教学案例开发参考手册

学院内部使用，不得外传

北京大学管理案例研究中心

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一、案例开发流程概览

- 选题立项
  - 填写立项表（确认中英文）
  - 中心立项评审
  - 中心反馈评审结果给立项团队
  - 安排企业调研计划
  - 企业调研
  - 2-4周

- 访谈安排
  - 与企业签订合作协议
  - 实地调研和访问
  - 1-2周

- 案例写作
  - 撰写正文及教学手册大纲
  - 撰写正文及教学手册
  - 修订、完成初稿
  - 企业反馈意见，正文修改
  - 获得企业确认书（图书馆存案除外）
  - 如有案例试讲合格
  - 1-6月

- 入库评审
  - 中心初审：查重、版式
  - 提交案例评审
  - 作者根据评审意见修改
  - 中文版本入库
  - 1-2月

- 翻译修订
  - 中心提供中译英文翻译及绘图供应商
  - 翻译计划（时间）
  - 中译校审反馈
  - 作者团队修订英文初稿、审稿、修改定稿
  - 6个月以上

- 投稿
  - 向HBP提交终版案例文件
  - 自确认校稿后编辑review（时间）
  - 获得收稿反馈
  - 作者团队审阅定稿
  - 二审审阅，修订
  - 确定最终投稿版本
  - 1-2月

注意事项：如作者团队使用中文撰写，需经过“翻译初稿”部分。如需英文内审，校审，需与翻译供应商协商。

已入库或正在开发中案例参与HBP专项投标，可依据《教学案例开发参考手册》进行修订后提交评审、翻译、校对。

北京大学管理案例研究中心会为您提供全面的案例开发支持。
您可以扫描下方二维码，告诉我们您的案例开发想法。

点击以下超链接，可获取案例开发相关资料：
https://www.gsm.pku.edu.cn/case/alkf/alkfcl.htm

如有任何疑问请联系：casecenter@gsm.pku.edu.cn
案例中心联系人：李琪
电话：010-62747245，18611770883（同微信）
二、如何开始一篇新案例选题与设计？

1. 案例开发目标

通过案例正文为载体描述企业/企业的管理者在经营管理中所面临的典型挑战、关键决策或热点问题。

针对案例正文所描述的核心问题设计课堂，通过理论、概念、框架、分析方法或工具，引导课堂上学员对焦点问题（典型挑战、关键决策、热点问题等）进行分析、讨论。课堂设计方案通过教学指南进行叙述和记录。

2. 案例开发线索

基于案例内容/信息来源，可大致将案例分为三种类型。

- 一手资料（field case）案例：基于与企业/被访对象真实访谈信息撰写的案例，同时这些案需获得被访谈企业的合法书面授权。

- 图书馆（二手资料）案例：基于公开发表的资料撰写的案例。该类案例必须包括适当和充分的脚注，同时案例中不应含有未经实际的个人或组织同意的观点、行动、心情描述等内容。

- 匿名案例：基于作者的真实经验进行撰写的案例。如，通过作者虚构，或无法获得企业授权的案例。其中企业名称、主人公、数据等信息应进行合理的匿名处理，以免引起法律纠纷。

3. 案例设计与合作企业判断

3.1 企业选择

我们倾向于选择在中国的具有典型性、代表性、创新性的企业实践作为案例描写对象。具体企业不限于中国本土企业或国外在华企业。

3.2 案例设计

倾向决策型案例，不排除具有典型性的启发型案例。

总体上，教学案例最多倾向于设计成决策型案例（哈佛案例最倾向），即关注企业实践中面临的经营管理机遇与挑战，进而引发课堂对于企业/决策者的应对抉择的开发讨论与辩证分析。同时，也不乏启发型案例，即关注企业的解决方案和措施（best practice），通过还原企业实践的过程，探讨执行、创新等细节。

3.3 如何判断一个企业/一种模式/一类实践是否适合案例开发

作者可以在案例工作开始前通过5W1H问题进行判断。

- Who：案例的主人公是谁？必须对机遇或挑战采取行动的主人公是谁？
• What：主人公所遇到的问题或机遇是什么？
• When：这些决策发生的时间是什么时候？
• Where：决策发生的地点与环境？
• Why：为什么会出现问题或机会？
• How：这一机遇或挑战是如何出现的？主人公为面对问题/挑战的解决方案有哪些？最终如何实施？

如果通过以上问题可预判信息均可获得，尤其是关于 Why 和 How 的内容丰满详实，则可以判断其是一个好的案例题材。

4. 针对本章节的扩展阅读

• 附录一：“Twenty Five Questions to Ask as You Begin to Develop a New Case Study” by Mary Gentile, Aug 13, 1990, HBP.

还有更多阅读的材料，详见“五、案例库资源及拓展阅读材料”。
Twenty-Five Questions To Ask As You Begin To Develop A New Case Study

Good case studies are as diverse as the faculty and researchers who write them. The following checklist was prepared to assist first time case writers. Its purpose is to stimulate thought and suggest ideas, rather than to offer hard and fast rules.

1. Where will this case fit within the existing course syllabus? what cases will precede and follow it? and what learning objectives should it illuminate?

2. Who will the audience be?
   - 1st or 2nd year MBA students? executive education program participants?
   - how much expertise/familiarity should be assumed?
   - what issues are most on their minds?

3. How "fresh" is the case topic?
   - historical cases are often difficult to write because actors have changed and details are not accessible.
   - on the other hand, cases "in-process" can present problems with objectivity, perspective, and confidentiality.

4. What type of case will you write?
   - decision-focus case.
   - compare/contrast case.
   - demonstration case.
   - implementation case.
   - case series.
   - quantitative case.
   - minicase, for specific applications/examples of a particular issue.
   - summary, or exam case.
5. In what style should you write a case?
   - objective, concise, direct, unadorned.
   - avoid unnecessary transitional statements. They tend to direct the reader too much.
   - try to keep paragraphs and sections to a reasonable length.
   - use headings as signposts. See Question 22.

6. What types of ancillary materials will you develop?
   - exhibits—think about material that can be more clearly presented in tables or graphs; exhibits should be integrated into case text.
   - videotapes—have specific purpose in mind; what can video do that text cannot?
   - computer exhibits—for spreadsheet analysis, for example
   - see Questions 23 and 24.

7. What makes a good case decision focus?
   - is it a microcosm or metaphor for the case topic?
   - is it specific? (not theoretical)
   - is it actionable?
   - is it controversial?
   - is it narrow enough to allow thorough exploration?
   - is it broad enough to allow generalizations to emerge, and to support a deep and far-ranging discussion?
   - does it have a logical shape or structure? (for example, chronology; issues focus; inverted pyramid moving from broad generalization to specific actionable questions; foreground/ background descriptions; cause/effect; etc.).

8. What/how much data should you include?
   - work backward from learning objectives and discussion questions and potential "solutions." Does the case include enough material to address these questions in depth?
   - is there enough data to generate an action plan?
   - is there enough data to support multiple interpretations or action plans?
   - does the shape or direction of the case remain clear—or does it become muddied by too much unrelated detail?

9. Does the case include controversy?

10. Does the case have dramatic interest? (Characters, personalities, tension, real stakes, etc.)

11. Does the case have a protagonist? Can we see the issues from her/his perspective? (not always necessary)

12. Are opinions, evaluations, interpretations, theories, etc. expressed in quotations?

13. Do exhibits contain useful information in a clear, fashion?
14. What are the standard components of a case study?
   - OPENING PARAGRAPH (The opening paragraph should state dramatically the case issue or problem.) See Question 20.
   - BACKGROUND/CONTEXT for firm, for case actors, for industry. See Question 21.
   - CASE STORY.
   - CONCLUSION (generates tension; focusses decision point; suggests options and considerations; etc.)

15. How long should a case be?
   - is it discussable in one class period? can a student be reasonably expected to prepare it in one evening?
   - don’t try to "kill many birds with one case."

16. Should you revise a case after it has been taught?
   - pay attention to areas where discussion was weak or thin, where students don’t seem to have enough data.
   - pay attention for "red herrings" which led the discussion off on unproductive tangents.
   - watch for factual errors and problems with clarity.

17. What are the most common pitfalls of case development?
   - the case with no clear decision or focus.
   - the case with too much in it (unmanageable detail).
   - the case with no structure, or shifting structure.
   - the theoretical case.
   - the case with no context (how does this case situation compare with comparable situations?)
   - the case with no actors.
   - the case with no controversy.
   - the case with no drama (boring—selectivity is often the key here. Don’t swamp your story with too many sub-plots.)
   - the inside-joke (assumed familiarity).

18. What are common causes of casewriter’s writing block?
   - no structure or clear decision focus (try telling the case story to someone and asking them what is most compelling?)
   - not enough specifics/concrete details from which to build the story.
   - no sense of urgency (try setting clear deadlines for yourself).
   - no audience (line up several fair, intelligent readers).

19. Some mundane tips:
   - always write cases in the past tense.
   - use nonsexist language.
   - use standard case conventions (for example, refer to actors by last names consistently; don’t capitalize position titles; number exhibits and refer to them within the text at appropriate points; etc.).
20. What do you want to include in the opening?
   - position case in time.
   - identify major actor(s).
   - identify firm.
   - identify or suggest the issue or decision focus (microcosm of case problem).
   - create dramatic interest.
   - provide reader with motivation to go on and with a hook upon which to hang the data that comes next.
   - be brief.
   - use descriptive details sparingly and selectively, to suggest the flavor of the case, the culture of the organization, the style of the major actor, the significance of the case situation.
   - remember the significance of "first impressions."
   - if possible avoid case opening cliches (for example, "Jan Smith leaned back in her chair and surveyed the Chicago skyline outside her 48th story office window.")

21. What do you want to include in the industry/company/individual background section?
   - Tell only enough history to suggest the culture and values that will be important to your case discussion. Remember that your case story is not the company history, but the history of the particular problem or decision you are presenting. If you go on too long in this section, your reader will lose sight of the problem you so carefully set up in your case opening. Keep asking yourself: "Does this piece of information shed light on the case subject?" Some casewriters like to include "red herrings," in order to make the student select the significant data. When making this decision, consider which issues you want your students to analyze with their limited preparation and discussion time.
   - Avoid evaluative or leading adjectives/descriptions. The prose in these sections should be the barest and most matter-of-fact in your case.
   - Use exhibits to economize on text. For example, use an exhibit to summarize a company's history or a manager's career chronology, or to present industry market share data.

22. What purpose should case headings serve?
   - to provide a scaffolding or framework by which the reader can organize the data presented. This framework should make it easier for the reader to remember and re-locate particular data points, BUT it should not suggest an interpretation or analysis or prioritizing of that data. The organization should be analytically neutral.
   - too many headings fragment the case and its material.
   - too few headings make it difficult for the reader to relocate material later on.
   - case headings should be straightforward, not evaluative. For example, "The Corporate Strategy Review Meeting, June 1986" is preferable to "The Strategic Turning Point."

23. How should you use exhibits?
   - to present complex (especially numerical) data clearly.
   - to present visual/spatial relationships (organizational charts, flow charts, process representations, etc.)
- Try to include *in your case text* any information that the reader needs to know in order to make sense of the story itself. Data which is necessary for case analysis and calculations can be included in the exhibits. In other words, use exhibits to simplify and clarify the text—without leaving glaring holes in it. The reader should be able to read straight through the case without referring to the exhibits until beginning its analysis.
- Remember to obtain permissions for material taken from other published sources, such as charts or tables.

24. What about videotapes?
- Ask yourself if there is a reason to use videotape supplements.

What will it add to the case?
- Plan ahead. Before writing the case, consider what is best said on paper and what on film. Consider whether the videotape will always be used when the case is taught, or if the case will also have to stand alone.
- Consider logistical problems and the probability of release.

