



Guidance on Writing a Case Study

Why Write a Case Study?

- To introduce yourself.
- To educate others.
- To evidence your competence.

Case Study Length and Structure

The Case study should be between 300 and 500 words long.

It should consist of a Beginning (The Business Challenge); Middle (The Solution / What you did); and an End (Benefits/Results). It should be written in plain English and only use industry terms and jargon where necessary.

Good case studies should be based around imparting useful knowledge. Extolling the virtues of your organisation is merely a benefit.

Note: It is not necessary to name specific people. It's often better to write about organisations or communities as this does not put too much pressure on any individual and makes it more readable by a wider variety of people. If you do identify an individual by name, you must have their permission.

1. Beginning: Outline the Challenge

First give key facts. Second, describe a business challenge you faced.

Example 1: XXX are an East Sussex-based parking enforcement company. Turnover is £1.5m with three major nightclubs and almost 40 small retail outlets. Credit card payment tracking problems meant operatives often found themselves in situations with confrontational members of the public refusing to pay fines. Profits and staff retention were both hit as a result.

In this example we know the division of the sector, the rough size of the company and a little about the challenges their management faced with regard to their operatives and clients. There is also enough about the problem to decide whether or not it has any relevance to the reader.

Example 2: XXX are world-leading experts in the field of car park management, with a staff of 2,500 and contracts throughout the UK. Back In 2002, the senior management team identified a number of issues that were affecting the business bottom line including problems retaining staff, customer complaints and and the quality of new recruits amongst others. They concluded that one solution to these problems, particularly those relating to staffing issues, could lie in investing in training.

2. Middle: Solution: What you did

This part describes what you did in response to the situation. What did your organisation *do*? What steps were taken? This will usually follow a chronological sequence. Wherever relevant, link the action taken with your organisation's current strategy or approach.

Example 1: The company introduced a number of training initiatives, both publicly and privately funded. The BTEC in Vehicle Immobilisation was adopted for all on-street employees and all

employees took part in regular 'top-up' meetings with a weekly-changing skill focus. These included; assertiveness, safety awareness, customer care . . .

Example 2: It was decided to review the correspondence and see if generalizations could be made. We formed a focus group and met monthly to compare and evaluate findings. It quickly became clear we could generalize and we developed a table to record results under the following categories . . .

Include a quote

A quote could be from any relevant person; the CEO of your organisation, yourself, another stakeholder, a staff member who has benefitted from the changes.

Example 1: Linda Gill, a Civil Enforcement Officer from a local authority in London, said *"I get good rates of pay and a generous holiday entitlement plus I'm working towards the NVQ level 2 in Controlling Parking Areas. I believe there are good long-term career prospects."*

Example 2: Group Operations Director Neil Bradshaw said *"XXX's support made all the difference. We have diversified our product mix and become less reliant on individual customers. And we continue to improve, winning business from competitors through our improved our reputation for diversification and fast response."*

3. End: Benefits and Results

Sum up what has happened or briefly indicate how things may be changing. The aim of the case study overall is to expand the opinions of the reader and to allow them to view all sides of the debate as well as sharing good practice.

Emphasize how you save money / time / resources and be as specific as you can. If you would rather not reveal actual amounts, use percentages to show how your experience enabled you to save / gain.

Example 1: As a result, productivity increased by 22%.

Example 2: These changes seem to have also increased job satisfaction – one new recruit said she was more likely to stay within the sector after the changes.

Example 3: The absenteeism rate amongst learners is 0.86%, the Company average is 5.3% representing an annual saving of £130,000.

Example 4: XXX now benefits from a reduced accident rate and its insurers allow more flexible terms. The business has experienced reductions in accidents for four consecutive years and now receives a substantial yearly rebate for low claims experience.

Example 5: The organisation was recently complimented in a Health and Safety audit on its high standards of compliance.

Using your Case Study

Tell people about your case studies and where they can find them; advising others makes you look authoritative and successful.

Two websites that feature good examples of case studies are:
<http://www.skillsforlogistics.org/en/index/skillspay/case-studies> and
<http://info.emeraldinsight.com/authors/guides/case.htm?part=4>

Please feel free to contact me for support or guidance on; jennifer.d@britishparking.co.uk