



Getting Your Case Study Published

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When submitting a case to the IFAMR for peer review and possible publication you are also required to submit teaching notes. A good teaching case provides a list of intended teaching outcomes and how each one is illustrated through the case. It also includes questions posed to readers at the end of your case. Such questions are valuable because they prompt readers (especially students) to focus upon your learning objectives. If detailed problem solving is called for, then methodological solutions should be illustrated in the teaching note. Comments on how to utilize the case are helpful to instructors. Detailed instructions on how to write Teaching Notes are provided in the Guidelines for Writing Teaching Notes. Here are the essentials to writing a useful case study:

- 1. A case study is an exercise in business management decision making.** A case study should be oriented towards making a decision and giving readers something specific to do. Decision cases have special value for teaching because they can be used to simulate realistic management situations. Cases should be written from the perspective of a specified protagonist (manager or decision maker).
- 2. Provide financial information.** Financial statements, proformas, or cost studies allow readers to make decisions based upon facts. Unfortunately, lack of access to needed financial information can prevent one from successfully researching and writing a case study. For this reason not every topic is well-suited for a case study.
- 3. Provide an industry context.** In other words, provide the reader information about your case company's competitors, suppliers, customers, history, regulations and so on. This aspect of the case does not need to be long. Let your teaching objectives guide how you allocate case content among the pages allotted to your manuscript.
- 4. Use actual quotes and characters.** In a compact amount of space, the case writer can convey a lot of information by using actual quotes from the main character(s) in the case. Valuable quotes convey the key facts, human emotions, and special terminology which exist in any particular agribusiness subsector. Quotes help students as they evaluate, choose, and defend their best case solution.
- 5. Cases about success are valuable to readers. Present a real, non-trivial, controversial topic or problem and a decision (or set of decisions) that is (are) relevant and important to agribusiness managers.** Why? There are an infinite number of ways to do something wrong, but only a few ways to do something right! For this reason, cases about successful companies have far more value than cases about failed or failing companies.

6. **Is a case the best format for your research?** Writing a case can be difficult for several reasons. First, the task is intensive. Not only must you write the case, but also a supporting teaching note. Second, it must tell a compelling story.
7. **The case should not include a literature review or an answer.** Keep in mind that most great teaching cases do not have one right answer.

References

[Scholarship and Decision Cases: Pedagogy and Standards for Publication](#)

Conrad Lyford, James Beierlein and Kenneth Harling

[Case Writing: An Art and A Science](#)

Kenneth Harling and Emily Misser

More about Harvard Style teaching cases can be found at: <http://www.hbs.edu/teaching/>