25. What should be included in a case teaching note?
- The teaching note is usually prepared after the case has been taught at least once. The format varies but often includes:
  0 Case summary.
  1 Statement of learning objectives.
  2 Suggested assignment questions.
  3 Suggested discussion questions, organized by learning objective or by discussion topic.
  4 Discussion of alternate case analyses.
  5 Blackboard plan, suggested teaching methods (role plays, written exercises, etc.), suggested time allotment for each major discussion focus.
三、如何进行一篇完整教学案例的撰写？

1. 关于案例正文基本元素及规范

1.1 标题与设计

案例标题需包含企业名称（或易于读者理解的简称），通过标题可以理解案例主题/方向；标题字数不宜太长，应易于读者记住。

1.2 案例介绍

通过1-2段文字（一般不超过300字），给读者一个简单明确的概述，简要介绍案例内容；以及案例核心讨论的问题，如企业决策或困境的问题。

1.3 正文内容建议

1) 引言中需明确案例主人公当前面临的核心决策所对应的日期、地点等环境。建议在案例正文中不要提及核心决策时间之后发生事件，目的是为了引导课堂更开放的讨论。如需要提示核心决策时间之后发生的内容，可在教学指南，或者系列案例中体现。

2) 案例充分体现了讨论焦点的复杂性，而不只是对问题表象的简单描述。

3) 讨论焦点具有争议性，可以存在不同意见，不一定有绝对正确或绝对错误的答案，促使学员从不同的视角考虑问题之后做出综合判断。

4) 案例提供讨论案例问题所必需的、以事实为基础、有可靠来源引用的信息。

5) 保持适当的张力但不过于模糊，文字信息充分但不冗余。

6) 案例对涉及的机构、主人公和事件保持客观与中立，以引发学员展开讨论；避免任何偏颇根据地描述或肯定案例主人公的心理活动或决策过程。

7) 案例结构合理，语言简练，逻辑清晰，可读性强，写作符合体例规范。原则上中文案例字数不超过10,000字，案例正文长度不超过12页（含附录）。

1.4 案例格式与引用规范

案例正文/教学指南格式与引用格式参考学院制定的格式模板，见附录二：中英文案例正文及教学指南版式。

1) 对于摘录的书、期刊论文、新闻等内容，需要有规范的引用。引用规范参阅附录三：The format of the references is as required in Quick Harvard Reference Guide。

2) 所有表格、图表、附录等均应被称为案例正文或教学笔记中的附件，并插入文件末尾。
3) 图及图片建议为高分辨率的黑白图像。

4) 电子表格和表格应作为可编辑对象，不是以图片插入到文件中。

5) 如有涉及图形中含有 x 轴和 y 轴，需对 x 轴和 y 轴所示内容进行注解。

6) 在每个附录下方需附上引用出处。说明该处内容是原始文件摘录还是作者使用原始文件中的数据创作的。

1.5 正文授权

通过一手资料撰写的文章终稿必须获得企业对案例正文内容的书面授权才可进行使用，具体包含访谈者的发言、企业的数据、企业的 logo、图片、视频、影像等企业提供资料。具体企业授权模板见附录四：案例确认书。
2.教学手册核心要素及内容要求

2.1 案例名称/Case Title

对应案例正文的标题加上“教学指南”。

2.2 案例概要/Case Synopsis

该处介绍案例内容，并写明案例可达到的教学目的。建议不要直接复制案例正文中的案例介绍。

2.3 教学对象与适用课程/Target Audience

目标受众是谁（例如本科生、MBA/研究生）？在哪些课程中可以使用该案例？（哈佛案例的目标受众通常为拥有工作经验的学生群体，如 MBA/EMBA 等）

2.4 教学目标/Learning Objectives

设定明确而恰当的教学目标、计划达到的学习效果。建议中文案例的教学目标不超过 350 字，英文不超过 200 单词，通常只需要一个段落或 3 到 5 个要点。

2.5 讨论问题/Discussion Questions

围绕教学目标，有针对性提出 3 到 5 个思考题。这些问题的文字必须与分析部分的标题匹配。教学笔记中提出的所有问题都需要分析/回答。一般而言，建议设计能够支持 90 分钟课程时长的思考题。

2.6 教学计划/Teaching Plan

一般分为三步，课前计划、课中计划、课后计划。可以用表格的形式或简明扼要的文字叙述，展示该案例在一定长度课堂讨论的时间分配（哈佛案例的“教学计划”通常设计为 90 分钟的计划）。不要把教学计划和分析混为一谈。

2.7 讨论问题分析/Analysis

针对每一个讨论问题，提供合适的理论、概念、框架、分析方法或工具等，以使学员获得超出案例公司的、具备一定普遍意义的洞察与启示。强烈推荐在每一个讨论问题分析中配套对应的板书计划。

2.8 推荐阅读资料和补充材料/Recommended Readings and Supplemental Material

提供 3 至 5 份推荐阅读资料，可与案例正文一同在课前发放给学员。这些应该包括分析中使用的任何框架、理论等。也可以作为课后扩展阅读列表，提供给学员。

补充资料可以是与案例描述的行业、法规等背景信息相关，有助于课堂案例分析参考；也可以是案例描述企业在核心决策时间之后发展的简要总结，可以是企业/主人公最终真实做出的决策及该决策对企业后续发展的影响。
3. 针对案例写作方法的扩展阅读

- 附录五："Key Elements for Excellence in Classroom Cases and Teaching Notes" by James Austin, James L. Heskett, and Christopher A. Bartlett, APR 17, 2015, HBP.

- 附录六："Writing Cases and Teaching Notes" by E. Raymond Corey, Nov 5, 1998, HBP.

- 附录七："Developing a Teaching Case" by Michael J. Roberts, Jun 28, 2001, HBP.

- 附录八："Teaching Notes: Communicating the Teacher's Wisdom" by James Austin, Feb 9, 1993, HBP.
Key Elements for Excellence in Classroom Cases and Teaching Notes

Purpose

This document concerns itself with defining the common elements that characterize excellence in two closely linked pedagogical documents: (1) excellent classroom cases that foster meaningful learning and the creation of knowledge in the management of organizations and (2) excellent teaching notes that enable those other than the creator of the case to achieve powerful classroom learning with the material. It is intended for use by anyone preparing such materials as well as those mentoring others in doing so.

Scope

Cases take many forms. They represent efforts to organize teaching and learning by any means other than the traditional lecture. They are intended to foster participant-centered learning. With the development of new technologies and media, they no longer are confined to paper and the written word. Regardless of form, there is a set of elements, some more important than others depending on the form of the case, that characterize excellent cases.

A case is incomplete without a teaching note. The creation and use of both is an interactive and iterative process. A teaching note makes the effective classroom use of a case accessible to those other than the case creator. Teaching notes, regardless of the form a case might take, contain a common set of elements that help define excellence.

Our concern here is with those key elements in cases and teaching notes. We do not focus on the case writing or teaching note development processes, although criteria for defining excellence does create important end targets and may suggest pathways for achieving excellence. As an appendix to this document we will provide a brief overview and reference the work of noted experts who have written extensively and well on this important and closely related topic of case development.
Method

Rather than rely solely on our own decades of work with cases and teaching notes, we first polled a group of Harvard Business School (HBS) colleagues from different disciplines and areas of expertise and asked them to define “a few key characteristics that separate an excellent case from an ordinary one.” All of those polled had long experience in developing widely-used and long-lived cases. We found a convergence in their responses and with the literature reviewed which we then refined and integrated as a set of concepts and criteria. We next tested the criteria against a sample of cases and teaching notes dealing with a wide range of business topics.

To test the relevance of these elements, we reviewed individually and independently of one another a set of cases recommended by “unit heads” of each of the eight subject areas at HBS as being highly regarded by their respective faculties. We then formulated and compared our respective judgments of how well each case and teaching note under examination met our criteria of excellence. That provided the basis for understanding differences and modifying the elements of excellence.

The cases selected for review included some that were also best-sellers at HBS Publishing. Thus, we were testing the elements of excellence on cases deemed by the internal (HBS) and external marketplaces as high quality. Because of the diversity of the case subjects, we were able to judge the general applicability across the main areas of management study of our elements of excellence. To further test the discriminatory power of the elements, some cases that were not best sellers were also reviewed. Lastly, the refined elements of excellence and a version of this document were reviewed by a larger group of emeriti and senior faculty at HBS. This feedback was used to make the final revisions in this document.

Organization

This note sets forth four core findings from our research: the elements that define excellence for classroom cases; the elements of excellence for teaching notes; the characteristics of a well-integrated case and teaching note “package”; and the elements of excellence for forms of innovative pedagogy other than traditional written cases. We also include as Appendix A a summary of key considerations and further resources for the processes of developing classroom cases and teaching notes. And finally, we have included as Appendix B a simple check list of things of which to be aware in the preparation and evaluation of these materials.

Findings I: Elements of Excellent Cases

Classroom cases are a special form of scholarship. Their primary purpose is to enable learning initially through individual student preparation and then more powerfully through stimulating collective learning in classroom discussions. In addition, they can provide the basis for anecdotal research of an in-depth nature that leads to the development of concepts and hypotheses for further exploration by other means.

Cases can vary considerably in terms of topics and substantive material. However, the best examples excel in terms of ease of reading, ability to stimulate productive discussion, and intellectual richness contributing to the attainment of the targeted learning objectives.

To facilitate further examination of these broad characteristics, we developed a set of eight elements that characterize excellence in classroom cases, each of which is elaborated below.
1. Focus
   - Focuses on one or more managerially important issues that contribute to understanding the world of practice.
   - Poses a problem or challenge that generally requires a decision and/or plan of action.

2. Completeness
   - Provides sufficient information to allow students to carry out the needed analyses without an instructor doing the analyses for the student. (In some cases, information may be intentionally left out of the case to foster particular student analyses and discovery.)
   - Is self-contained, not relying on other notes, readings, text chapters, or reference materials, unless those are assigned with the case and included in the teaching note.
   - If appropriate, uses media other than the written word to present needed information in a way that enables a richer understanding or analysis (e.g., videos revealing location context, processes, or protagonists’ personalities or perspectives) or software for exhibits that enables computer-aided data manipulation.

3. Clarity and Succinctness
   - Is written in a clear and engaging style typically using past tense and active voice.
   - Features organization and sentence structure that are easy to read with language that is accessible and narrative that is clear and flows smoothly.
   - Omits information not relevant to learning objectives and avoids unintentionally inconsistent information.
   - Has an opening that clearly signals or states what the case is about and why it matters to the protagonist(s) or others and a closing section that generally calls for analysis and action.

4. Engagement
   - Allows a reader to strongly identify with the key actor(s)’s issues, problems, situation, business or context, encouraging intellectual and emotional engagement, thereby stimulating thorough preparation and participation by students.
   - Describes compelling organizations, leaders, issues or decisions and the seriousness of the stakes for case subjects.

5. Controversy
   - Describes conflicts or differences among interested parties.
   - Enables a wide range of views to be presented in the case.
   - Presents and raises fundamental and competing issues.

6. Complexity
   - Avoids obvious answers.
   - Requires judgments.
   - Presents hard-to-resolve dilemmas.
7. Robustness

- Presents opportunity for demanding and high quality analysis.
- Is diagnostically rigorous but is manageable within time constraints.
- Requires students to build arguments for different positions or perspectives.
- Calls for reasoned assumptions.
- Involves economic and/or noneconomic trade-offs.

8. Intellectual Richness

- Demonstrates new insights, novel ideas, concepts, or frameworks.
- Provides significant opportunities for discovery by students.
- Presents case material creatively to attain learning objectives.

Findings II: Elements of Excellent Teaching Notes

Teaching notes are essential and valuable companions to cases. First, they guide the development of the case study by providing clear learning objectives, envisioning discussion areas and questions, and by offering suggestions for ways to introduce and encourage students’ analyses of relevant data and other information. Second, they provide assistance to instructors in using a case more effectively to evoke participant centered learning.

While teaching notes are not a substitute for case preparation or discussion leadership skills, they do contribute to greater instructor confidence, effectiveness, and efficiency in preparing to teach. Whereas the case is the intellectual discussion vehicle for the students, the teaching note is the instructor’s “driver’s manual” for guiding the discussion. It is where the author applies her or his pedagogical creativity and intellectual rigor. In brief, a teaching note explains:

- what the case is about
- where it fits in a course
- why we are teaching it
- what we are going to teach
- how we can teach it

A less complete option to the teaching note that we will describe in more detail is a document designated as a teaching plan. This simpler and more personalized format can provide a general framework to help faculty deepen students’ comprehension of the teaching objectives and energize classroom discussion. While less developed than a teaching note, a teaching plan typically includes a case synopsis, teaching objectives, assignment questions, a discussion plan, a board plan, and for quantitative cases, calculations leading to the solution. Often, a teaching plan becomes the first draft of the document that eventually is developed into a richer teaching note.

By way of contrast, a teaching note is the document enabling others inside and outside of one’s school to use the case effectively, which is essential to achieving dissemination and impact of this intellectual capital. Teaching notes are not meant to provide precise maps to be rigidly followed, but rather they offer guidance and intellectual stimulus to instructors who in turn can apply their own creativity to adjust the teaching of the case to their particular situation. For this reason, for the
remainder of this document, we will focus on the characteristics of the more complete and detailed teaching note.

Excellent teaching notes measure up well on three main components: learning objectives, substantive analysis, and teaching process. Each can be assessed on several dimensions.

