



# eCases

## 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.

# Why case studies?

“The best case studies provide learning experiences that are often remembered beyond the student’s time at the university. Students frequently report drawing upon concepts learned via case study when solving business problems years after graduation.

Students may remember the issues of a particular case and apply what they have learned to career challenges much more effectively than they may recall theoretical concepts.”



Dr Rebecca Morris  
Editor-in-Chief  
The CASE Journal

## The difference between teaching cases and research cases

Writing a teaching case requires a distinctive literary style written in the third person, in the past tense and establishing an objectivity of core dilemmas in the case

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 putting the 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.



## Getting ready to write



### Be clear on your teaching objective

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



### Identify case lead author

You might want to consider writing your case study in partnership with colleagues. However, if you are writing a case with other people you need to make sure that the case 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.



### Collect information from sources

Make sure that you have all the materials you will need before you start the writing process. This will speed up the actual process. Most case studies have a mixture of primary and secondary sources to help capture the spirit of the protagonist.



### 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, 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

## 1. How to write and structure a case

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

## 2. The opening paragraph should make clear

- Who the main protagonist is
- Who the key decision maker is
- What the nature of the problem or issue is
- When the case took place, including specific dates
- Where the case took place – which organisation
- Why the issue or problem arose.

## 3. 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 of the story so that students can think of competing alternatives.

## 4. The concluding paragraph should

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

## Final thoughts...

### What makes a great teaching case?

- Written in the case teaching narrative style, not in the style of a research article
- Submitting a case that has been classroom tested and therefore is much more robust
- Objectivity and considering all sides of a dilemma
- Fit with the objectives of the publication it is included
- Allowing for relevant learning outcomes and enabling students to meet them effectively.

### What makes a good teaching note?

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

### Common review feedback comments

- The case requires additional information in order to be taught
- A lack of detail
- Suggested answers are not supported by the case
- Learning objectives which apply a model without a purpose
- No sample answers
- Not written in the third person or past tense
- No analysis or lessons learned.

Once you have written the case study and teaching notes you need to try 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 two key options:



**Emerging Markets Case Studies (EMCS)** welcomes well-researched, instructive, and multimedia online cases about the most interesting companies in complex emerging market contexts, to be used by faculty to develop effective managers globally. Cases must be factual, and be developed from multiple sources, including primary data sourced and signed-off by the company involved. Secondary-source cases would need to make a significant contribution beyond the initial secondary sources. The accompanying Teaching Note should apply comprehensive and recent theoretical perspectives to the appropriate learning activities detailed.



**The CASE Journal (TCJ)** is 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, with releases available where necessary, and all cases must be accompanied by an instructors' manual/teaching note that identifies the intended course, relevant theoretical concepts or models that can be applied and the research methodology for the case. The instructors' manual or teaching note should also contain discussion questions with suggested responses and a teaching plan if not inherent in the Q&A.

## How do I submit my case study?

**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>

**Submissions to EMCS** are made using ScholarOne Manuscripts, the online submission and peer review system. Registration and access is available at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/emcs>

Full information and guidance on using ScholarOne Manuscripts is available at the Emerald ScholarOne Manuscripts support centre: <http://msc.emeraldinsight.com>

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



**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.**

## Who to contact?

For more information about writing and submitting a case study please contact **Claire Jackson, Senior Publisher** ([cjackson@emeraldgroup.com](mailto:cjackson@emeraldgroup.com))