

I. Required Steps for Tool 22 (Alternatives)

Before you discuss each tool, include the bolded tool number. In this case, it is **Tool 22**. Follow these instructions exactly for the case exam as Tool 22 should include (1) the alternative paragraphs followed by (2) the decision matrix, followed by (3) the scale, and followed by (4) two paragraphs. This is it! Do not include these steps or any other titles (e.g., Justification of Best Alternative).

Step 1: State and Discuss Each Alternative

- Alternatives considered should come from the case and include Do Nothing.
 - Ideally you will have no more than four alternatives that will come from the case.
 - You may consider your own alternatives (e.g., a combination of two alternatives that come from the case).
 - Your alternatives are future focussed so do not include a strategy completed already by the company such as the WSM purchase in the Designer Classics case.
 - Avoid vague alternatives (e.g., forward integration or market penetration) but do state specific alternatives (e.g., purchase Elite Carpets in the Designer Classics case).
- Create one paragraph for each alternative with grammatical sentences and no bullet points.
 - State and bold each alternative. This is then followed by two sentences for each paragraph.
 - The first sentence will be two parts: the strongest pro/advantage and “**So what?**”
 - The second sentence will be two parts: the strongest con/disadvantage and “**So what?**”
 - Do not include unnecessary words, such as describing the alternative as we can infer this from the case, stating it is a pro or con as your statement should be evident, and telling us it is the first alternative or the second alternative, etc.

Step 2: Create the Decision Matrix

After the last alternative paragraph – this is usually Do Nothing – insert the decision matrix. The matrix does not require a title, it must be typed and include both gridlines and column titles as it is a table. **The font should meet the minimum formatting requirements** (e.g., it is not a smaller font than the required font, which is usually 12-point font, respect the one-inch margins, be horizontal, etc.). Consider as well:

- The column titles need to be clear and include a formula (e.g., $A*B$).
 - Consider the sample decision matrix below for how columns are set up. If there are any calculations, it needs to be clear to the reader where the numbers come from and how you arrived at a final number.
 - Use complete words (i.e., do not cut up words if your column is not wide enough).
- As with any table, it must remain intact and not be divided across two pages.
- There needs to be a Total line in which you will make obvious (e.g., bold or circle) the best alternative and the contingency plan.

a. (Column 1) Attributes

- Also known as decision criteria, list the attributes in the first column in order of weighting – this is listed in the second column – from greatest to smallest/most important to least important.
- Include no more than five attributes.
- Attributes should be chosen based on case facts such as issues that are important to key stakeholders (e.g., revenue potential, cost, feasibility to implement, time to implement, profitability, image, in line with mission, etc.).
 - Attributes are not tools (e.g., organization health), case alternatives, or general business concepts unrelated to the case.
 - They usually come from the case goals, industry KSFs, and general case information.
 - These attributes should be in line with your analysis (e.g., “So what?”).
 - There should be one attribute for each row. For example, cost/ risk are two different attributes.
- Attributes should not be similar (e.g., increased revenue and increased market share are similar).

b. (Column 2) Attributes Importance or a Similar Column Title

- Assign a weighting for each attribute. Weight ideas come from the case and will be based on what is required for a successful strategy.
- List the weights in order of importance (i.e., largest to smallest).
- A high weighting is most favourable and vice versa.
- The sum of the weights should equal 1; each individual weight is a percentage (e.g., 0.3).

c. (Columns 3+) Alternatives

- For each alternative, list them across the top of the matrix to the right of the attribute importance column.
- The attributes, weights, and scale should be applied to the alternatives including Do Nothing.
- Create two columns for each alternative. The first column is titled Belief. For each attribute, you will assign a belief value based on your scale (to be discussed shortly). The second column should show the value which is the attribute weight multiplied by the belief value.
- Arrive at a Total for each alternative. Your scoring is important as depending on the scale, a low overall score is best or vice versa.
- Do Nothing will never have a zero score and it will not be the best alternative.

Reminder: In the Total line, note (e.g., bold or circle) the best alternative and contingency plan.



Consider the example below. What is wrong with it based on these instructions?

Attributes	A Relative Importance (1-100)	British Airways		Continental Airlines		United Airlines	
		B Belief (1-10)	A*B	B Belief (1-10)	A*B	B Belief (1-10)	A*B
Schedule	20	8	160	5	100	6	120

Step 3: State Scale Under the Matrix: One Scale for the Whole Matrix

Under the matrix, include a scale and define the scale (i.e., explain the meaning of the scale) at both ends only. You are encouraged to have a scale that is at least 1 to 5 but no more than 1 to 10. Context is important and stating 1 = low and 5 = high means little.

The explanation of the scale is critical as it represents your belief of the impact of the attribute on the alternative. A strong example is that 1 = low potential that the attribute aligns with the alternative and 5 = high potential that the attribute aligns with the alternative. Here is another example but remember to only define the ends (i.e., 1 and 5):

<div style="text-align: center;"> LOWEST   HIGHEST </div>	1 = Does not display ability to meet our requirements in this area
	2 = Slightly displays ability to meet our requirements in this area
	3 = Moderately displays ability to meet our requirements in this area
	4 = Displays good ability to meet our requirements in this area
	5 = Displays excellent ability to meet our requirements in this area

Step 4: Add Two Required Paragraphs of Explanations Under the Scale

In the first paragraph, justify each attribute, their corresponding weights, and their importance. Introduce each attribute in the order it is listed in your matrix to be followed by the weight in brackets and to be followed by the rationale for having selected that attribute.

In the second paragraph, justify why the best alternative was selected – without repeating the information from the earlier paragraph as we see this this information. Describe how it is comparatively the best solution given the future strategic direction/goals of the firm. In addition, include one sentence that mentions the contingency plan (i.e., second-best alternative) in case all the requirements are not in place to successfully implement the preferred alternative. Also include a rationale for this plan without stating it was the second-highest score.