1. Learning Objectives

Learning objectives anchor a teaching note. The design and substance of excellent cases contribute to the attainment of specified learning objectives. These educational goals are generally elaborated and refined in the process of case and teaching note development and are set forth explicitly in excellent teaching notes. There are three principal characteristics of effective learning objectives: clarity, specificity, and positioning.

- **Clarity.** Objectives are clearly expressed. They are not confused with case issues, which are themes for discussion rather than the types of learning being sought by the discussion of those topics. Stating what a student is going to do, e.g., “analyze…” or “compare…” is insufficient; excellent notes express clearly what that activity aims to achieve in terms of learning. (See boxed insert for example.) Not all learning objectives are equally important. Where there are multiple objectives their relative importance and connectedness are indicated. Overloading the case with too many objectives can cause confusion and dilute learning impact.

- **Specificity.** The overall goal of management education is to develop capabilities to analyze problems, make decisions, implement them, and lead organizations so that they make a positive difference in society. Learning objectives specify the types of learning sought in a case that will contribute to that larger educational goal. Learning objectives in excellent teaching notes comprise: (1) **Knowledge Enhancement**, such as theory, frameworks, concepts, information, institutional knowledge; (2) **Skill Building**, such as problem or opportunity identification and analysis, strategy formulation and implementation, function-specific techniques, or other more generic analytical capabilities; (3) **Attitudinal Development**, such as values, beliefs, self-awareness, intellectual openness, receptivity to change, risk tolerance. The more specific the objectives, the clearer the guidance for what information is included or excluded in the case and how best to lead the discussion. Ambiguity is to be avoided.

- **Positioning.** The relevance and importance of the case and its objectives are specified relative to a body of learning in excellent teaching notes. This can include their contribution to a course or program or module in which the case is to be used as well as to the relevant literature. Cases both draw from and contribute to a larger body of knowledge. Accordingly, excellent teaching notes contain a synopsis of the case and indicate how and why it is positioned in a specific course for target students. Where a case has multiple potential uses, the identification of alternative positioning in other courses, programs or modules can also be helpful. This brief description can be helpful to instructors reviewing the teaching note to “shop” for cases that might be useful, or skimming the note as a precursor to reading the case during the class preparation process.
Example of Learning Objectives

In one case the central issue concerned “the strategic and organizational responses to globalizing consumer, economic, technological, and competitive forces.” Simply preceding this with the phrase “To examine” would not create a useful learning objective. This particular teaching note went on to provide the needed specificity of objectives in terms of conceptual knowledge enhancement and skill building: “…to reinforce the concept of a company’s ‘administrative heritage’ as an asset that must be captured and used rather than denied;” “…to illustrate the concept of worldwide learning as an important source of competitive advantage for MNCs;” “…to sharpen skills in analyzing the diverse environmental forces driving globalization, and their limits.” For each of these objectives the note briefly elaborated the substantive nature of the expected learning.

2. Substantive Analysis

The teaching note provides the analyses of the case that inform the instructor and reveal the analyses that students are expected to carry out. These substantive analyses constitute intellectual capital that can generate insights about the subject matter and reveal quality of mind. They provide the content to the teaching plan.

This content can be presented in different ways. Some authors prefer to create a separate section for the analysis, then draw on that detail as they outline the teaching process. Others integrate the substantive analysis into a more detailed description of the teaching process, revealing the kind of analysis each question is expected to evoke. While specific analyses will vary greatly across cases and courses, the following elements characterized many of the best teaching notes we examined:

- **Thoroughness.** Analyses are thorough and clearly related to the learning objectives and how the case draws on and/or contributes to the relevant literature.

- **Clarity.** All qualitative analyses and quantitative calculations are clear in terms of how they are made and what data in the case are used. Opportunities for student discovery of insights are flagged and explained.

- **Alternatives.** Alternative analyses are presented with arguments and calculations for pros and cons.

- **Complications.** Possible analytical areas that students may find problematic are highlighted, including, for example, the possible use by students of data about the case gleaned from the Internet, with suggestions to the instructor about how to handle them when they occur.

- **Exhibits.** Exhibits are annotated in terms of how they are used in the analyses; if an exhibit is not referred to in the note, it may be an indication that it is superfluous to the case.

- **Learnings.** Possible “takeaways” or closing insights tied to learning objectives are indicated.

- **Supplements.** Linkages to relevant literature are cited and supplemental background reading materials that might be helpful to instructors may be suggested.
3. Teaching Process

Guidance on how the case can be taught is vital and can reveal an instructor’s pedagogical creativity. While each case will call forth a unique set of specific processes, an excellent teaching note encompasses the following basic elements: Discussion Plan, Questions, Openings and Closings, and Special Techniques.

- **Discussion Plan.** Excellent teaching notes provide an overview map that sets forth the main discussion areas or sequential topics, sometimes referred to as discussion pastures or segments. This structure is not rigid and should always be subject to real time adjustment based on the actual classroom dynamics, but it should propose a logical learning path that is linked to the educational objectives. The degree of flexibility of the sequencing of the topics should be indicated. Suggestions for how to make transitions from one discussion area to the next are helpful. Because the scarcest resource in a class is the time available, time management in a discussion is particularly challenging, so a tentative time allocation for each topic area is specified. Board space is also limited, so a possible board plan is also quite helpful. Incorporating classroom experience into the note is highly valuable, particularly for flagging possible process pitfalls and how to deal with them. Usually teaching notes are not finalized until the case has been taught one or more times, sometimes using the precursor teaching plan for initial guidance. Teaching notes continue to be dynamic documents that should incorporate additional experiential insights. Those with revision dates are welcome evidence of this process.

- **Questions.** A discussion leader’s primary tool is questioning. The best teaching notes delineate a set of questions that most effectively guide the discussions through the Discussion Plan’s topic areas. Types of questions found in excellent teaching notes may include the following: (a) information-seeking (who, what, why, when, where) that may be relevant to setting up a particular analysis, but may also run the risk of case fact regurgitation leading to low student engagement; (b) analytical (why, how) that require diagnostic, causal, or interpretive mental skill-building; (c) action (what, how, why) that foster decision-making and implementation skills; (d) challenge (why) aimed at deepening or expanding the analysis; (e) hypothetical (what if) that allow discussants to extend analyses with different assumptions beyond the case information; (f) predictive (what will happen) to foster the development of forecasting capabilities; (g) generalization (what lessons) that encourage a more abstract level of cognitive reasoning, which also may require more reflection time by the student before answering. (See boxed insert for examples of the foregoing types of questions.)

The question plan that is set forth for a discussion area often will have a primary question and a series of follow-up questions. In addition to the in-class discussion questions, excellent teaching notes offer a set of study questions assigned to guide the students’ preparation. Rather than simply being listed in the note, their purpose is explained, e.g., to advance the students’ understanding and analysis of the case including focusing on specific areas requiring pre-class calculations. By using in-class questions that go beyond what the student will have probed before class, the discussion can build on pre-class work rather than just have the students present their prepared answers.
Examples of Discussion Questions

The following are illustrative questions extracted from a teaching note:

- **Information-Seeking**: What is Starbucks’ employee turnover rate?

- **Analytical**:
  - Why is turnover so much lower than the industry, and what is that worth?
  - What is your assessment of the new coffee purchasing guidelines?
  - So why is this valuable to the company?
  - What is that worth to the company?
  - Why would coffee farmers agree to change their farming practices to these more environmentally friendly methods?

- **Challenge**:
  - Does it make any sense for Starbucks to pursue these environmental objectives with Conservation International dealing with small farmers in the backwaters of southern Mexico?
  - Wouldn’t it be simpler to just write a check and make a donation to CI instead of getting engaged with loans and people in the field and lots of complications?
  - Is there any evidence that is happening?

- **Action**:
  - What would you recommend to Starbucks regarding the future of its relationship with CI?

- **Hypothetical**:
  - What if the cost of sourcing from these farmers increased by 50%?

- **Predictive**:
  - What might happen if consumers learn you had been unable to reach an agreement with CI?

- **Generalization**:
  - Looking at Starbucks in general and its alliance with CI as one example, what do you think of CEO Orin Smith’s assertion that “Aligning self-interest to social responsibility is the most powerful way to sustaining a company’s success?”
  - What lessons can we draw from today’s case in terms of how to most effectively manage the interface with nonprofit organizations?

- **Openings and Closings**. Many regard the instructor’s introduction of the case as vital to its positioning, and particularly the opening question which can be the most important one posed by the instructor. How one opens a discussion can be influenced by the specific class circumstances, but excellent teaching notes offer one or more suggested openings. This is the only part of the class session that is under the full control of the instructor, so planning it is feasible and important, given that how a class begins can inordinately influence the dynamics of the entire discussion. In the note the opening is specified and justified in terms of its purpose.
Similarly, planning a closing is extremely desirable because it can significantly affect how students feel about the session. This is a more complicated task because the session dynamics and evolution can shape what seems most effective for a closing, and therefore the instructor must be ready to adjust (and even discard) a planned ending. While one can usefully have a list of potential “takeaways” ready, it is important to alter or relate these to the actual discussion or they may seem “canned” and discount the utility of the actual discussion. Sometimes it may be effective to leave the class with a provocative ending question, and so one or more may be included in the note.

- **Special Techniques.** The process guidelines might also suggest the use of special techniques such as roleplaying, voting, dyad or breakout groups, and multimedia vehicles. There are many options for pedagogical creativity. Excellent teaching notes explain in detail how the technique will be used and how it will enrich the learning process.

**Findings III: Elements of Effectiveness for Case/Teaching Note Integration**

A case and its teaching note can be evaluated separately against their respective criteria. However, it is also important to scrutinize the two together as an integrated unit. A superb case with a weak note, or vice versa, does not merit excellence. Furthermore, outstanding work will reveal reinforcing linkages between the two. Four integrative criteria are **synergies**, **transferability**, **intellectual contribution**, and **learning experience**.

- **Synergies.** A case and its teaching note fit together in complementary and reinforcing ways. The note reveals pedagogical richness in the case that would not be obvious by simply reading the case. The case in turn enables analytical rigor and insightful analyses in the note.

- **Transferability.** The case and note enable an instructor unfamiliar with the case to have a successful learning session.

- **Intellectual contribution.** Managerially significant ideas or original concepts are creatively presented and illuminated in ways that advance thinking.

- **Learning experience.** The case and teaching note are likely to produce a powerful learning experience for students.

**Findings IV: Elements of Excellence for Other Teaching Materials**

A variety of materials other than traditional decision-oriented cases may be prepared for use in the classroom. These include, but are not limited to, technical notes that present and explain a concept, role-playing situations (such as those requiring negotiations), simulations, games, and group exercises involving research and the exchange of ideas. Case materials may also make use of various media including video or the Internet. But as long as these variants on the traditional case exhibit a set of educational objectives in the context of a course or teaching module and are focused on participant-centered learning, they can be assessed on many of the same dimensions characteristic of more conventional classroom case materials discussed above.

Like more conventional classroom cases, these materials can make conceptual and intellectual contributions, as exhibited by the degree to which they convey important information, link ideas to arrive at new insights, relate their contents to a broader literature, or demonstrate pedagogical
creativity stimulating powerful learning. As with cases, teaching notes are critical in assuring that these kinds of materials can be used widely.

**An Organic Document**

While the foregoing elements that describe excellence in cases and teaching notes are intended to be encompassing, they are not necessarily exhaustive or definitive. Case authors, their mentors, and reviewers of cases and teaching notes bring to the task their own experiences and judgments that may suggest adding to or adjusting the elements highlighted here. This document should be viewed as an organic work that will continue to be revised and enriched by users based on their on-going application. Lastly, we hope that developers of cases and teaching notes find this document to be useful in their vital task of creating new pedagogical capital in the pursuit of effective learning.
Appendix A: Developing Classroom Cases and Teaching Notes

As we noted in the beginning, this document focuses on the criteria for excellence rather than the processes of preparing classroom cases and their teaching notes. But in this appendix, we briefly shift focus from a detailed definition of the characteristics of excellent output to a brief overview of the input processes required to create such materials. In doing so, it is important to note that our intention in this final section is simply to highlight key aspects of those processes, before referring the interested reader to some highly useful sources that deal with these topics in detail.

Creating the kind of excellent pedagogical materials described in this note inevitably involves the same kind of long and careful process of research and writing that faculty typically invest in developing an excellent article or chapter. It begins with an idea that may be rooted in a larger research project or a course development need, and ends in a careful process of writing, rewriting, and revising to create a stimulating and engaging piece of classroom material, matched with a thoughtful and insightful teaching note.

