnson’s global supply chain organization. The senior executive in charge asked him to work with the group to create a truly global supply chain, rather than a chain of regional supply centers. The question was “what is the optimum series of supply chains that

Quiz or scientific instrument?

Some people might call the Global Mindset Inventory a quiz. Those people would be wrong.

“Anybody can write a bunch of questions, but creating a scientific instrument is a different story,” Thunderbird Professor Mansour Javidan said.

Javidan used the example of a thermometer. To measure the temperature, you put the thermometer outside for a while and then check its degree reading.

“And I know because there is science behind it, that that instrument is telling me an accurate reading of what is the temperature,” he said. “Extrapolate from this simple example to ‘I want to know your digital capital as a human being.’ ... I don’t have a thermostat that I can put in your mouth and measure, ‘Oh, this is your digital capital.’”

Instead, he must ask questions about the person’s behavior, feelings, and knowledge—but not every question is a good question. “Do you use a laptop?” is an example of a bad question, because whether someone has a digital mindset or not, they are likely to use a laptop.

“There is a science behind figuring out what questions to ask,” he said, adding there are also procedures to follow in conducting statistical analysis.

A researcher will write maybe 50 questions with the hope of ending up with 15 that are usable.

“So through statistical processes, I’m going to end up with a thermostat that measures your digital mindset. And I have to show you the science that would convince you that, yeah, this is a real instrument,” Javidan said.



GLOBAL MINDSET FEATURE

would satisfy the whole world.”

“So you need to create a global network of supplies, both internally and externally,” he said. “That means you need to get people from different parts of the world, different countries, to work together, to collaborate, to understand, to support. That’s why the executive in charge asked me to start with the global mindset inventory.”

After the GMI was administered,

executives in charge of the various worldwide elements of the global supply chain got together to study individual and group profiles and decide how to improve the company’s global mindset. The challenges, opportunities and obstacles involved became the subject of the case.

The same is true in any case relating to an organization’s global ambitions and the opportunities/challenges they’re facing in their

global environment.

“There’s no limit to how many cases you can write, what topics you can include.” Javidan said. “Think about a company that wants to globalize its HR policy. Can they do a good job if their senior HR people have a high global mindset or a low global mindset? Can they improve their HR group’s global mindset so they can do a better job of developing effective global policy?” ♦

CASE WRITING CORNER

Unusual case, all too common problem

In “Murder in the Ivory Tower,” the newest offering from the Thunderbird Case Series, Prof. Christine M. Pearson tackles a university’s crisis response—or lack thereof—in the leadup to an on-campus shooting that left one department chair dead.

The case traces intricacies and impacts of a graduate student’s harassment and violent threats to faculty and staff over nearly a year. It aims to capture the evolution of information, judgments, decisions, and actions during a crisis, and to provoke readers’ insights regarding crisis management successes and failures.

Pearson sat down to share more about her reasons for writing the case and what she hopes people will take away from it.

What drew you to writing this case?

As evidence and details began to surface, it seemed leaders had ignored, discounted, and dismissed genuine red flags. As I learned more, the lack of preparation, communication gaps, and other deficits in crisis management and response basics were astounding. As one example, for nearly a year, targets reported and forwarded to appropriate authorities communications from the murderer that included harassing, racist, antisemitic,



and obscene hate speech, along with veiled and overt threats. Faculty, staff, and student recipients and their colleagues reported these communications and sent evidence to university leaders, repeatedly.

As a crisis management expert, I was driven to understand deeply why this potentially preventable murder occurred. What went wrong, and why? What could have been done better, and how? Ultimately, my objective is to help others avoid these kinds of devastating

shortcomings, individually and in their organizations, whether universities or elsewhere. The case is a means of sharing clues to specific lessons and insights.

Were there any special considerations in writing about this subject?

From elementary to graduate schools, murders and other forms of campus violence are rising. These contexts are relatively new locations for ongoing concern about such horrific dangers. Violence at any school touches a very broad array of stakeholders, on campus and far beyond. At universities, the reach can be vast. Effects are especially deep and long-lasting because they jar the integrity of education. The potential for dramatically influential insights is substantial.

CASE WRITING CORNER

Given the current political/social climate, is it hard to keep discussion from devolving into a fight over gun control?

