


Writing Teaching Cases



The case method is a powerful way of teaching and learning business subjects. This short guide gives advice on how to write your case study and teaching note.

We want to help you create a successful case, so if you are unsure about any aspect of the writing or publication process, please reach out and ask for guidance. Our contact details are on the final page.



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WHY CASE STUDIES?

"We have to find ways of capturing the complexity of management. And, the only way we can do that is with in-depth, longitudinal, carefully crafted, rigorously developed case studies."

"Undertaking case studies has been fundamental to every bit of work that I've done."
Michael E. Porter, Bishop William Lawrence University Professor, Harvard University, USA

The difference between teaching cases and research cases

Writing a teaching case is more similar to writing a spy thriller than a research article.

To begin with, a case has to have a hook: an overriding issue that pulls various parts together, a managerial issue or decision that requires urgent attention.

The trick is to present the story so that the hook is not immediately apparent but "discovered" by students by putting relevant pieces together. More importantly, the hook must be linked to a particular concept, theory, or methodology.

A teaching case reflects the ambiguity of the situation and need not have a single outcome, as the intent is to create a dialogue with students, encourage critical thinking and research and evaluate recommendations.

Research cases are a methodology used to support research findings and add to the body of theoretical knowledge, and as such are more academically-focused and evidence-based.

Before you start your case



Be clear on your Teaching Objective

The case method offers a variety of class participation methods such as discussion, role-play, presentation or examination – decide which method best suits the case you want to write.



Collect Information through documents, interviews

Make sure that you have all the materials you will need before you start the writing process. This will speed up the actual writing process.



Identify Case Lead Author

You might want to consider writing your case study in partnership with colleagues. This can be a good option to add value to the paper by drawing on different strengths. However, if you are writing a case with other people you need to make sure the paper reads as one voice. You do not have to share the work evenly. Instead, play to your individual strengths: one author might be better at data analysis, one a better writer. Agree and clarify the order of appearance of authors. This is very important since this cannot be changed after publication.



Obtain permission to publish

All teaching cases submitted for review must include appropriate signed permissions from case protagonists, e.g., CEO; company directors or any employee given authority by the organization; or the person or persons under review, granting full permission to publish the case. Written permission must also be obtained if you include any material for which someone other than yourself or the case subject/protagonist, own the copyright. Failure to obtain permissions can lead to severe delays in publication.

WRITING THE CASE STUDY

How to write and structure a case

- Write in past tense
- Identify and establish an issue/problem which can be used to teach a concept or theory

The opening paragraph should make clear

- WHO is the main protagonist?
- WHO is the key decision maker?
- WHAT is the nature of the issue/problem?
- WHEN did the case take place? Specify the date line in this paragraph.
- WHERE did the case take

The body of the Case should

- Tell the whole story - usually in a chronological order
- Typically contain general background on business environment, company background, and the details of the specific issue(s) faced by the company.
- Tell more than one side to the story so that students can think of competing alternatives.

The concluding paragraph should

- Provide a short synthesis of the case to reiterate the main issues, or even to raise new questions.

Common mistakes when writing a teaching case

- Written as a research article not a case
- Submitting a case that has never been taught in class
- "Taking sides"
- Including analysis and lessons learned
- Not following instructions – author guidelines.
- Lack of fit ('why was it sent to this collection?').
- Case does not adequately suit the teaching/ learning objectives it sets out to achieve.
- Lack of permission documentation from organisation.

What makes a good teaching note?

- Case synopsis
- Target audience
- Clear learning objectives
- Suggested class time, broken down by topics
- Suggested student assignment
- Brief description of the opening 10-15 minutes
- Challenging case discussion questions with sample answers
- Brief description of the closing 10-15 minutes
- If applicable, an update of "what actually happened"
- Supporting material – worksheets, videos, readings, reference material, etc.

Common mistakes for teaching notes

- Teaching the case requires additional information
- Not enough detail – a 90 minute teaching plan supported by a one page teaching note
- Suggested answers are not supported by the case
- Learning objectives – applying a model without a purpose.
- No sample answers
- No analysis or lessons learned

Once you have written the case study and teaching note it is worth trying them out in class to see if there is enough information in the case study and that the teaching note supports an exciting and productive lesson.

WHICH PUBLICATION WOULD SUIT MY CASE STUDY?

A key factor in boosting the chances of your case study being published is making sure it is submitted to the most suitable outlet. Emerald is delighted to offer a range of different offerings:

The Case Journal

Emerald is delighted to publish The CASE Journal, the official journal of The CASE Association, the leading, online, double-blind, peer-reviewed journal featuring factual teaching cases and case exercises spanning the full spectrum of business and management disciplines.

TCJ invites submissions of cases designed for classroom use. Cases from all business disciplines will be considered. Cases must be factual, and releases must be available where necessary. All cases must be accompanied by an instructors' manual that identifies the intended course, relevant theoretical concepts or models that can be applied, and the research methodology for the case. The instructors' manual should also contain discussion questions with suggested responses and a teaching plan if not inherent in the Q&A.

Emerging Markets Case Studies

Emerging Markets Case Studies is a digital collection of peer-reviewed teaching case studies focusing on business decision making and management in global markets.

We welcome cases and especially teaching notes that apply comprehensive and recent theoretical perspectives and empirical findings. Teaching notes should detail appropriate learning activities and be finalized after at least one teaching of the case. Teaching objectives and course topics should cover one or more of the main Business and Management subject areas.

We welcome submissions based on companies from the approximately 30 countries regularly highlighted in the various BRICs, Next 11, CIVETS, 10 Big, Eagles, G3s, and Dynamic Markets Index rankings.

HOW DO I SUBMIT MY CASE STUDY?

The Case Journal

Submissions to TCJ are made using ScholarOne Manuscripts, the online submission and peer review system. Registration and access is available at

<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/tcjl>

Full information and guidance on using ScholarOne Manuscripts is available at the Emerald ScholarOne Manuscripts Support Centre:

<http://msc.emeraldinsight.com>

All cases and articles will be subject to a double blind developmental review process. Our reviewers will offer suggestions for improvement and revision, where appropriate.

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Who to contact?

For more information about writing a case and how to submit a case study please contact Gareth Bell, Publisher by emailing gbell@emeraldgroup.com