The following describes a sequence of key steps that a first-class case researcher will take in creating the kind of quality pedagogical material that meets the standards of excellence described in this note:

- **Identifying the case opportunity**: An initial step typically stimulated by a course need, a site opening, or a chance to bring research findings into the classroom.

- **Clarifying the case focus**: The vital task that we represented as the first criterion in our description of learning objectives for an excellent case.

- **Obtaining site access**: A sometimes challenging task for younger faculty who can often elicit the support of senior colleagues or alumni.

- **Negotiating the case agenda, data access and interview schedule**: This vital process is key to ensuring that the research investment will result in material that matches your case’s identified opportunity and focus.

- **Outlining the case and teaching note**: This initial outline is a base level document that will be adapted and modified by the material gathered during the research process. An early outline will ensure that the document is developed with the focus, completeness, complexity, controversy, and other criteria we have described in this note.

- **Gathering the data**: This involves the art of careful interviewing as well as collecting relevant documents to ensure that the case has the completeness, robustness and richness that defines an excellent case and teaching note.

- **Updating the draft case and teaching note**: In an iterative process, the draft case and teaching note are continually adapted and refined during this research process. It is very useful to have a draft teaching plan with discussion segments and questions that one can match with the case content to see if there is too little or too much information to enable the desired discussion.

- **Writing the final draft**: This is where the researcher can actively check to ensure that the case and teaching note reflect the criteria represented in this document. It is a process that should identify any gaps in information that must be sought from the company.

- **Obtaining case clearance**: This will be much easier if the contract was clearly defined at the outset. In some cases, it may require negotiations to disguise sensitive data.
• **Revising the case and TN:** Most cases can be significantly improved if they are revised after being taught once or twice in a real classroom situation. Precursor teaching plans can be fully elaborated into a formal teaching note.

The case method has been at the heart of teaching and learning at Harvard Business School since 1924, and in that time, a great deal of wisdom has developed around the process. Although the nature of cases has evolved (e.g., supplemented with video, integrated online tools, etc.), the core characteristics have remained remarkably consistent. And over that long history there has been a tradition of passing down the art and craft of developing excellent classroom materials from one generation of faculty to another.

This note draws on much of that wisdom, but leaves much of it untapped, for those who wish to explore further the issues around case development that we have briefly identified above we recommend the following key documents:

• Malcolm P. McNair, “McNair upon Cases” Harvard Business School Bulletin, July-August 1971. Prof. “Mac” McNair was an HBS faculty member for 44 years, and recognized as one of the School’s great developers and teachers of case materials. This document is condensed wisdom taken from a video recording of one of his many discussions about the development of cases. In it, he focuses a great deal on the structure and style of a case study which he characterizes as “a distinct literary form.” Worth reading for his distinction of all key structural elements -- time, narrative, expository, and plot.

• Benson P. Shapiro, “Hints for Case Writing” Harvard Business School Publishing case number 9-587-052. Prof. Ben Shapiro is an emeritus professor who had a long and distinguished career as one of the school’s preeminent developers and teachers of case material. His focused five page document offers practical advice on the full process of developing a case from designing the case to evaluating and improving the final product.

• Michael J. Roberts, “Developing a Teaching Case” Harvard Business School Publishing case number 2-900-001. Prof. Mike Roberts also had a long career at HBS, not only as a member of the teaching faculty, but also as its Executive Director of Case Development. This encyclopedic note with 31 pages of text and four exhibits covers everything from the definition of a case to the steps of researching these to writing up the final materials.

• James E. Austin, “Teaching Notes: Communicating the Teacher’s Wisdom” Harvard Business School Publishing case number 9-793-105. Prof. Jim Austin, one of the authors of this note, was also one of HBS’s preeminent developers and teachers of case materials. He was also known as the champion of the teaching note, a fact that is reflected in this excellent document detailing the preparation of TNs. Although much of his wisdom is reflected in the preceding pages, it is worthwhile reading his referenced note which provides considerable more detail on this important topic.

• Louise A. Mauffette-Leenders, James A. Erskine, and Michiel R. Leenders, *Learning with Cases* (Richard Ivey School of Business, 2007). The authors of this book all have extensive experiences with case method teaching. While it is written from a student perspective, the book is also of value for case method instructors. It provides in-depth coverage of the case-oriented learning process as well as useful suggestions for small and large group effectiveness, case presentations, reports, and exams.

Of course, the ultimate effectiveness of a case and the teaching note depends on how they are applied by an instructor, which requires discussion leadership skills. An excellent source of guidance for teaching can be found at https://www.hbs.edu/teaching/case-method/Pages/default.aspx.
Appendix B: Case and Teaching Note Check List

Elements of Excellent Cases

1. **Focus** — Does the case:
   - focus on managerially important issues generally posing a problem or challenge generally requiring a decision?

2. **Completeness** — Does the case:
   - provide complete and self-contained information allowing the student to thoroughly analyze and develop a richer understanding of the core issues from multiple perspectives?

3. **Clarity and Succinctness** — Is the case:
   - written in clear, straightforward language around a logical structure without unnecessary verbiage or information? Are Exhibits referred to and used as necessary to provide additional essential data? Does the case opening reveal one or more key issues, and the closing call for action or decision?

4. **Engagement** — Does the case:
   - provide strong student engagement through the inherent interest in, or importance of, the protagonist, the organization, and/or the core issue?

5. **Controversy** — Is the case:
   - written to highlight the differences in perspectives, stakeholder interests, and/or potential outcomes of controversial issues?

6. **Complexity** — Is the case:
   - structured around multifaceted issues with no obvious answer, but often with trade-offs and dilemmas?

7. **Robustness** — Does the case:
   - require rigorous analysis of information provided, sufficient to support multiple points of view, with the analysis often needing reasoned assumptions and the resolution requiring judgments?

8. **Intellectual Richness** — Does the case:
   - contain novel ideas, concepts, or frameworks providing significant discovery opportunities for students, with material presented creatively to attain learning objectives?
Elements of Excellent Teaching Notes

1. Learning Objectives – Does the note:
   - include at its core clear, specific case learning objectives, explicitly defined and tied to the teaching plan and case analysis?
   - indicate objectives that delineate the specific learning sought (e.g., concepts, analytical skills, knowledge, attitudinal development) rather than simply indicating case issues?
   - reveal the relative importance and interrelatedness of multiple objectives?
   - present an overview of the case describing its content, its positioning and the importance of the learning objectives in the module, course, and student level?

2. Teaching Process – Does the note:
   - detail a complete class discussion plan, including an overall structure and sequence of discussion “pastures” or segments with related primary and follow up questions, a proposed timeline, a related board plan, suggested openings, simulations of possible discussions, possible problems and how to handle them, and closings including summaries and takeaways?
   - include assignment questions and explain their purpose?

3. Substantive Analysis – Does the note:
   - provide a complete analysis of the case related to the learning objectives, including pros and cons of options, supported by information and calculations clearly linked to case sources and exhibits?
   - provide additional reference sources and linkages to the relevant literature to assist an instructor’s understanding supplied where called for?

Elements of Excellent Case/Teaching Note Integration

1. Synergies
   - Does the fit between the case and the note reinforce each other and bring out strengths in both?

2. Transferability
   - Do the case and note enable an instructor not previously familiar with the case to have an effective classroom teaching experience?

3. Intellectual Contribution
   - Do the case and note present managerially significant ideas or concepts and creatively illuminate and advance thinking?

4. Learning Experience
   - Do the case and note enable students to have a powerful learning experience.
Writing Cases and Teaching Notes

A case is a snapshot taken at a point in time, written to serve a particular teaching objective. Unlike the business situation on which it is based, it comes to the student neatly packaged, not over time in bits and pieces of information. Further, some of the data – numbers, names, products lines, dates – may be disguised to preserve confidentiality.

Nevertheless, case studies are immensely useful as teaching vehicles for building a reservoir of subject knowledge and for developing analytical skills. For the teacher, case writing provides unparalleled insights on the continually evolving world of management.

A good classroom case has these attributes: first, it presents a management issue or issues calling for resolution and action. Second, it puts the student in the manager’s shoes to assure involvement in the learning process. Finally, and most important, it is as brief as possible, presenting only the essential facts, to minimize the amount of reading time. Some believe that including extraneous data is useful for giving students an exercise in sorting out information as being pertinent or irrelevant. Such a tactic comes at some cost in the student’s time for case analysis, and is not worth it.

Case Leads

Case leads come from a variety of sources. A major source, of course, is the business press. Magazines such as Business Week, Forbes, and Fortune and daily papers such as The Wall Street Journal, and The New York Times, if followed regularly, will produce a plethora of case subject opportunities. Most often, a call to the subject company, with a follow-up letter, will get the casewriter in the door. Particularly good sources of case leads are former students as well as executive program participants. Informal conversations about their business problems often yield a rich harvest of case study possibilities.

Why Do Companies Cooperate?

Companies may be willing to cooperate in casewriting projects simply out of a desire to contribute to business education. They understand the need for business school faculties to keep current with business practice. Another motivation is to gain exposure in business school classrooms to benefit their recruiting programs. Knowledge about a company’s operations and its corporate culture may often lead students to sign up for recruiting interviews.

Finally, some managers may be seeking the equivalent of consulting help; the supervising faculty member, they believe, may be able to help resolve their problems. Such expectations should

This note was prepared by E. Raymond Corey, Professor Emeritus for casewriters and their Faculty supervisors.

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be quickly squelched. The kind of data needed and the relationship with interviewees are typically quite different as between casewriting and consulting projects.

Sometimes, however, a case lead may arise out of a successful consultation. By the same token, company managers may gain insights from attending one or more class discussions of a case focused on their problems. Nevertheless, it is important to keep these two initiatives separate.

**Getting Started**

While case studies often evolve in unanticipated ways, it is useful *a priori* to start the file with the instructor’s statement of purpose. How will the case fit into the course? How will the instructor use it for teaching purposes? Add to the file a tentative list of the data needed and another list of possible interview questions. The latter may provide an initial data-gathering framework.

Finally, of course, the casewriter should search public data sources to learn as much as possible about the company. Stock analyst reports available often through brokerage houses, company annual reports and SEC filings, articles in the business press, and Internet Web sites will yield a plethora of relevant information.

**The First Field Visit**

The first field visit to the case site is vital for purposes of

- defining the issues
- identifying interviewees and other data sources
- talking about case release procedures
- understanding time requirements
- naming a company liaison person.

**Defining the Issues.** The case problem, as laid out perhaps, in some early discussion with a company manager, usually needs more rigorous definition, one on which the instructor, the casewriter, and company managers agree. The case may focus on some action problem or problems, that is, ones which managers must confront and resolve, as well as a broader strategy and/or policy issue, and perhaps some tactical questions. Of relevance in defining the problem scope is what information are company managers willing and able to provide within the limits of their authority. Further, potentially interesting areas may have to be left out to avoid creating an end-product too lengthy for effective classroom use. While issue definition is of primary importance on a first-meeting agenda, it warrants continual reexamination as the case project proceeds and the casewriter becomes more knowledgeable about the company.

**Identifying Data Sources.** The primary data source is likely to be interviewees at different levels in the organization. It is useful early on to make a list of them. In drawing up such a list, arrange to interview up and down the corporate hierarchy and across departments to gain different perspectives on case issues. Data diversity is important since differing opinions and sometimes conflicting data in a case provide the substance of a rich classroom debate.

The interviewee list should be left open. Invariably as interviewing proceeds, the casewriter will learn of others who can provide useful information and opinions.
It would be important, as well, in the first meeting to inquire about any internal documents that deal with case issues. What reports are there? Can they be made available? What security measures should be observed in the casewriter’s use of them?

**Case Release Procedures.** In casewriting projects, it is normally understood that company managers will be asked to provide often-confidential data but will control what information is made public as a case study. The casewriter and the instructor commit to maintaining confidentiality on any information not included in the finished case, as released in writing by a responsible corporate executive. Such reassurance is essential if the casewriter is to be given privileged access to proprietary data. Exhibit 1 is a sample case release form.

At the same time, the instructor must know that ultimately case release is assured if corporate executives are satisfied that it poses no threat to company interests. Accordingly, it is essential in the first meeting to have an understanding of who in the subject company will be involved in the release process. Will the case draft be reviewed by the company’s legal staff? How high in the corporate hierarchy will the case go for approval?

Not only is it essential to plot the release trail early on, it is useful, as well, to set up interviews with this cadre of “gatekeepers”. One purpose is to assure that each one has a clear understanding of what the case is about, the kind of data the casewriter would like to include, and the written release statement. Second, the casewriter needs to understand any concerns of those who may be passing judgment on case releasability, and to deal with them early on. But seldom have those involved in the casewriting venture thought through the ultimate internal case review process. Some discussion in the first meeting may help to get this defined.

