



Brisbane Campus

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

What is a case study?

A case study is basically a true story of what happened to a business or industry over a number of years. It tells the events, according to time, that happened, how the managers had to deal with it and their response to the problem. They are interesting as the company usually has changed its business or strategies based on the event.

What is a case study analysis?

A case study analysis is a written activity that summarises, analyses and recommends to the company what should be done/learned from the event in the case study.

There are two basic kinds of case studies:

- **Analysing Case Studies with Questions** – There are set questions that must be answered that guide the writer's analysis of the case.
- **Problem based** – The writer decides how they want to analyse the case.

You will usually be required to write a case study analysis at University and for business.

Why do we write case studies?

- to apply theory into practice
- to learn real life lessons so as not to repeat them in the workplace

How do you complete one?

There are five (5) basic steps to completing one:

1. Read then reread the case study
2. Read the questions at the end if any.
3. Analyse the study to determine what went wrong exactly, why and how to avoid it in the future
4. Gather information from books, journals, relevant websites.
5. Write answer(s)

Case study analysis layout - Analysing Case Studies with Questions

These have set questions at the end of the case study that must be answered.

When writing your answer, use the following layout:

- Answer
- Explanation
- Example

Example - Analysing Case Studies with Questions

Additional case study: Facebook

Firms in India are losing productivity because of Facebook. Office staff are spending too long on the social networking site. According to The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Assocham) employees use Orkut, Facebook, Myspace, and LinkedIn for "romancing" and other purposes. On average, employees spend an hour a day on sites like Facebook. This reduces productivity by 12.5%. Nearly half of office employees accessed Facebook during work time. Some 83% saw nothing wrong in surfing at work during office hours. In September 2009 Portsmouth City Council in England banned staff from accessing Facebook on its computers when it was discovered that they spent, on average, 400 hours on the site every month.

Questions

1. What is meant by productivity?
2. Analyze the impact on a fall in productivity on costs.
3. Analyze the possible consequences for businesses in India of banning access to Facebook and other social networking sites.
4. Do you think access should be denied?

Example Answer Question 1 - Analysing Case Studies with Questions

Function	Example	Language
Answer →	1. Productivity is how much work an employee does in the time they are at work. The more work they do in the time period the more productive they are considered to be. For example, an employee who is expected to work 8 hours per day but works for 7 and relaxes for one is not as productive as one who works continuously for 8 hours.	Use of present tense e.g. <u>is</u> ←
Explanation →		Use of link word <u>For example</u> ←
Example →		

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Case study analysis layout - Problem based

These are usually longer and there is a lot of choice as to how to approach the analysis. The layout is similar to a business report.

1. Title Page
2. Letter of transmittal
3. Table of contents
4. Executive Summary
5. Problem identification
6. Analysis of problems and Issues
7. Evaluation of alternative solutions
8. Recommendations
9. Implementation
10. Appendices
11. Reference List

Title page

Unless otherwise stated the title page of your report should include the following details:

- title of the report
- your name and student number
- due date for the assignment
- name of the tutor or Lecturer for whom the report was written
- the name of the subject (including the subject code)

Letter of Transmittal

A report usually includes a covering letter or message to the person who requested it. Basically, the writer says, "Please find attached the report you requested." This covering letter or message should be written as a brief formal letter. It must clearly state **WHEN** the report was written, **WHO** it is written for and the **PURPOSE** of the report.

Example Letter of Transmittal

Mr. William Jones
Director
Future Strategy & Solutions
147 Success Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

01 April 2014

Ms. Eleanor Smith
Manager
ACME Pty Ltd
592 Zig Zag Avenue
Strathpine QLD 4500

Dear Ms. Smith

As requested, the team of Future Strategy & Solutions has prepared a report examining the effectiveness of current policies and procedures of your workplace organization. The purpose of this report is to present the findings based upon research and to provide recommendations concerning how best to proceed in the future.

The findings of the report demonstrate that constantly refining and modifying policies and procedures within the workplace organization adds value and works toward compliance and streamlining work activities.

