

Cross-Border Coffee Break: Case Studies, Impactful Local Voices

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1. In the categories of cases, would you say that some of these case types overlap?

Yes, I think they do. I pulled the categories apart somewhat just to make the definitions clearer. You can find several of those categories within the same cases. They do overlap.

2. Are you aware of any cases that are done more on an industry level rather than the company level?

Yes, they tend not to be cases too much because at an industry level it's difficult to find a protagonist that represents the industry. There are background notes on an industry, which can give an overall coverage of what's current in that industry. What are most companies within that industry struggling with? You might look at the newspaper business and say that newspapers around the world are struggling with the impact of online and people moving away from buying a physical newspaper to expecting free access to information and resources. That's something that would be covered in a background note rather than a case at an industry level, but at the level of an individual newspaper then I could imagine the case being written at exactly that. The background note would be the thing that goes first to the students and then the case follows that.

3. How are policy cases different than business cases?

I'm not sure that they are different. I think we carry quite a few collections that look at issues of policy. There are collections looking at government policy, governance, healthcare, etc. The main difference is not an emphasis on profitability but looking at not-for-profit activities or governance activities. The cases still have a focus on business-like behavior, analysis, communication, and working as teams. The output is different but the nature of the discussion or the nature of the case is really affected by it.

4. Could you please clarify the relationship between teaching cases and accreditation?

We've been talking for some time with AACSB and EFMD. Both have rubrics for accreditation and rooms for schools to submit teacher-writing cases as evidence that make those standards. In the AACSB accreditation rubric, it follows two things. One is AACSB measures and accredits your ability to being the kind of school that you say you want to be. They don't want to impose their definition of what makes a good business school. Their definition is if you want to be an international school, local school, teaching school, research school, etc., then they ask you to provide evidence that you are really good at being that type of school. They categorize faculty from research faculty and teachers who not only teaches but writes teaching cases. The faculty member who does that could be described in AACSB terms as evidence of impactful scholarship. You may be a practitioner, perhaps someone coming in from industry, you're non-academic but you are taking your industry experience and teaching with it. You're teaching is captured in the teaching case as its used in other skills, that teaching case is evidence of impactful scholarship. We are very happy to provide data that will say, this case has been taught in excellent bills in X number of countries and has reached X number of students. We have experience of some skills using that in support of their accreditation bids.

5. Do you ever find that cases that are submitted to you are not cited or referenced correctly? If so, what are the most common mistakes people make?

I think the typically the mistakes we'll find are those that are usually in academic work. Nothing sticks out as being unusual about cases as compared to what the forms of academic writing.

6. How long should the teaching note be in regard to the case study and how long is a mini case?

Our definition of a mini case is under five pages. Some people have a definition that is even shorter and only a couple pages. It is very difficult to say how long a teaching note should be. Strangely enough, in my experience the shorter the case, the longer the teachers note. It seems to need more support and ideas from the teacher if the case itself is very short. Typically, about five to six pages with a minimum of three pages. Some people are longer with more detailed teaching notes. Some teachers find it very useful, while some just want to have some support but not be controlled. They just want enough evidence to help them fly as a teacher but not so much detail that they feel restricted.

7. How do you deal with situation where you are using primary data to write the case then the protagonist renege on sharing their data?

The essential part of the relationship building between the case writer and the protagonist is to develop that bond of trust so that they trust you and you're going to treat their information. Be clear and upfront, stating I'm trustworthy but I'm also an independent academic. I have the right to express my views accurately and to write a truthful case about your business. This needs to be stated in the beginning. It's a real skill to maintain that relationship. It often works really well between the protagonist and the case writer. The difficulty comes when final sign-off is required and you must get sign-off from the company. It's the company you get sign-off from, not the protagonist. Even if the protagonist is the chief executive, sign-off is required from the legal department of the company. People from the legal department are outside the process of the case being written. They have standard forms of tightly governed non-disclosure agreements that they are used to working with just in case they find the case very difficult. That can involve a lot of hard work but it's not seen as an add-on but as something that's absolutely core to the skills that are required in writing the case. It also goes back to this the choice of the scenario and the choice of the company that you're working with. If you're going to approach Apple and they won't sign off on anything because you're an ordinary first-time writer at a fairly small school. I've gotten no contact with Apple; you're giving yourself an almost impossible task. In this situation, I would give the contacts I already have and use the people I already have relationships with to find out which one of those has mentioned a similar scenario. It could be the local coffee shop, auto repair, solicitors, or a shopping center. Those kinds of people are really valuable. The general advice for novelist is to write what you know about and the same about writing a case. Write what you know about and the people you already developed some type of relationship with.

8. What is your experience with cases with disguised organizations, situations, and protagonists?

From the writing perspective it can often be an invaluable technique to get a hesitant company to agree release of a case that may otherwise not be able to be used.

From a teaching perspective, it's good if the teaching note discloses that it's a disguised company/protagonist, even if it doesn't say who the real company/person is, as the teacher can teach the case in class with the confidence that the situation was real and accurate.

We have lots of disguised cases in the collection and it is often discussed on workshops.

9. Where can faculty look for a first-time case writing grant?

The Case Centre has a scholarships scheme for first-time case writers. We award ten scholarships each year. Each scholarship provides support of £1000 and a free place on one of our case writing workshops. Further details of the scholarships and how to apply may be found at <https://www.thecasecentre.org/educators/submitcases/scholarships/about>

10. What types of resources would you say are important to those interested in writing their own teaching cases?

The resources listed in my final slide are a very good place to start. They include written and video resources, guides and books from a variety of case writing schools. Our *Connects* e journal also features tips from established case writers and our website is also regularly updated with interviews and tips about case writing.

Also, become familiar with leading cases written in your area of expertise and see how other writers have addressed the topic. Our award winning and best selling cases lists are a good place to start.

11. Does the Case Centre only provide trainings for teaching cases or are there workshops for research cases as well?

The Case Centre has a strong focus on teaching cases, though some collections of research cases are contained within our database, and our workshops reflect that focus. Having said that, there are fundamental, core skills that apply equally to both teaching and research cases. If you are considering one of our workshops and would like to discuss its suitability, our Events team would be very pleased to help you workshops@thecasecentre.org