Concerns about confidentiality may lead into an early consideration of the extent of disguise, if any, that the company may wish as a condition of release. Will quantitative data be disguised? The company name and names of managers? Dates? In many instances, no disguise at all will be required. In any case, it is important that the instructor call attention at the outset to any case elements which, if disguised, would seriously diminish the case’s usefulness for his or her purposes.

**Time Requirements.** Those involved in supplying relevant information will want to know how much of their time the case project will take. Normally, and depending, of course, on the nature of the case, the initial and follow-up interviews may be scheduled for about an hour each. In addition, some company managers will be asked to review case drafts.

In addition, if the instructor plans to use the case at a certain point in his or her course, there should be some discussion of the time by which the release is needed. The project schedule may then be planned to meet this deadline.

**Liaison Arrangements.** Having a company person to serve in a liaison capacity will considerably facilitate the casewriting effort. His or her duties could include making hotel reservations for the casewriting team, scheduling interviews, and expediting case draft reviews and case release. The liaison person may also be called on to organize a class visit of company representatives when the case is first taught.

Following the initial visit to the case site, it would be useful to record the elements of agreement in a memorandum from the instructor to the company liaison. The memo could cover:

- the case focus
- types of information needed
- data sources
• elements to be disguised, if any
• release procedures
• schedule

Such a memorandum would serve, in effect, as the contract between the casewriters and the company. In addition, disseminated by the liaison to those who will be involved, it may be used to gain a clear understanding among interviewees and others of the conditions of the project to which company managers have agreed.

Interviewing

Personal interviewing is the primary method for gathering case information, and interviews must be conducted to elicit as much relevant data as possible. Accordingly, an essential task in the initial meeting with an interviewee is to build trust. The interviewee’s personal concerns may well be involved:

• Can I trust this person with the kind of information he/she would like to have?
• What don’t I want him/her to know?
• How might this exercise help (or hurt) me?
• Can this person understand what I’m talking about, or is this a waste of my time?

Some comfort may be provided by casual conversation about such matters as the manager’s career background and his/her current job responsibilities, industry trends; positioning the case subject in the instructor’s course.

If confidentiality is a matter of concern to the interviewee, he or she is not likely to say so for fear of displaying a sense of insecurity. But the casewriter should talk about that early on. The manager, for example, may be offered the opportunity to review the casewriter’s interview notes before the data are included in the case draft.

Structured vs. Nondirective Interviewing. In a structured interview, the casewriter directs the discussion along generally predetermined lines of inquiry. In a nondirective approach, the casewriter may start with some broadly formulated questions but rely much more on the interviewee’s volunteering relevant facts and opinions, with occasional prompting from the casewriter.

A nondirective approach almost always produces unanticipated aspects of the case situation and provides useful information about which the casewriter might never have thought to ask. In effect, piqued by the writer’s interest, the “case” wants to talk about itself, and should be allowed to do so.

As the interview proceeds, the interviewer might jot down any questions coming out of what is being said. Then, at a lull in the interviewee’s comments, he or she may go back and ask for clarification and elaboration on what has been said.
Listening and Understanding\(^1\). While the casewriting experience varies considerably from one company context to another, the following guidelines are generally useful. First, the casewriter should be listening closely for:

- What is mentioned more than once either by the same person or by different people in the organization and ask why, e.g., “This has come up a couple of times; could you tell me why it is significant?”

- Interpretations, evaluative comments, beliefs, and explanations about the way things were, are, and/or should be. Whether they are factually accurate may not be important; what is important is that these may be perceptions that shape the way the interviewee thinks and acts.

- Indications of the interviewee’s values, e.g., “Customers come first”; “We really have to protect the older workers”; “We’re becoming a lot more bureaucratic; it’s killing initiative and taking a lot of fun out of working here.”

- Clues on other sources of relevant information, e.g., “We made a study of that a while ago”; “We get into that in our annual plans statement”; “There’s some good data in the industry trade association reports.”

Understand what is being said:

- Be sensitive to the interview context. The interviewee may consciously or subconsciously say what he or she wants you to hear, or

- be on guard for fear of being evaluated by the interviewer and/or other persons in the room, or

- be concerned about conveying information that may damage the interviewee’s position in the company.

- Be aware of how the person’s background experiences and current role interests tend to influence what he or she is saying.

- Look for patterns; put what you are hearing in a frame of reference. Listen for things that relate to, amplify, confirm, or are consistent with what other people have said. Probe further.

- Be particularly aware of comments that don’t fit some emerging pattern and try to understand apparent inconsistencies.

Conduct the interview in a non-obtrusive manner.

- Listen in a patient, friendly but intelligently probing manner; be sure to show interest in what is being said.

- Don’t argue with the speaker.

\(^1\) This section is adapted from MBA Field Studies: A Guide for Students and Faculty edited by E. Raymond Corey, Harvard Business School Publishing Division, Boston, MA 1990, pp. 37-39
• Put the speaker in a position of authority.
• Talk or ask questions only to
  • open the interview
  • direct the conversation to another topic area
  • discuss the significance of what is being said
  • help the person talk
  • relieve any anxieties on the speaker’s part that may be affecting the interview
• Don’t put words in the speaker’s mouth or suggest interpretations of what is being said to suit your own ideas.
• Get the speaker to extend and elaborate on what he or she said with questions like, “I don’t understand that; could you help me?”
• Ask for concrete examples.
• Avoid frequent interruptions; flag your questions on your notepad and wait for a lull in the conversation to go back to them.
• Don’t express value judgments or opinions about what the interviewee is telling you about himself or herself, or about other people, or about actions taken or not taken.
• Don’t offer advice, but if it’s solicited, be cautious and tentative in your response.
• Express appreciation for the interviewee’s time, factual information, and insights.

At the end of the interview, keep “a foot in the door” with a comment such as, “May I get back to you if I have any questions?” or “I’d like to send you a copy of my notes and then call you to get any suggestions you might have for corrections or added information.” Second-round interviewing, if time permits, can be especially valuable, particularly if the interviewee has been given the first-round notes. The interviewee is likely to feel more secure and more comfortable with the interviewer in a second meeting and be more open. Furthermore, after reviewing the record of the initial meeting, the interviewee is likely to think of other useful and relevant information and/or sources of information to pass on to the casewriter.

Writing the Case Draft

Cases should be easy to read. That means brevity, plain language, short sentences, and frequent topic headings. Somewhere in the first page or two, the case “action” issue, as perceived by a company manager or managers, should be stated. It may be repeated at the end of the case. Other issues, broader or ancillary, may be noted at different points as the case story unfolds.

In the interests of brevity, any extraneous data, information not needed to understand and deal with the issues, should be excised. A deplorable trend in recent years has been toward longer and longer cases. Companies seem increasingly willing to provide information, and casewriters seem sorely tempted to “put everything in.” Little account is taken of the case preparation burdens imposed on students.
One way to reduce the body of the case is to include data of tangential relevance, such as industry information or the company credo, in appendices to be skimmed by readers for context or background.

Any relevant data, however, should not be omitted because the casewriter thinks it would not survive the case release process. What company managers will or will not release is usually as difficult to predict than stock prices or the weather.

Clear and simple charts and graphs often serve as more effective data-presentation vehicles than wordy and complex paragraphs. Tables, bar charts, linear regressions, and pie charts, among others, can get information across quickly and easily. Each graphic should be numbered and noted at the appropriate point in the text e.g. “Exhibit 3 shows sales of product x by month and by territory for the previous year.”

**Submitting the Case Draft.** The case draft may be sent to the company liaison for dissemination to those who will be involved in the review and release process. They should be asked to review the draft for 1) accuracy, 2) completeness, and 3) any proprietary information about which there may be release questions.

A major, if not the primary, purpose at this stage is to elicit further case inputs. By now company managers are comfortable with the casewriting project, and their reviews of the case draft will bring other relevant facts to mind. Accordingly, the draft submission should be followed up with a round of visits with those who were previously interviewed. This, hopefully final, round of interviews invariably produces such reactions as, “Yes, that’s what I told you, but it certainly looks different in print.” or “The case doesn’t say anything about ... Let me tell you about that.”

A close-to-final double-spaced draft may then be crafted and returned to the company with a release card. In a cover letter, the writer may indicate that any minor changes can be noted on the draft to be sent back with the card.

Finally, the “test run”, the first time the case is used in class, is likely to uncover areas that may need further elaboration. It will also serve to identify parts of the case that could be deleted as nonessential to the issues. If company managers attend the class, their responses to student comments and questions may suggest some case revisions, as well.

**The Instructor-Casewriter Relationship**

Case collecting is important to the teacher to keep his or her course current and to explore new topics. Casewriting is critically important to the research assistant as a learning experience. In most instances, the casewriter is a graduate student working toward an advanced degree and anticipating a teaching career. Thus, the casewriting experience becomes the context for a mentoring relationship, one that may go far in advancing the interests of both writer and supervisor.

Such relationships vary widely in nature. At one end of the spectrum, the junior member may be told that his assignment is to write X number of cases and given no guidance on subject matter or potential case sites. Ideally, the supervisor provides substantial initial guidance on case leads, opens doors, and provides early inputs on case focus and information needs. Further, at least some case opportunities might well be selected to further the casewriter’s thesis interests.

The casewriting relationship provides an unparalleled context for training future generations of teachers as well as business leaders. It is an ideal setting for developing the art of inquiry, writing skills, and a sense of academic values. Obviously, the quality of the experience for the casewriter will

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2 This was my own first experience as a research assistant.
depend largely on how much attention and coaching he or she receives from the supervisor. In the least, the latter should plan to accompany the casewriter on the first one or two field visits as well as on the case draft review interviews. He or she should also give top priority to counseling with the casewriter as the work proceeds and to reviewing case drafts. So trained, the casewriter is more likely in his or her time to help bring along the next generation of professionally-prepared teachers.

**Writing the Teaching Note**

On the one hand, the teaching note is the written product of the instructor’s class preparation. On the other, paired with the case, it becomes a contribution to education for other instructors to use.

The teaching note might begin with a statement of “teaching objectives.” Another section may list the discussion questions followed by a detailed treatment of each one. A “what happened” section can be included, if that information is known, for purposes of providing some closure or, more likely, of sparking further discussion. Another heading in the teaching note is often “summary comment”, setting down the instructor’s ideas about what may be learned from the case, and relating it to other cases in the course.

A final section on “teaching suggestions” serves to pass on to other instructors any ideas on how the case can be taught most effectively. For example, the note might suggest role-playing for certain parts of the discussion. It might suggest questions that may be raised in class to provoke deeper consideration of certain points.

Some teachers write in paragraph form, others in outline. Exhibit 2 is an example of the latter, taken out of the case “Dominion Motors & Controls” (see “A Note on Case Method Learning”).

Many teaching notes also contain sections on “board plan”, that is, how points may be organized on the chalkboard as the discussion proceeds. While that may be helpful to some instructors, it implicitly imposes a structure that may not be easy, or even desirable, to achieve in a free-wheeling discussion. In any case, it requires much more instructor control of the discussion, and may put students in the role of filling in points in some preconceived outline.

Teaching notes are living documents. They must be added to and recast to reflect the instructor’s experience in the case, advancing subject knowledge, and changes in the business environment. In particular, as the instructor follows the changing fortunes of the case-subject company, the teaching note should be revised to reflect what further may be learned.

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3 HBS Case No. 899-105
EXHIBIT 1

Sample Case Release Form

Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration
SOLDIERS FIELD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02163

I have examined the material entitled ________________________________________

submitted by _____________________________________________________________.

On behalf of myself and/or the organization named below, I authorize Harvard University, as well as any individuals or organizations authorized by Harvard University, to use this material at Harvard University and elsewhere and to adapt, reproduce, and distribute it in any manner or medium, including commercially published casebooks and foreign language translation.

Signature ____________________________________________
Name ____________________________________________ (please type or print)
Position __________________________________________
Organization _______________________________________
Street ____________________________________________
City & State _______________________________________
Date __________________________ Postal Code ___________ Country ___________

12/95
EXHIBIT 2

Excerpt from “Teaching Note on Dominion Motors & Controls, Ltd.”

Alternative 3:

Pro:

This seems to be exactly what the market wants.

- It would appeal to customers because of low initial cost and low operation cost.
- Because of the low operating cost of this motor, users could be persuaded to replace their present 10 hp units with new 5 hp motors. (Operating savings would pay for the new motor in little over a year as follows.)

