

BUSINESS CASE STUDY

Content

A case study is an analysis of a particular business situation of an organisation which includes identifying the key issues and analysing them in the context of learned theories. It may also include comparing the pros and cons of possible solutions to these issues, as well as selecting the more effective solution with recommendations for future action. One type of case study is an analytical case study where you determine what has occurred in the business situation and what problems have arisen as a result with the main focus on the 'what' and 'why'. Another type is a problem-solving case study, which builds on the analytical approach, yet provides recommendations to improve the situation.

Structure

Case studies for business situations generally contain an introduction, main body and recommendations section. They may require an executive summary that states the aim of the case study, a description of any methods used to collect data, a summary of the main issues, and recommendations for future action. Some case studies require a table of contents and appendices section with information that does not need be included in the body of the report but would be useful for the reader. Clarify the sections required for your case study assessment with your educator.

Case Study Elements

Case Studies often include the following elements:

Executive summary

- overall summary of the purpose of the case study, its findings and points of discussion, and the main recommendations.

Table of contents

- content list of what will be covered in the report.

Introduction

- brief background of the focus of the case study with relevant background information.
- a clear statement of the issue/s to be addressed and/or the aim and scope of the case study.
- include the main points that will be covered in the main section of the report signposted for the reader.

Main Body

- contains all the key aspects of the assessment criteria.
- identifies the main problem/s
- analyses the problems inclusive of underlying causes.
- evaluates possible solutions to problems that you aim to solve.
- cite all source material using APA 7th edition in-text referencing.

Recommendations

- summarises the main findings without adding any new information.
- gives recommendations based on the findings.

Reference List

- provides a list of the source material you used in your report following the APA 7th edition reference list format.

Appendices

- provides further information that is too long or detailed to include in the main body of the report. Usually, appendices are not included in

Things to consider in a business case study:

- Organisation's objective
- The stakeholders within and outside the organisation
- The organisation's formal and informal decision making processes
- The organisation's process of production or service delivery
- The organisation's competitors
- External factors impacting on the organisation
- The major problem/s
- The subsequent problems and implications
- The role of management in relation to the problem
- The role of production/service providers in relation to the problem.



Style

Case studies require you to write in the third person (people's names, he/she/they, the counsellor, the client etc.) when discussing theories or research, or the client, the professional or the organisation in the case.

A case study might require you to use first person ('I', 'my' etc.) to provide your own reflections about the case, its personal impact on you, or how you would apply theories and skills to the case. Check with your educator about whether you should use first person.

Case studies are written in a formal tone. There are different types of writing for different sections within the case study. For example:

- Use simple past tense to describe procedures and methods.
- Use the present tense to emphasise the currency of information when reviewing what is already known in the field.
- Use comparative and evaluative language when analysing and interpreting information.
- Use modal forms such as 'may', 'might', 'tend to', 'suggests' when speculating rather than describing known facts.

Critical Thinking

When writing a case study, critical thinking is necessary to meet the requirements of the assessment. Critical thinking is used in the process of understanding and interpreting the issue, in analysing and evaluating information, in the application of relevant theories to your research, and when formulating conclusions and giving recommendations. For more on critical thinking, click [here](#).

Asking the following questions can guide you when evaluating information:

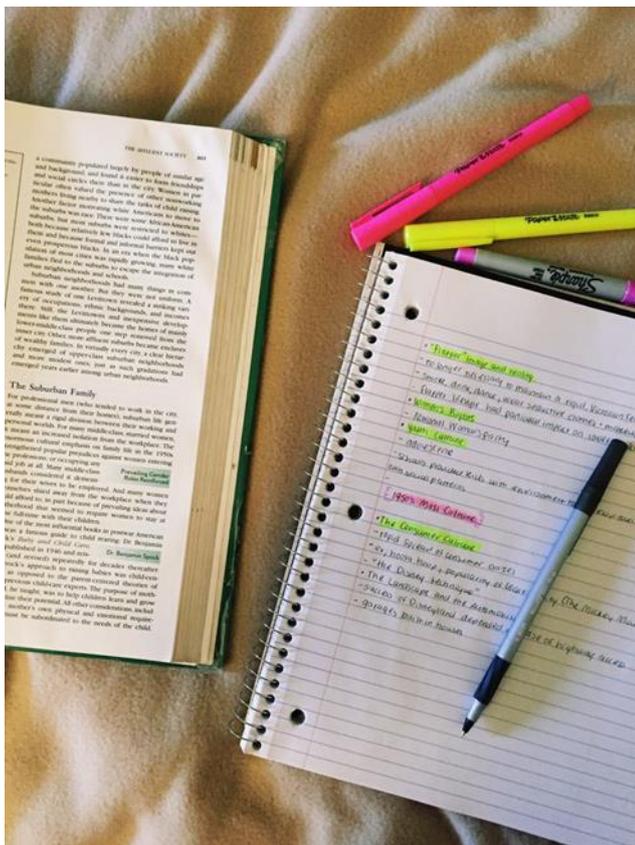
- Are the claims being made supported by current evidence?
- Is the type of evidence the most suitable available?
- When analysing information, have you considered the 'why' and the 'how'?
- Have you reflected on any biases or assumptions that may influence the direction of the report?
- Does the report evaluate different perspectives to make fair judgements and recommendations?

Headings

Unlike essays, business case studies usually have headings that relate to your particular assessment. Headings give structure to your writing by telling the reader what content to expect as well as illustrating its relative position within a hierarchy.

If you have not been given specific headings to use in your report, you will need to create appropriate headings based on the elements in the marking criteria.

For more on APA style of figures & tables, click [here](#).



Formatting headings according to APA Style

The APA Publication Manual gives guidelines for up to five levels of heading in a paper, although most report assignments will need only two or three levels.

1. The first level should be centered and in bold. Each main word should start with a capital letter.
2. The second level should be left aligned and in bold. Each main word should start with a capital letter.
3. The third level should be flush left, in bold and italics. Each main word should start with a capital letter.

The example on the following page shows font and indentation formatting for when three levels of headings are used.

Example of APA Style formatting

Heading level 1 should be centered and in bold. Each main word should start with a capital letter.

Problem identification and analysis

When using abbreviations for terms that are long, write the full term and abbreviation in parenthesis. Use the abbreviation only from then on.

Heading level 2 should be left aligned and in bold. Each main word should start with a capital letter.

The lack of employee motivation

Put a first line indentation for all paragraphs.

The Word Processing Centre (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”

When citing sources of three or more authors, use: et al.

(Robbins et al., 2000). 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). 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).

In-text citation for direct quotes need double quotation marks and a page or paragraph number.

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