



# Writing cases

## An introductory guide

- Choosing a format
- Inspiring classroom discussion
- How to publish your case

*"Write a case that you would like to teach yourself on a topic that you feel strongly about."*

Christoph Loch, Cambridge Judge Business School

## Writing cases

Welcome to this brief guide to writing cases.

### Field-based or desk-based?

Field-based cases involve working closely with a company and key employees. This type of case is great for bringing a slice of reality into the classroom. Field-based cases are also an excellent way to blend teaching and research and will help to build valuable relationships with real-life companies in the world of business.

Desk-based cases rely on thorough research and judicious selection of materials. They can be a good choice where access to a particular company is impossible. Both field-based and desk-based cases can be highly successful and very effective in the classroom.

*“The case must quickly pull the reader in and force them to think about what they would do and why.”*

Brian Rogers, Swiss Re Institute

### Using multimedia

The case method constantly adapts and changes to meet new challenges and expectations. Case authors now use multimedia in a variety of ways to enhance their students’ classroom experience and ensure today’s tech-savvy learners stay engaged.

*“A whole new mix of ingredients can go into preparing and enriching innovative cases – video, multimedia, simulations, online resources and much more.”*

Peter Zemsky, INSEAD



## A protagonist: telling stories

A compelling protagonist will quickly engage students. They will identify with the lead character as the story in the case unfolds. The key question, 'What would I do next?' will be the start of a great classroom discussion and steep learning curve.

*"The most common mistake that new case writers make is that they think a case should be a story from start to finish. In fact, it should be half a story. Students should be left asking, what am I going to do now?"*

John Mullins, London Business School

## Choosing a format

The traditional written case remains hugely popular. However, case writers now have a number of options to supplement or even replace the written word. Examples include video cases, comic book cases, and even virtual world cases. It's an exciting time to be a case writer!

*"Before I write a case, I think about how I would teach the class, and then I think about what type of case I would like to write."*

Robert Steven Kaplan, Harvard Business School

## Testing in the classroom

This is the only way to find out if your case 'works' or not and a great opportunity to gain invaluable feedback from students, colleagues, and – if you're lucky – the case protagonist who may wish to see the case being taught.

*"The process takes some patience and some 'learning while doing' to develop a case that really sings."*

Mary Crossan, Ivey Business School



## Teaching notes

The figures speak for themselves: under half of the cases in The Case Centre's collection have teaching notes, but 98% of the 50 most popular cases have one.

A teaching note is vital if you want your case to have wide appeal, and can also help when writing the case; some case authors even draft the teaching note first to help clarify their thoughts. It's hugely important, so make sure you include one.

*"I think teaching notes are as important as the case itself. I always spend as much time on them as the cases."*

Sandra Vandermerwe, Gordon Institute of Business Science

## Case release

If your case is field-based, you must get permission from the organisation to release it. The Case Centre cannot publish field-based cases without this permission. By maintaining good relationships and communications with your contacts, case release should be a matter of routine.

*"Secure the collaboration of the company and make sure that they are willing to give you access and permission to publish the case."*

Pierre Chandon, INSEAD

## Distribute through The Case Centre

Make your case available worldwide by publishing with The Case Centre. Simply go to our website to get started. We are unique in offering a distribution service to both institutions and independent authors across the globe. We also allow you or your institution to retain copyright. [www.thecasecentre.org/submityourcase](http://www.thecasecentre.org/submityourcase)



## Find out more ...

### Workshops

Sharpen your case writing skills and be inspired at one of our expert-led case writing workshops. Intensive, practical and hands-on, you'll radically improve your case writing expertise, and have a great time at a wonderful venue. Most of our case writing workshops also offer a post-workshop mentoring and review service.