Monthly power base rate:

| Motor Type | Power Cost
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 hp</td>
<td>$20 x 10 hp = $200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 hp</td>
<td>$25 x 5 hp = 125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Power saving with 5 hp motor

$75/month or $900/year

$1200 (proposed price of Alt. 3 motor) = 1.33 years payback

- Producing this motor would enhance DMC’s reputation for leadership and contribute, therefore, to sales of all products.

Con:

There is a real question as to whether this is what the market wants and needs.

- Bridges may want 7½ hp even though his tests indicate 3-5 hp to be sufficient.
- New wells may require different kinds of motors.
- Small oil companies may not want the same motor that Hamilton wants.
This alternative goes against DMC’s long-standing policy not to claim performance in excess of NEMA standards.

By making this motor, DMC may be opening the door to many similar requests for special-purpose motors.

The new motor cannot be ready to sell this season.

$75,000 investment is required: this alternative is the most risky one if the product is not what the market wants.

Conclusion:

This option has to be seriously considered. Important concerns are:

- How valid are Bridges’ data? What more do we need to know?

- Could DMC gain a competitive advantage by designing and marketing special purpose motors for this and other applications?

- What product offering should DMC ready for the coming sales season and how should it be priced?
Developing a Teaching Case (Abridged)

Cases or “case studies” are used at Harvard Business School and other institutions for teaching purposes. Typically, students are assigned a case, which describes a business issue from the perspective of the executive decision-maker: the case protagonist. For example, a case might pose a problem such as “How should a new product be priced?” or “Should the firm be organized along functional or product lines?”

Cases are used as metaphors for a larger—and more general—class of business problems. By addressing several pricing problems in a marketing course, for instance, students are assumed to develop a perspective on what factors influence this class of decisions in all (or at least most) situations. For example, in the process of considering a pricing decision for an industrial product, students might learn to consider the price of competitive products, the cost of the product, the value of the product to the customer, as well as the possible substitutes for the products, as the factors that need to be considered before making a pricing decision.

Not only must a case provide sufficient detail to allow the student to grapple with the problem in a realistic way, but the case must also present the context and the protagonist in a rich fashion. This allows the student to identify with the manager and other decision maker(s) in the case, and to gain some appreciation for the complexity that the “real world” always imposes on choices and decisions. (Throughout, the decision maker who is the central character in the case will be referred to as the “protagonist.”)

There are several important assumptions that lie behind the case method as a teaching approach, and which, in turn, lie behind the development of the case:

- *There is general business knowledge*: If all business knowledge were situation-specific, students would have to analyze an infinite number of cases to be prepared for a job in business. In fact, there are many general principles, from pricing to valuing companies to organizing tasks into individual positions and these jobs into organizational units.

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1 Many details in this note refer specifically to cases developed at Harvard Business School. However, the more general points in this note will be of use to casewriters elsewhere.
bullet Even though general knowledge exists, its successful application depends on the specifics of the situation: If business were truly a science, we might just teach the “laws” and principles. But, the effectiveness of much managerial action is dependent upon many situation-specific variables. By attempting to apply these general principles to the specific situation presented in the case, the student learns what matters, and how to think through these aspects of a situation.

bullet The instructor knows “the territory” sufficiently well to select case situations that highlight relevant dimensions of the problem: That is, in order for the case method to work, the instructor must be sufficiently knowledgeable about the principles the case is intended to illustrate to select a case that highlights these general principles. For instance, to come back to our pricing example, suppose an introductory course on business was to include one case on pricing. Imagine if the instructor happened to choose a case on prescription drugs. This class of products has some very unusual properties, because the individual making the purchase decision (the doctor) is not the same as the actual consumer—the patient. This turns out to have important effects on the pricing decision. If the instructor does not know enough about this set of issues to select an example that highlights more general principles, she is in danger of asking students to extract general principles from examples that are not really general. One phrase that is often used to explain a case to people is that it presents “the world in a grain of sand.” The corollary principle to this is that you have to know enough about how the world really is so that when you simplify it down to a very small particle—the grain of sand—you maintain the properties that you want students to be able to capture and abstract from.

The remainder of this piece will describe—in more detail—what makes a good case, the process of working in the field with a company to develop a case study, as well as techniques for writing a case.

This piece will discuss not only cases, but also:

bullet notes or “technical notes” which are often used to present more conceptual or background material. This document, for instance is a note. (See page 19.)

bullet teaching notes, which are prepared for use by instructors who teach the case. The teaching note provides some background on the thinking that went into the design of the case, as well as various approaches to using the case in the classroom. (See page 20.)

What Is a Case Study?

Cases are first and foremost teaching vehicles. To write a good case, the instructor must be clear on what it is she is trying to teach. Once it is clear what kind of experience the instructor wants to stimulate in the classroom, the case can then be designed backwards from that end point. For example, suppose that the instructor wants to use a case in a course on “Management Practices” to discuss hiring employees. The first thing the casewriter needs to know is: “What does the instructor believe are the important lessons to be imparted to the class on this topic?” The entire class could revolve around interviewing techniques; it might focus on the tools for defining the requirements of a particular job; or, on performing reference checks. Indeed, the class might focus on all of these.

But just knowing the topics is not enough. The casewriter needs to know what specifically is important about, for instance, interview techniques. If the instructor believes that it is important to analyze the applicant’s past job experiences in light of the requirements of the open position, then the case needs to include this data. Thus, it is important not only that the casewriter know what
questions the students will be asked to address in class, but also that she knows what analysis will be required for answering those questions and what data are necessary to perform that analysis.

If you’re not familiar with cases, before you undertake any casewriting effort you should ask a colleague—or the faculty member with whom you will be writing a case—to recommend a few good examples for your reading.

What Makes a Good Case

First, a good case achieves its learning objectives via both a good story and some analysis that students must perform after they’ve read it. That is, if the student merely reads the case, one would hope that they would learn something valuable—how a venture capitalist thinks about potential investments, or how a sales manager hires salespeople. But, a good case must do more than this. A good case must pose an action question—a decision—and then permit the student to perform some piece of analysis that will shed light on the issues raised by this decision or problem. By forcing students to focus on a specific situation, the case is intended to serve as a general lesson on how to approach problems of this type. So, for instance, a case might present the issue of whether to construct a new plant in order to manufacture a new product. One question that would arise would revolve around the “break-even”—the lowest volume of product that the company can sell and still earn a profit. Answering this question requires that the student perform a break-even analysis, based upon fixed costs, revenues, and variable costs. The student who performs this analysis should be rewarded with an insight into both the case protagonist’s specific problems, as well as into this general class of issues.

To take another example—from a different field—suppose you were asked to write a case for a course on auto repair that posed the following problem: “Paul walked down to his garage, got into his car, and prepared to head off to work. Unfortunately, his car wouldn’t start.”

Now, the question arises: what information should be in the case? Perhaps a history of other problems Paul has had with the car, perhaps more information about what kind of car it is, etc. But, if you know the “theory” of how an internal combustion engine works, you have a big head start. You know that starting an engine requires three elements—fuel, air, and a spark, and that the spark is generated by the electrical system. If you called a mechanic and said, “My car won’t start,” he or she would ask: “Is the engine turning over? What does the fuel gauge say? If you turn on the headlights or the radio, do they work?” With these questions, the mechanic can establish if it is a fuel problem, an electrical problem, or something more complicated. But, in order to ask the right questions you have to know the theory.

The same is true of a business case. If you are sent out to write a finance case on whether Alpha Corp. should acquire Acme, Inc., you need to know the financial theory behind what makes for an attractive acquisition: i.e., that a company should make an acquisition if it is a positive net present value project, and that this, in turn, depends upon the forecast incremental cash flows anticipated from the acquisition, as well as the risk of those cash flows, which will be reflected in the discount rate.

Thus, the casewriter must have the following four things firmly in mind early in the casewriting process:

- The issues the case will focus on: This is often thought of as the “first paragraph,” although it may indeed take up the first page or two of the case;
• The analysis required to address those issues;
• The data required by students to address those issues satisfactorily; and,
• Where that data can be obtained.

While the case itself does not teach the analytical techniques (these are taught by the instructor during class or in a “note”) the case does provide a setting where those analytical tools can be applied in practice. And, it gives the student an appetite for those analytical tools and frameworks by forcing them to grapple with a set of issues where these tools can be of value.

What a Case Is NOT

The above description should highlight both what a case is and what it is NOT. It is not a piece of research. One should not set out to write a teaching case with the agenda of “Let’s see what we can learn about how Beta Company manages the product design process.” During the course of developing a case, one may well learn some things that one did not know, and this is indeed one of the joys of casewriting. It would be dull work if casewriting were merely about confirming what you already knew. But, you need to go into the field with a strong set of ideas about how the world does work. Without such a set of ideas, you will certainly discover the way one company does something. But you won’t know if this is an example of good practice or bad practice. You won’t know if it’s typical or atypical, or even if you’ve accurately captured one example.

The typical process is to go into the field to write a case with a fairly strong notion of what you want to teach and how the case will serve that end. Often you won’t find some fraction of what you expected to find, you will discover some things that surprise you, and you will indeed learn something about the topic of interest. But, this learning takes place against a backdrop of a strong initial set of hypotheses about the way in which this class of problems should be addressed. And, it is precisely this set of hypotheses that will drive the initial interviewing agenda and data collection efforts.

Another distinction that is important to make regarding the differences between a teaching case and a piece of research concerns the writer’s strict adherence to “truth” and “the fact.” In a piece of academic research, such truth is paramount. In the creation of teaching case, however, distortions to “the truth” are knowingly made. Perhaps the company wants something disguised. Or, perhaps a situation is simply more complex than can be managed in an hour and twenty-minute class. Simplifications and distortions are frequently made to enhance the teaching value of the case—distortions that would be unthinkable in a piece of “research.” For this reason, HBS cases include a phrase at the bottom of each case informing the reader that the case should “not be relied upon as a source of empirical data.”

There is such a thing as a research case. These cases are written for research purposes and—as such—typically seek simply to describe some aspect of a company, or its decision-making processes. A research case need not have a protagonist or an action issue, and is not intended for teaching purposes. Research cases are typically written early in the life of a research project, at the hypothesis generation stage, when researchers are searching for a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. Once the phenomenon is understood better, and hypotheses regarding it have been developed, the writer may go back and turn a research case into a teaching case (with the company’s permission, of course).

Finally, it is worth pointing out that while a case is a good simulation of a business situation, it does have some limitations. First, the students do not have real responsibility for implementing their
Developing a Teaching Case (Abridged)

While they may formulate and discuss action plans and details of the steps they would take, there is still a big difference between talking about it and doing it. In the field of business education, we have not found a good analog for the role the teaching hospital serves in the field of medical education. In addition, because a case typically includes all of the data that the student will be expected to use in his attempt to analyze the situation and formulate a plan, the information gathering skills required to solve business problems are not well developed by the case method.

Benefits of Case Method Teaching and Learning

It is difficult to talk about writing cases without talking about teaching, and difficult to talk about teaching without talking about learning. So, what is it that one hopes a student learns by preparing a case? At HBS, we often talk about a course having knowledge, skill, and attitudinal objectives:

- The analytical tools and framework, the principles and theories of a field, as well as general information about a process or technique, form the basis of knowledge. For instance, the notions of cycle time, process flow and bottlenecks form a set of principles in operations management. Definitions of cash flow and approaches to discounting form a set of theories in finance. Information regarding legal forms of organization and patent law constitutes a knowledge base relevant to starting high-technology ventures. Each field has its own base of knowledge.

- Skills relate to the application of knowledge—how to calculate and discount cash flow, how to determine cycle times and throughput, how to analyze patent claims. A key premise of the case method is that the skill required to apply principles and analytical techniques can best be learned by practicing these skills in the simulated context of a case. Further, an assumption behind the use of the case method is that by framing and structuring the problem, and by applying the techniques to a specific situation with which the student can identify, a more powerful learning experience takes place. Finally, the case method helps develop the students' abilities to articulate a point of view, defend it, and inform their own views with the opinions of others. These discussion skills are an important component of case method learning, and of success in the "real world."

- Attitudinal objectives are another important component of the case method. By placing students in situations where they are required to step into the role of the protagonist, reach a point of view and take action, students develop an attitude about their responsibility and ability to contribute to the situations in which they find themselves. In addition, students learn to analyze situations from the point of view of top managers—considering all aspects of a situation—rather than from a lower-level point of view.

A case discussion can achieve these learning objectives better than a lecture on similar material because it puts the student in the position of identifying with the protagonist. During a class discussion, you will often hear a student say, “We should . . . lower prices, introduce a new product, change our distribution strategy . . . .” The important part of this sentence is the “we.” The student has identified sufficiently well with the company and the protagonist that he is no longer dealing with some abstract concept. It is this identification that is the source of the powerful energy that drives preparation, classroom discussion and learning.

