BUSINESS PLAN CASE STUDY

RE:TURN — Can a Small Startup Make Takeaway Packaging Circular?

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT | Lessons 1–6

Student name: _____	Group: _____	Date: _____

CASE STUDY: THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Imagine that you are part of a young entrepreneurial team in Constantine, Algeria. Your team has developed RE:TURN, a start-up that wants to change the way cafés, university cafeterias and takeaway restaurants serve food and drinks.

The idea is simple: instead of giving customers a disposable cup or food container, partner cafés offer durable, reusable containers. Each container has a QR code. Customers pay a small refundable deposit when they borrow a container and receive the deposit back when they return it to any participating partner. A mobile-friendly platform records deposits, returns and participating locations.

The founders believe that customers are becoming more aware of plastic waste. They also believe that cafés want to reduce packaging costs and improve their environmental image. However, the founders have discovered that a good idea does not automatically become a successful business.

THE COMPANY

RE:TURN was founded in 2025 by three recent university graduates: Lina, a business administration graduate; Yacine, a software developer; and Amine, who has experience working in a family-owned café. The company currently has six employees and operates a small washing and storage unit near the city centre.

Its mission is to make reusable takeaway packaging convenient and accessible. Its vision is to become a trusted reuse network across major Algerian university cities. The founders value convenience, affordability, reliability and environmental responsibility.

At present, RE:TURN works with 12 cafés and two university cafeterias. It owns 2,000 reusable containers in different sizes. The platform is basic but functional. The company has received positive comments from several café owners, but it has not yet reached a stable level of monthly profitability.

THE MARKET AND ITS CUSTOMERS

The founders have identified three main customer groups:

- University students who regularly buy coffee, sandwiches and takeaway meals.
- Young professionals who want convenient food and drink options during the working day.
- Cafés and restaurants that want practical packaging solutions and a stronger sustainability image.

A small survey of 150 students conducted by the founders produced the following results:

Survey finding	Result
Students who said they would try a reusable-container service	68%
Students who said the return point must be close and convenient	82%
Students who were concerned about paying a deposit	47%
Students who preferred a mobile app or simple QR process	61%

The local market already includes conventional disposable packaging suppliers. Some cafés also allow customers to bring their own cups, while a few competitors sell reusable bottles and cups. However, the founders have not identified another local company offering a shared return network across several cafés.

The market may grow, but customer habits are difficult to change. Some customers forget to return containers. Others question whether the containers are hygienic. Café owners worry that storing used containers may take up space and slow down service.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

RE:TURN offers three connected services:

- Reusable cups for hot and cold drinks.
- Reusable food containers for sandwiches, salads and takeaway meals.
- A return-and-tracking service that allows customers to return containers to any participating location.

The main features include durable containers, QR-code identification, a refundable deposit, several return points and a washing process managed by RE:TURN. The founders argue that these features provide convenience, reduce dependence on single-use packaging and help partner cafés communicate their environmental commitments.

The proposed unique value proposition is: “RE:TURN makes reusable takeaway packaging as convenient as disposable packaging, through one simple network of cafés and return points.”

The company is considering two customer options. Individual customers pay a refundable deposit for each container. Partner cafés pay a monthly service fee based on the number of containers they use. The founders are still testing the right prices.

MARKETING AND SALES PLAN

RE:TURN plans to reach customers through Instagram and TikTok videos, student ambassadors, posters on university campuses and partnerships with local cafés. It also wants to organize a “Reuse Week” campaign at the beginning of the next university semester.

The proposed positioning is: “The easy, affordable and reliable way to reuse takeaway packaging in your city.” The company intends to begin with a student-friendly price and offer discounts during the launch period. It will distribute its containers through partner cafés and cafeterias, while customers will be able to find return points using the QR platform.

The founders have set the following targets for the next six months:

- Increase the number of partner cafés from 12 to 30.
- Increase the number of registered users from 500 to 2,000.
- Achieve at least 60% of borrowed containers being returned within seven days.
- Reach a level of monthly sales revenue that covers regular operating costs.

