



How to write the case study

There are two different approaches to case studies

Type 1: The Analytical Approach

The case study is examined in order to try and understand what has happened and why. It is not necessary to identify problems or suggest solutions.

Type 2: The Problem-Oriented Method

The case study is analysed to identify the major problems that exist and to suggest solutions to these problems.

This Quickref focuses on Type 2: The Problem-Oriented Method

Check with your lecturer which type they require.

A successful case study analyses a real life situation where existing problems need to be solved. It should:

- Relate the theory to a practical situation; for example, apply the ideas and knowledge discussed in the coursework to the practical situation at hand in the case study.
- Identify the problems
- Select the major problems in the case
- Suggest solutions to these major problems
- Recommend the best solution to be implemented
- Detail how this solution should be implemented

NB: The Case is the “real life” situation
The Case *Study* is the analysis of this situation

Available online at <http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/quickrefs/>

How to Write the Case Study

There are usually eight sections in a case study.

Synopsis/Executive Summary

- Outline the purpose of the case study
- Describe the field of research – this is usually an overview of the company
- Outline the issues and findings of the case study without the specific details
- Identify the theory that will be used.
- Here, the reader should be able to get a clear picture of the essential contents of the study.
- Note any assumptions made (you may not have all the information you'd like so some assumptions may be necessary eg: "It has been assumed that...", "Assuming that it takes half an hour to read one document...")

Findings

- Identify the problems found in the case. Each analysis of a problem should be supported by facts given in the case together with the relevant theory and course concepts. Here, it is important to search for the underlying problems for example: cross-cultural conflict may be only a symptom of the underlying problem of inadequate policies and practices within the company.
- This section is often divided into sub-sections, one for each problem.

Discussion

- Summarise the major problem/s
- Identify alternative solutions to this/these major problem/s (there is likely to be more than one solution per problem)
- Briefly outline each alternative solution and then evaluate it in terms of its advantages and disadvantages
- No need to refer to theory or coursework here.

Conclusion

- Sum up the main points from the findings and discussion

Recommendations

- Choose which of the alternative solutions should be adopted
- Briefly justify your choice explaining how it will solve the major problem/s
- This should be written in a forceful style as this section is intended to be persuasive
- Here integration of theory and coursework is appropriate

Implementation

- Explain what should be done, by whom and by when
- If appropriate include a rough estimate of costs (both financial and time).

References

- Make sure all references are sited correctly

Appendices (if any)

- Note any original data that relates to the study but which would have interrupted the flow of the main body.

Other useful references

LLOnline, IT Case Study <http://www.monash.edu.au/lis/lonline/writing/information-technology/case-study/>

Kimberly, N & Crosling, G 2005, *Q Manual*, Monash University, Caulfield East, Vic, pp.47-49.

Management Case Study, L & L Online tutorial <http://www.monash.edu.au/lis/lonline/writing/business-economics/management/index.xml>

Summers, J & Smith, B 2004, *Communication skills handbook*, John Wiley & Sons, Milton, Qld, pp.47-62.