This highlights an important point—the choice of case subjects. Ideally, case protagonists should be people with whom students can easily identify. For example, in an MBA program, an ideal case protagonist has an MBA. If you were to select as a protagonist, for example, a young person with
only a high school education, it becomes too easy for the students to believe that the protagonist is in a particularly problematic situation because he doesn’t have an MBA—“I would never get into that situation.” As the instructor/casewriter, you may know that this statement is quite wrong—that you’ve seen many MBAs in exactly this position. But the student simply finds it too difficult to identify with the case protagonist, and some of the power of the learning experience is lost. The same is true for old cases. You may know that the issues around bottlenecks and cycle time are exactly the same in the semiconductor industry as they are in the metal stamping business. But students can envision themselves working for a semiconductor firm much more easily than they can in a machine shop and therefore the semiconductor setting—all else being equal—should prove more effective at engaging the class. One truth is that—as the instructor—you are competing with all manner of distractions: TV, job search, reading the newspaper. You will only get a certain amount of the student’s time—how do you want to use it? If you need to invest an extra two pages of text and ten minutes in class convincing students that the situation in the case really does matter, that is time and energy you won’t have available to spend on the real teaching points of the case.

Sources of Case Ideas and Case Leads

The appetite to develop a particular case can come about in two primary ways.

**Issue-driven:** An analysis of an existing (or new) course syllabus may lead the instructor to conclude that an existing case works well, but is just too old. Or, based upon knowledge of the field, an instructor may decide that “We need cases on this issue, but set in the service sector, because more and more students are going to work in service businesses.” Or, “More and more executives I speak with tell me that our students have a tough time with product costing—we should be giving them better preparation on this issue.” In such an instance, you begin with the issue, and start looking for an example that highlights it. For instance, for a case on training employees in the service business, you might start thinking about the kind of companies where this is particularly important—fast food, retail, etc. Then, you might look for specific companies that had been discussed in the press as having made a large investment in training, or were addressing a significant problem in this arena. Whenever you spoke with someone, you would be able to articulate the set of issues you were investigating. Thus, by the time you found a case site, the focus of the case would be well-established, the company would have indicated its interest in participating, and you would have asked enough questions to know if you were likely to get the case that you wanted.

**Company/Industry/Executive/driven** Many cases come about because an instructor has learned about a company or executive from the media, and decided that it would be an interesting case. Or, the instructor may decide that “We need more cases on service businesses” or “More cases on foreign/international businesses.” In these instances, when you go to the company, you have no clue what the case will be about. Almost every company has an interesting story to tell, but not every story has a case in it. This mode of case development is more difficult, and it should be recognized as such. But, these motivations—to get cases in a particular industry, for example—are valid. The key is to start looking for a real issue as soon as you identify a potential case site, and to get to a clear picture of what that issue is as soon as possible. (See pages 12-13 for a discussion of how to find a case issue within a particular company if you find yourself in this situation.)

In either situation, the decision to write a particular case is a function of the match between the potential case subject and the course topic to be covered. When you begin with a clear picture of the issue, you can search for companies that might provide good case subjects by sorting through various business media, looking for examples of the issue of interest. You may use personal contacts,
including former students and other alumni of the School. When you begin with a company or executive, you must quickly determine whether you are likely to unearth an issue that can be slotted into the course you are constructing.

Types of Cases

As a backdrop to understanding the kinds of information that will need to be gathered during the case development process, the various sources for that data, and the kind of release required for publication, it is worth pointing out the several different types of cases that exist:

- **Company field cases** are developed with the cooperation of a participating company. They usually have the firm’s name in the title, include interviews with one or more company executives, and require approval and release from a senior executive at the company. This is the most common type of case study.

- **Individual field cases** are written about specific individuals. A case might focus on a particular woman’s career as it spanned three different companies. Another might follow an individual’s search for a company to buy. The fact that the focus of the case is an individual—and that the individual will release the case—raises a particular issue. The most frequent cause for concern is that the individual has talked about certain information that relates to companies with which he was once associated. If the case reveals any non-public data based upon the individual’s experience with a particular company, then the company must approve the use of these data.

- **General experience** or “armchair” cases are written based solely on the faculty member’s general knowledge. For instance, a faculty member might need a very basic case for an introductory accounting course. Rather than find a real company, the instructor simply invents a story about Mary Jones, who opened a restaurant, bought tables, chairs, food ingredients, hired labor, served a certain number of customers. And based on dollar figures for each of these activities, the instructor would ask students to derive a set of financial statements. Because the issues here are so basic, and because the instructor knows the territory sufficiently well to abstract the important elements into the case, this is probably an efficient use of everyone’s time. But as the territory you wish to explore becomes increasingly complex, it is rare for a general experience case to work effectively. Complexity simply requires too much reality—reality that is hard to get without a real company. No release other than the faculty member’s signature is required for a general experience case. One danger of a general experience case is that the writer will use more specific experience, which would require a release. For instance, if the instructor acquired the experience that formed the basis for the case via service on a board, and if the case presents elements of the situation that are at all recognizable, a release from the company should be sought.

- **Published information** (or library) cases are those derived from published sources such as newspapers, magazines, research reports and journals. As such, they must be extensively footnoted. Further, the “credit line” at the bottom of the case must identify the case as “prepared from published sources.” (See the Baker Library citation guide at http://www.library.hbs.edu/guides/citationguide.pdf.) Note that no attempt should be made to make a “published source” case appear to be anything but that. The device of having the protagonist staring out her office window, for instance, implies a knowledge of the individual that is inconsistent with a published source case. Finally, if all material is obtained from public
sources, there is no need for a formal company release. However, it is the policy of HBS that all subjects of published source cases be sent a copy of such a case, as a courtesy.

Case Length

Cases typically range from 7 to 12 pages of text, and roughly the same number of pages of exhibits. Thus, 15 pages in total is a pretty short case, and 25 pages a fairly long one. In reality, most cases are too long. It is easier to write a longer case because you can avoid the hard work of thinking through what exactly you want the students to focus on, what analysis they should perform, what data they need. This extra length, however, comes at the expense of the students’ preparation. Most students are unlikely to spend more time preparing a long case—but they will simply spend more time reading and less time thinking.

Exceptions to the above rule of thumb occur when a case concerns a particular company “document.” For instance, in an entrepreneurship course, some cases are largely business plans—there might be one page of text that says that the venture capitalist/potential investor received the business plan and needed to prepare for a meeting the following morning with the entrepreneur who was seeking $1 million. The rest of the case is simply an exhibit that consists of the business plan for the company, or excerpts.

This can make a great case, but the temptation is to leave too much in, since again, it is easier to just leave the entire document as an exhibit rather than make careful decisions about editing.

A Final Point

One final point to understand is that—while cases are true—they are not “the truth.” No complex situation can be distilled to 10 pages of text and a few exhibits. Any case is necessarily an abstraction, a distillation, and an oversimplification. And, *all of these distortions are made in the service of the teaching purpose of the case.* Students will take one to two hours to read and prepare the case (we hope!) and an hour and 20 minutes to discuss the case in class. In order to accomplish the teaching objectives of the case, students need to focus their minds on certain issues; this means simplifying away those dimensions of the situation that don’t help with the central focus of the case.

Thus, in the course of developing the case, the casewriter will need to make dozens—if not hundreds—of decisions about information to include and exclude. The rule that should drive these decisions is the teaching purpose of the case, not some abstract notion of what is “true.” For instance, let’s suppose that you are writing a case on the Acme Company’s proposed acquisition of Delta Corp. In reality, the company did a very thorough analysis—exactly the kind of analysis you want the students to perform as the main learning in their preparation of the case. However, a month before the decision was presented to the board, Delta was sued for patent infringement, and this liability simply forced Acme to shelve the proposed acquisition. If the case is designed to highlight a relatively simple example of acquisition financial analysis, the contingent patent infringement liability may be too complicated and take too much time away from the analysis of the basic situation. The casewriter may make a perfectly legitimate decision to simplify the situation by excluding the patent infringement issue. If one were performing basic research or writing a research case, such an omission would be a fundamental violation of good research principles. But, for purposes of developing a teaching case, such simplifications are made all the time.
Before the First Field Visit

The development of a teaching case requires a number of discrete steps, each of which will be discussed below.

Prior to Contacting the Company

The first step in the process of considering the writing of a case is to determine whether other faculty are working on cases with the company, or have worked on a case with the company in the recent past. You should check the HBS Publishing online catalog to determine if a case already exists on this firm.

If you find that a colleague has an existing relationship with a company, it is strongly suggested that you contact this person and communicate about your intentions. It would be embarrassing to you personally and to the School to contact an executive about a possible case, only to learn that the firm was already working on a case with another faculty member here at the School. The importance of this cannot be overemphasized.

By the same token, one faculty member cannot exclude another from working at a site. Faculty members may communicate their current involvement, and can certainly request that new work not begin until their current project is completed.

In addition to determining whether other faculty members are working at a company, it is also worth learning whether senior executives are alumni of the School. This check can be done via the alumni database on the HBS Intranet.

Finally, if you have not already done so in the course of determining your interest in the company as a potential case site, you should search published sources for information on the company. You should endeavor to be as well informed as possible before having your first conversation with the company, and talking with them about a potential case.

Contacting the Company

It is obviously easiest to contact a company when you know someone there and when you know what you want to write a case about. It is most difficult when you have neither a specific concept for a case nor a contact.

Having checked the online catalog and published sources, you will know if another faculty member has a relationship with the company that can help introduce you. If you determine that no one at HBS has a relationship with the company, it is worth checking the alumni database. Perhaps a current or former student—or a student of a colleague—is a senior executive with the company and can serve as a point of contact. When all else fails, a “cold call” or letter can still be effective. When you do contact the company, you will want to describe the nature of the course you are teaching and why the company may make an appealing case, given the topics covered in the course. You will want to lay out the kind of information required, the amount of time that will be required on the company’s part, and the rules of confidentiality under which we work.
Preparing for the Initial Visit and Interviews

There is usually a fair amount of data that can be obtained from public sources prior to an initial visit. Information is generally available on a company’s web site, as well as from annual reports and 10-ks (if the company is public). When a company is public, analyst reports are usually a very useful source of an independent view of the business. If you are working as an RA for an instructor, always ask what background information he or she may have. And, if possible, it is always good to get some information from the company prior to the visit. This is particularly true if the focus of the case is established, and if the company has a good sense for the documents that relate to that topic. For instance, if the case will focus on the decision to enter a new product market, the company may have a business plan prepared by the team charged with making the decision. Such a document will help detail the issues, the available information, the analysis the company did, and allow you to be well-prepared for interviews—you’ll know what information you need to obtain to complete the case.

Scheduling and Sequencing Interviews

In many cases, the executive you are working with (or her assistant) will ask you whom you wish to interview at the company. You need to have some knowledge of the company in order to answer this question properly. First, you should always visit with your “sponsor” first—this may be the executive who will be the protagonist in the case, or it may be someone else. You will want to give this person as clear a picture as you can of the issues the case will focus on, how much time it will take, who from HBS will be involved, etc. (See HBS Brochure for Companies, http://intranet.hbs.edu/dept/drfd). If you are an RA working with a faculty member, the faculty member should usually go on this first visit, and, if not, should have introduced you to this executive by phone, email or letter.

If you don’t have a good feel for the issues and the players before you visit the company, you can greatly enhance the productivity of a first visit by having a brief phone call prior to your arrival. This is particularly true when significant travel is involved. Ideally, you would like to have a thorough understanding of the issue(s) the case will focus on, and you should know who at the company would have an important perspective on it. If the issue revolves around introducing a new semi-custom product, the marketing executives will certainly be important to the case. It is also possible, however, that the manufacturing folks have a strong point of view that you will want to capture. A 30-minute phone conversation prior to a visit can make the trip much more productive by sharpening the focus on the issues and identifying the key players, assuring that they will be in town and can be scheduled for your visit.