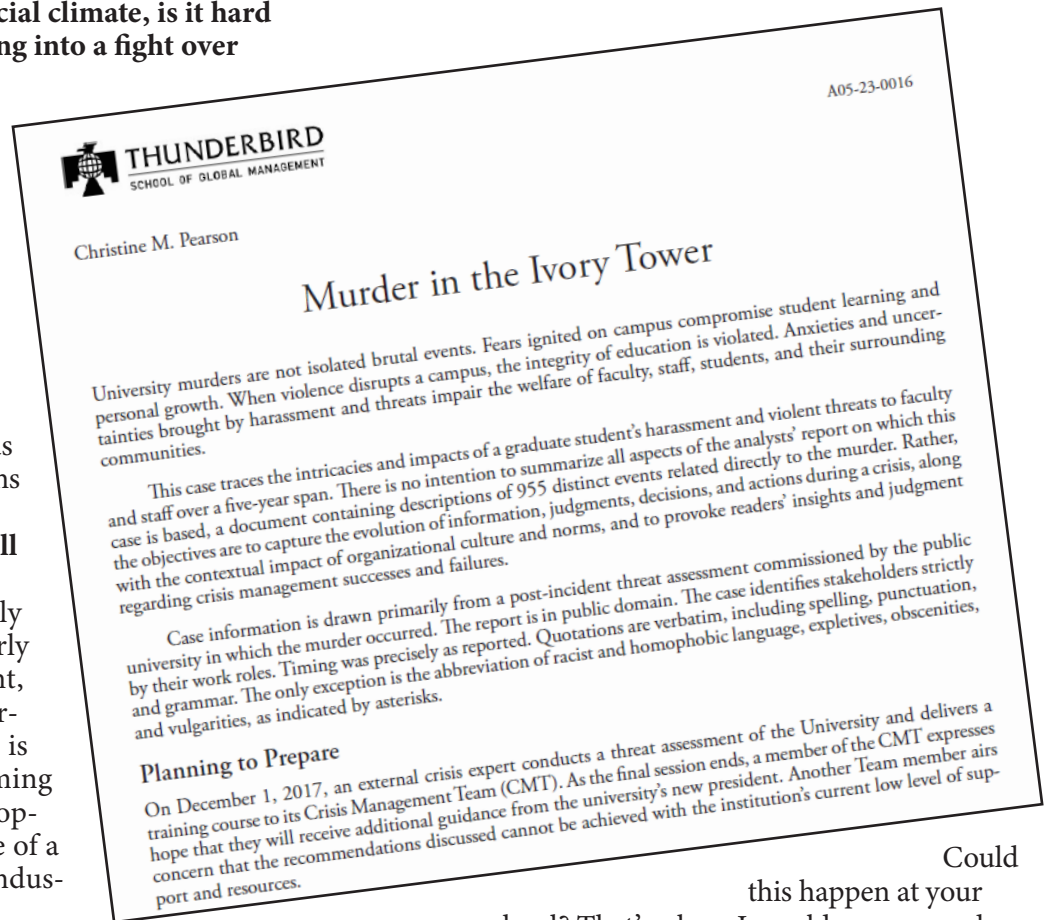
Although the topic is mentioned sometimes, gun control hasn't been a central issue. I think it's because there are so many challenging internal details regarding the institution and its stakeholders. There's no question the university setting, and the graduate school stakeholders, in particular, captivate student attention. The context resonates as home territory, and the discussions tend to reflect that.

What do you hope students will learn from this case?

Many organizations are woefully unprepared for crises. In very early research about crisis management, we learned the primary reason organizations invest in preparation is their experience of a crisis, assuming they survive. The second most popular motivation is the occurrence of a crisis close to home (e.g., same industry, nearby location).

I hope students who read "Murder in the Ivory Tower," as well as faculty who teach it, will take advantage of their insider's perspective. That proximity can prompt recognition and reinforce the extraordinary value of crisis thinking, preparation, practice, and learning, which can support building foundations and making improvements.

Do you have any advice for professors who consider teaching the case?



Could this happen at your school? That's where I would recommend starting. As you prepare, think about existing crisis preparation/response requirements and capabilities within your department or school, then across your university. Learn whether your assumptions are accurate. Discuss facts and norms with your students, colleagues, and leaders.

I hope, for anyone who uses this case, the facts will seem inconceivable in their locations. I fear, for many, they may not. ◆

DID YOU KNOW?

Prof. Euvin Naidoo co-wrote his first case in 2003—20 years ago—with Prof. Rosabeth Moss Kanter at the Harvard Business School. The case, *Nelson Mandela, Change Leader*, focused on leadership lessons Wall Street can take from both the public sector and Africa, based on leadership insights for "turnarounds" drawing on Mandela's leadership example.

The case, which has served as the flagship capstone case for Harvard's Managing Change elective, became a key chapter in the book "Confidence," which emerged as a *New York Times* and #1 *Businessweek* Bestseller. This positive case experience for Prof. Naidoo served as one of the inspirations to propose and co-launch, with Prof. Mary Teagarden, Thunderbird's successful 2023 elective on "Agility & the Art of Case Writing" that aims to serve as a catalyst for participants to use the case method and storytelling as a toolkit to be more effective CxOs across public, private and not-for-profit organizations.