The marketing budget is limited. The founders cannot afford a large television or billboard campaign. They must choose promotional activities carefully and demonstrate to potential partners that the service can attract customers and operate reliably.

THE CRITICAL MOMENT

Two weeks before the planned launch campaign, a problem occurs. A popular café chain expresses interest in partnering with RE:TURN, but it requires the company to provide 1,500 additional containers within two months and guarantee frequent collection and washing. At the same time, one café partner reports that several customers have not returned containers. A social-media comment questions the hygiene of shared reusable packaging. The founders have limited cash and must decide whether to accept the large partnership, expand slowly, or change their business model.

The founders need a clear business plan to convince a potential investor and to guide their next decisions. They ask your team to analyze the business and recommend a realistic way forward.

YOUR TASK

You are acting as business consultants, Read the case carefully and answer the questions below in clear, professional English, Use evidence from the case.

PART A — Understanding the Business Plan (Lesson 1)

1. What is the main purpose of a business plan for RE:TURN at this stage of its development?

2. Identify two possible audiences for RE:TURN's business plan. What information would each audience be most interested in?

3. Explain why the business plan should be clear, concise and professional.

PART B — Executive Summary (Lesson 2)

4. Write an executive summary of 100–130 words for RE:TURN. Include the business idea, target customers, value proposition, current position and future objective.

5. Which three facts from the case should appear in the executive summary? Explain briefly why you selected them.

PART C — Company Description, Mission and Vision (Lesson 3)

6. Describe RE:TURN's business activity, founding team and current operations.

7. Identify the company's mission, vision and four core values from the case.

8. Do you think the mission and vision are clear and realistic? Suggest one improvement to either statement.

PART D — Market Analysis and Industry Context (Lesson 4)

9. Identify the three main customer segments. Which segment should RE:TURN target first? Justify your answer.

10. What market trends or customer needs may create an opportunity for RE:TURN?

11. Identify at least two direct or indirect competitors or alternatives mentioned in the case. How can RE:TURN differentiate itself?

12. Interpret the survey results. What do the figures 68%, 82% and 47% suggest about customer interest and possible barriers?

13. Prepare a brief market analysis paragraph (80–100 words) using evidence from the case.

PART E — Products, Services and Value Proposition (Lesson 5)

14. Distinguish between the products and services offered by RE:TURN.

15. Identify three features of RE:TURN's offer and explain the customer benefit of each feature.

16. Evaluate the proposed unique value proposition. Is it specific and convincing? Rewrite it if necessary.

17. Complete two comparative sentences about RE:TURN and disposable packaging or other alternatives. Use accurate comparisons supported by the case.

PART F — Marketing and Sales Strategies (Lesson 6)

18. Apply the 4 Ps of the marketing mix to RE:TURN: Product, Price, Place and Promotion.

19. Which two promotional channels should RE:TURN prioritize with its limited budget? Explain your choices.

20. Suggest one pricing approach for individual customers and one for partner cafés. Explain the logic behind each.

21. Describe how a customer can move from awareness to purchase and then to repeat use of RE:TURN.

22. Select three performance indicators (KPIs) that RE:TURN should monitor during the next six months. Explain what each indicator measures.

PART G — SWOT ANALYSIS (MAIN FOCUS)

23. Prepare a complete SWOT analysis of RE:TURN. Identify at least four points in each category. Every point must be supported by information from the case or clearly identified as a reasonable external possibility.

STRENGTHS (Internal +) E.g. resources, skills, capabilities, advantages 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	**WEAKNESSES (Internal −)** E.g. limited resources, operational problems, gaps 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
OPPORTUNITIES (External +) E.g. market needs, trends, partnerships, growth 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	**THREATS (External −)** E.g. competitors, customer resistance, external risks 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

24. Select the two most important weaknesses and the two most serious threats. Explain why they require urgent action.

25. Based on your SWOT analysis, propose TWO strategic actions that use RE:TURN's strengths to take advantage of opportunities (SO strategies).

26. Propose ONE action that reduces a weakness and protects the company from a threat (WT strategy).

27. Should RE:TURN accept the large café-chain partnership now, accept it under conditions, or postpone it? Use your SWOT analysis to justify your recommendation.