[www.thecasecentre.org/workshops](http://www.thecasecentre.org/workshops)

*"When learning case writing, I found it very helpful to attend a case writing workshop."*

Lutz Kaufmann, WHU-Otto Beisheim School of Management

### Competitions

Do you have star quality? Our competitions, now known as the case method community's annual 'Oscars', are open to case writers worldwide. Don't miss the chance to compete with other leading case writers in our Outstanding Case Writer, Outstanding Compact Case and 'Hot topic' Competitions. There's also an Outstanding New Case Writer Competition for first-time case writers. Good luck! [www.thecasecentre.org/starquality](http://www.thecasecentre.org/starquality)

*"I was really honoured to win. The competition was an opportunity to motivate myself, to really put a lot of effort into my case and make it the best it could possibly be."*

Laurel C. Austin, Ivey Business School



## Scholarships

Are you an unpublished case writer? Apply for one of our Case Writing Scholarships and benefit from professional input, a cash award and a free place on one of our expert-led case writing workshops. [www.thecasecentre.org/scholarships](http://www.thecasecentre.org/scholarships)

*“The constructive feedback I received on my draft case ensured that I was on the right track. The scholarship was instrumental in building my case writing confidence.”*

Katrina Simon-Agolory, Namibia Business School

## Case Writing & Teaching Exchange

Meet fellow case writers across the globe at our Case Writing & Teaching Exchange on LinkedIn. You can ask questions, discuss case writing and share your own hints and tips. [www.thecasecentre.org/exchange](http://www.thecasecentre.org/exchange)

## Get the book...

Looking for a comprehensive and user-friendly guide to the case method? If so, John Heath's *Teaching & Writing Cases*, published by The Case Centre, is the book for you. It explores the basic core elements of case teaching and writing as well as the huge impact that new technology continues to make on the case method.

[www.thecasecentre.org/heathbook](http://www.thecasecentre.org/heathbook)



## Resources

Explore our resources for case writers:

- The Case Centre: [www.thecasecentre.org](http://www.thecasecentre.org)
- Discover the case method: [www.thecasecentre.org/discover](http://www.thecasecentre.org/discover)
- Watch video clips on the case method: [www.thecasecentre.org/videos](http://www.thecasecentre.org/videos)
- Preparing your teaching note: [www.thecasecentre.org/teachingnoteguide](http://www.thecasecentre.org/teachingnoteguide)
- Getting case release: [www.thecasecentre.org/caserelease](http://www.thecasecentre.org/caserelease)
- Our case workshops: [www.thecasecentre.org/workshops](http://www.thecasecentre.org/workshops)
- Customised workshops: [www.thecasecentre.org/custom](http://www.thecasecentre.org/custom)
- Scholarships for unpublished case writers: [www.thecasecentre.org/scholarships](http://www.thecasecentre.org/scholarships)
- Awards and Competitions: [www.thecasecentre.org/starquality](http://www.thecasecentre.org/starquality)
- The Case Centre's global case distribution service: [www.thecasecentre.org/submitcases](http://www.thecasecentre.org/submitcases)
- Learning with Cases: An Interactive Study Guide: [www.thecasecentre.org/guide](http://www.thecasecentre.org/guide)
- Subscribe to The Case Centre's newsletter: [www.thecasecentre.org/connect](http://www.thecasecentre.org/connect)
- Find out about becoming a member organisation: [www.thecasecentre.org/membership](http://www.thecasecentre.org/membership)



# Discover The Case Centre



## Your one-stop case resource

We are the independent home of the case method. You can:

- browse and buy cases, articles and book chapters
- come on a case method workshop
- use CoursePack Creator
- submit your case or collection
- apply for a case writing scholarship
- enter our competitions.

## The case method

As a teacher you'll be inspirational. As a student you'll be inspired. Discover the case method and transform your classroom experience. [www.thecasecentre.org/discover](http://www.thecasecentre.org/discover)

## Become a member organisation

Our members are a vital part of The Case Centre community and at the heart of everything we do. Find out more about membership: [www.thecasecentre.org/join](http://www.thecasecentre.org/join)



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