Yours Sincerely

William Jones
Director
Future Strategy & Solutions

Table of Contents and List of figures, tables, illustrations.

This page(s) is used to outline the sections of the case study. The contents page should list the main section headings and any sub-headings of the report together with their page numbers. Make sure that the contents numbering system is the same as the one you use throughout the case study. If there are more than six figures, tables and illustrations they should be listed on a separate page with the page numbers in the text.

Example of a table of contents

CONTENTS	
1. Executive Summary	1
2. Introduction	2
3. Problem Identification and analysis	4
3.1 The lack of motivation among the Word Processing Centre (WPC) Employees	4
3.2 Decrease in costs	5
3.3 Lack of social contact	6
4. Evaluation of solutions	7
4.1 Appoint a WPC employee to two solicitors	7
4.2 Organise external social events	8
5. Conclusion	9
6. Recommendations and Implementation	9
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Executive summary

A good executive summary allows a busy reader to get the main points of the case study without reading the whole case study. It is usually a half to one page long.

It should include:

- The purpose of the case study
- The scope of the report
- The methods used in any investigations
- The main findings and points of discussion
- The main conclusions of the report
- The main recommendations

Example of an executive summary

Function	Example	Language
Purpose →	<p>The purpose of this case study was to examine the drop in workplace production amongst employees at the Word Processing Centre(WPC) and to halt the high turnover of staff across all its multinational offices and subsidiaries.</p>	Past tense ←
Methodology →	<p>Research for this case study included a review of current literature on the integration of business, culture and motivation.</p>	Past tense ←
Background →	<p>The Word Processing Centre (WPC) is a large multinational company which at the time employed over 67,000 staff and processed over 270, 000, 000 orders every year. The company became active in the 1930s seeking to target the large corporate (85%) population. By 1988 it had achieved 15% of national market share.</p>	← Past and/or present depending on the case presented and the company involved
Findings →	<p>The major findings indicate that the Word Processing Centre (WPC) employees suffer greatly from a lack of motivation due to isolation and lack of task variety. Furthermore the company's cost cutting has led to an overall lack of resources which hinders the employees' ability to complete tasks and thus also affects their motivational levels.</p>	← Present tense and past tense. What the author found is present, events are in past.
Conclusion & Recommendations →	<p>While it is clear that the situation was unique in some ways it was avoidable. This report recommends that the Word Processing Centre (WPC) create more opportunities for departments and employees to interact, give more power to employees to make decisions and appoint a social committee to organise social events to boost morale.</p>	← Present when mentions recommendations, past tense while referring to the events

Findings

- Problem Identification and analysis

Function	Example	Language
<p>3. Problem identification and analysis</p> <p>3.1 The lack of motivation amongst the Word Processing Centre (WPC) employees</p> <p><u>Topic sentence</u> →</p> <p><i>Supporting Evidence from Theory</i> →</p> <p><i>Supporting Evidence from case study</i> →</p> <p>Sum up and link to next idea →</p>	<p>The WPC employees greatly suffer from a lack of motivation. Motivation is the willingness to exert high levels of effort to reach organisational goals, conditioned by the efforts to satisfy some individual need (Robbins, Bergman, Stagg and Coulter, 2000, p.549). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory identifies those symptoms, which contribute to the WPC clerks' lack of motivation. The clerks state that they feel isolated on the 35th floor and have contact only with one another and Mrs Blakely. Also there is a high turnover rate, with only three clerks in the WPC having worked for the firm for more than eighteen months, with the majority staying only about 12 months. As a result they do not possess the initiative for growth and achievement of their potential. The clerks' esteem needs are also undermined because they perform the same monotonous activities. They possess no autonomy as Mrs Blakely assigns the tasks. Moreover, they would like to earn a promotion but find it hard to stay interested. Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory is also relevant. It identifies the intrinsic factors, the motivators that are related to job satisfaction and motivation, whereas extrinsic factors, the hygiene factors, are associated with job dissatisfaction (Robbins et al., 2000, p.553). As previously identified above, the ones that are relevant are supervision, relationship with the supervisor, working conditions and relationship with peers (Robbins et al., 2000, p.553).</p>	<p>←</p> <p>Use of nouns for heading</p> <p>←</p> <p>Use of present tense e.g. suffer</p> <p>←</p> <p>Theory cited using present tense. e.g. <i>suffers identifies</i></p> <p>←</p> <p>Use of present tense e.g. state, is</p> <p>←</p> <p>Use of link words <i>Also, As a result, Moreover</i></p> <p>←</p> <p>Theory cited using present tense. e.g. <i>is, identifies, are.</i></p>

- Evaluation of alternative solutions

Function	Example	Language
<p><u>Topic sentence</u> →</p> <p><i>Supporting explanation</i> →</p> <p><u>Negative impact of solution</u> →</p>	<p>4. Solutions for Motivating the WPC Employees</p> <p>4.1 Appoint a WPC employee to two solicitors</p> <p>Each data clerk should be appointed to two solicitors where possible. This would allow the WPC employees to have increased contact with other people in the firm.</p> <p>Each WPC employee's work area could be near the office of their designated solicitor. All data clerks on the same floor should be located together. This would enable them to perform a greater number of activities instead of doing the same thing all day. Consequently, this would improve their work skills and allow the WPC employees to show greater initiative, establishing responsibility and loyalty. It would also provide better training for becoming a relief secretary. Also the data clerks could meet as a group every week to discuss problems and issues. However, WPC employee skills may not improve because the clerks could feel intimidated by the solicitors.</p> <p>It may be difficult to discipline the girls and prevent them from arriving late, talking and slacking off. They may not be able to keep up with the extra workload and their skills may not improve.</p>	<p>Use of <u>should</u> to show advice ←</p> <p>Use of modals; <i>would, could, should</i> to show possibility/advice ←</p> <p>Use of <i>consequently</i> to show possible result ←</p> <p>Use of <i>However</i> to show contrast. ←</p> <p>Use of modals <u>could, may</u> ←</p>

Conclusion

Function	Example	Language
<u>Summarise main ideas</u> →	In conclusion, Herzberg, Robbins et al and Coulter all agree that lack of motivation severely impacts on a businesses' ability to function. The research therefore supports the solutions which aim to increase motivation in the short and long term. As a result the recommendations in this report need to be implemented if the business wishes to increase profits, retain key staff members and be successful in the long term.	Present tense to summarise e.g. <i>agree. is</i> ←
Evaluate →		Present or future to express opinion ink past to present e.g. <i>need to be</i> ←
Writer's view →		

Recommendations & Implementation

Function	Example	Language
<u>Topic sentence</u> →	<p>4. Recommendations and Implementation</p> <p>4.1 Increase motivation amongst the WPC employees</p> <p>In order to reduce the lack of motivation amongst the WPC employees a combination of allocating them to solicitors and setting individual goals should be implemented. Goal setting is very important as it will motivate each individual to assess her role in the firm. Goals can be established for each WPC employee, the WPC employees as a group, and also for the WPC senior staff and solicitors. By appointing a WPC employee to a solicitor, each clerk can learn to recognise their needs, especially their esteem, social and self-actualisation needs in the firm. Motivators such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and growth can also be achieved (Robbins et al., 2000, p.553).</p>	Use of simple verb. E.g. increase . ←
Supporting Reason →		Use of <u>should</u> to show advice ←
Result of advice →		Use of <i>can</i> to show possibility of following idea ←
Sum up and Use of evidence →		Use of phrase <i>Bying</i> to link idea to positive possibility using <u>can</u> ←

Appendices

Information not referred to in the main part of the report should be attached in an Appendix. This information is relevant but not necessarily essential to the larger overview. Appendices may include tables, texts, graphs, diagrams, photographs, questionnaires, etc.

Reference List

Like an essay, a literature review must contain a reference list or recommendations for reading in a full bibliography. The reference list should give information about all sources cited in the report. Use the APA referencing format.

These guidelines are not prescriptive and some academic staff may have their own preferences, so it is important that you consult the subject outline and/or the tutor before proceeding.