It is also useful to understand the hierarchy of the organization and how you will work with it going forward. In some cases, once the focus of the case is sharpened, the “sponsor” may hand you off to a subordinate who will provide you with much of the information and do most of the work. This is perfectly fine—better to be assigned to a more junior person who is willing and able to do the work than to a senior executive who doesn’t have the time and who doesn’t really know the details you need. However, if this happens, be sure that the senior executive has communicated to his colleagues the company’s willingness to share information with you. At times, the junior executive can be quite wary about sharing data, and if she has not been fully briefed by her superior on “the deal.” In this case, you need to be straightforward about the understanding that was in place, and simply ask your new contact person to have a discussion with their superior about this. Moreover, it is a good idea to keep your sponsor informed as you progress through the interviewing and casewriting process.
Negotiating the Terms and Conditions

As discussed above, the clearance process requires that the company that is the subject of the case sign-off, or release the case, prior to its use in class or publication by HBS Publishing. Ideally, the negotiation over what data will be required for the case, and the process of getting the company comfortable releasing this data, will take place at the very beginning of the casewriting process. One good reason to do this is to learn as early as possible if the company will be uncomfortable or, alternatively, learning as early as possible that the data cannot be released, and therefore, that the hoped-for case cannot be written.

Occasionally, these conversations can be had with a high degree of exactness before the case begins, and the decision to abort the process may be made if it appears the desired data cannot be released. More often, however, the casewriter and the company embark upon the process with the sense that there will be some sensitive information and that “we will cross that bridge when we come to it.” The casewriter will have a far clearer idea of what information is truly essential once the writing process has begun and the issues have been clarified. Similarly, the company will have a far clearer idea of what is required—and why—once it sees a draft of the case.

For these reasons, the detailed discussion of how to negotiate these issues—and how to think about options for disguise as a way around them—appears later in this note (see page 17).

In the Field—Visiting the Company

Introducing the Case Method

Often the initial contact will be quite familiar with you, the case, and the casewriting process, as a result of the discussions that lead up to the decision to participate in the case study. As soon as you start interviewing other people in the organization, however, they are likely to be unsure about what is going on, why you are there, or even what a “case” is. It is always useful to begin each interview with a statement like: “I’m sure ____ (the sponsoring executive) told you something about why I was visiting, but I’d like to take a minute to introduce myself and tell you personally what I am trying to accomplish.” This is a simple courtesy, and will often elicit a response that confirms that the person has no clue why you are there.

During this initial piece of the discussion, it is important to say a little bit about your own background, about the case method of teaching at HBS, what course this case will be used in, why you are interested in the company and this particular situation, as well as the rules for confidentiality. It is also important to set expectations around the amount of time this will take, follow-up work, etc.

Interviewing

Once you are at the company, the bulk of your work will consist of interviewing. This will include the case protagonist, as well as others in the company who have a perspective on the issues at hand, or whom can provide important background information for the case. To emphasize a point made above—the information you require will be a function of how you have framed the case, and what you know—and can learn—about how such decisions are made.
A key step is determining who is likely to have the information you need, and which member(s) of the organization will have interesting perspectives on the issues at hand. As an example, suppose you are teaching a course on retailing, and specifically, on how a merchant should select the products to sell, and how much shelf space should be allocated to each of these products. The first things the casewriter needs to figure out is who in the organization is likely to be making such decisions, and what type of situations will lead to particularly interesting problems. It could be that the decision is fairly uninteresting when it comes to a choice about simply carrying a new product, but that it is a much more interesting decision when made in the context of designing a new store prototype, which will set the pattern for a large number of new stores. Now, the decision is of far more consequence, and the care with which it should be made, the amount of data collected, the number of people involved, all dramatically increased. Part of the art of writing a good case is in finding situations that highlight the particular issue to which you are interested in exposing the student.

Based on your work in this field, you go out to a case site and attempt to write a case on how the XYZ book store reconfigured its prototype store, based upon changing customer buying patterns due to the Internet. And, let’s suppose that based upon your prior research in the field, you believe that retailers typically make these decisions based upon the profit margin generated per square foot. That is, they try to maximize the dollar margin generated in the store per year, and this problem reduces to generating the most dollar margin per linear foot of shelf space. You are at a huge advantage walking into the case site with this piece of knowledge. If an interview subject simply said, “We looked at sales patterns and tried to pick the products that consumers were buying in the largest quantities,” you would (hopefully) not settle for this answer. “What about the profitability of the product?” you might ask. “Does this figure into your decision about how much shelf space to allocate?” If they said “no,” you would suspect that this was an example of poor practice—not excellent practice. And that might be fine, and you might still be able to write a case about this company. It is likely, however, that they would not have all of the data that you would want for the students to analyze the product-specific profitability—after all, if the company never did the analysis, why would they have collected the data?

You would have a far easier time getting the data you need for the case, and a higher probability of learning something interesting yourself, if you found a company had prepared a two-inch thick book of tables in which every product is ranked by the margin per linear foot. (Casewriters live for moments like these.)

Imagine how different this experience would have been if you had not known enough to have a point of view regarding how this class of decisions should be made.

Generally, the key to a good interview is to go in with a solid idea of the information you want to come out with. It may be that the interviewee does not know it all, or points you to another individual in a better position to answer the question. But, a solid agenda will make the interview productive.

Finding the Case Issue

Much of the above has been written on the assumption that you know the specific issue that the case will focus upon. As discussed earlier, however, this is not always true. Sometimes you will begin with the idea that you want to write a case on a particular company—because it seems like an interesting firm, or because it is in an intriguing industry, or because the protagonist seems noteworthy.
Each of these may be good reasons, but they demand a great deal of additional work from the casewriter. Finding “the case” within a target company can be one of the most challenging jobs in the whole art of casewriting. You usually begin by getting a brief overview of the company and its recent history. Then, you start probing for a case issue. If someone is completely unfamiliar with a case, you might say, “Every case has two components—an interesting story and an issue or decision (probably best not to call it a “problem”) with which students need to grapple. Can you think of any issues your company has dealt with lately that students might find interesting?” A second level of questions can be drawn from the “theory”—what you know about the territory of the course. So, for instance, if you are trying to write a case for a finance course, you might ask, “Have you made any significant capital equipment purchases? Or acquisitions? Or raised any money through the stock or bond markets?” All of these are actions that would typically call for some form of careful analysis and decision-making. For an organizational behavior course, you might ask about reorganizations or the design of new human resource or training systems, or recruitment or training issues. Again, what you know about the content of a particular course/field of study should tell you where to look for issues of interest. Nonetheless, this remains a difficult challenge, and one you should always be up front with the company about—never agree to “write the case” before you have found a substantial issue around which you believe you can craft a good case.

**While Gathering Information, Constantly Think About WRITING**

As you are interviewing, constantly think about the case you are going to be writing. Do you know enough to write the story you want to tell? Test your understanding by constantly telling yourself the story. Can you develop a clear picture in your own mind—or even better yet, relate it to a colleague—in a way that makes sense? This is a point you will need to get to before you can do a good job of writing the first paragraph, and therefore, you will need to focus on understanding the threads of the story that are important for the case, and how they come together at a single point in time and on a single person’s desk—the case protagonist at the time of the case.

Pay attention to stories and anecdotes that capture truths you want to build into the case. Many cases benefit from having a few little stories; they can provide a timeless piece of wisdom, or raise an interesting issue. For example, during an interview with an executive from a medical device company, the case subject related: “XYZ Company wanted to distribute this product of ours because it would give their sales reps more shoulder time with the docs.” The phrase “shoulder time” beautifully captured the way that salespeople in the industry thought about selling to doctors. It opened up a wonderful opportunity to ask the class, “Why did XYZ Company care about more “shoulder time” with the docs?” The answer to this question was: because they wanted to sell to the doctors—who are not price sensitive—rather than to the purchasing agents—who are price sensitive. The answer exposed the lynchpin of profitability in the medical device industry: keeping the product interesting and new enough so that the doctors want—and feel they need—to talk to the salespeople, rather than simply telling salespeople to talk to hospital purchasing agents, where they know they will get beat up on price. This is the key to making money in this business, and one simple phase in the case opened up the opportunity to have this discussion with the students.

A classic Federal Express case provides another example. The issue in the case was whether FedEx should introduce the new “letter” sized package, and what they should charge for it. There was a quote in the case from a manager who said that FedEx’s planes (at least at the time of the case) “grossed out before they cubed out.” This was the key to the case—it meant that the scarce resource was ounces or pounds of weight, not cubic inches or feet of volume. Because the planes were weight-constrained rather than space-constrained, the issue was how much margin the new packaging
would earn per ounce, rather than per cubic inch of space or per dollar of revenue. Imagine if an inexperienced casewriter had been conducting these interviews, without an understanding of what the case was really about and how a thorough contribution analysis should be performed. Such a quote could easily have sailed over the head of even a good interviewer.

Again, this highlights the importance of knowing—before you go into the field—what the case is about and what analysis the instructor will want the students to perform in class. For instance, suppose that the instructor believed that the key to the FedEx example (prior to conducting interviews at least) was the contribution margin per dollar of sales. And, the instructor explained how he would perform such an analysis. Then during the interview, the casewriter would ask, “How did you decide to offer this packaging, and how to price it?” The casewriter would be prepared to hear, “We looked at the contribution margin as a percent of sales, and wanted to price it so that it had at least the same margin as our other products.” Instead, the manager might respond: “Remember before when I said the planes gross out before they cube out—well, weight is our scarcest resource. The average box pack weighs 4.2 pounds and has a price of $22, and we earn $12 of contribution margin on that. So, that is $2.86 per pound. We analyzed the average letter pack from our test market in Detroit, and found that it weighed 11 ounces. Well, at ___ per ounce of contribution margin, and ___ of cost, we could price it at ___ and still make the same margin per ounce. But, this seemed too low—so we priced it at ____, which earned us __ per ounce, which was ___% higher than the standard box pack.”

In this example lies the root of why some faculty like to write their own cases, or at least like to go on all or most of the interviews with the casewriter: they feel that the knowledge required to make a judgment about a particular piece of information (such as the quotes above) is quite sophisticated, and that these judgments require a very extensive knowledge of the territory and of the teaching objective of the case.

Writing—Case Draft Preparation

It’s the writing part of casewriting that most people seem to have the most difficulty with. It’s worth being clear about one thing: when we say writing, we usually mean thinking. We don’t have a good word for the intellectual work that goes into putting something articulate on paper, and therefore, we tend to group that work under the heading “writing.” And, face it, most people are not comfortable, when asked, “What did you do today?” replying: “I did some thinking.” But, it is the thinking that is the hard part of writing, not the writing itself.

A few tips that should prove helpful as you begin to write:

Determine as quickly as possible the specific situation with which the protagonist will be wrestling. You should be focused on coming to a perspective on this from the time you first walk into the company, and think about little else until you figure it out. The specific situation will determine the issues and the analysis that the case will focus on. Unless you can articulate this clearly in your own mind, you will have a very difficult time writing the rest of the case: building in the required information, leading the reader through the story, following each thread that leads to the situation that is articulated in the first paragraph. If you’re working with a supervising faculty member, be sure you agree on this before doing a lot of other writing.

Write the first paragraph. The first paragraph—or the first page—captures the time, the protagonist, the issues, and the pressures that make the decision or problem an important one. This
picture of the case will be the touchstone around which the case is crafted. It will be important to get this right, and it is worth writing it down as carefully as you can to communicate this picture to any faculty colleagues/supervisor with whom you may be working.

Prepare an outline. An outline of the case—including a list of exhibits—will help you organize your thoughts and the material you plan on including in the case. Often, the final structure of the case will be different—as you tell the story, you will develop new insights about how best to present the material. But, an outline is a useful starting point, and it will help you develop a first draft of the case. In addition, it is a valuable tool for communicating your sense of the case to colleagues and for obtaining their feedback and input on information/issues they think should be in the case.

Construct a time line. The first thing to do is figure out the time the case is set—the day, the week, the month. This will determine what information needs to go into the case, vs. what events transpired after the time of the case, and therefore, are not relevant. Then, plot all of the relevant events in the case against this time line. Be sure you understand the logical relationships between events: did one influence the other?

Write. The biggest problem that most casewriters have is that they wait too long to start writing. They think that they are not quite ready, that they don’t have all the data they need, or that they need to clear a big block of uninterrupted time. The best thing that you can do is to start writing within a day or so of the first set of interviews. First, write the first paragraph—the first page or so of the case that will set the situation, the time of the case, the protagonist(s) and the context. Then, just write. It is only the process of writing that will drive the discovery of what information is missing, what data you need to complete the story.

Maintain the authority of the casewriter’s voice. As the casewriter, you have a lot of authority. Don’t squander it by heaping exaggerated praise on the company or the protagonist. For example, describing the protagonist’s decision to raise prices as “heroic” or the company’s products as “the best in the industry” will cost you credibility with the reader. You will need all your authority to accomplish certain goals in the case—to lead the reader through some complex territory with some simplifications and generalizations, and you will want that authority to be there when you need it. If you want to say something flattering, put the words in someone else’s mouth: “His colleagues believed that ____.” “Joe was widely believed to ____.” “The company believed that its products were ____.”

Use quotes liberally. The use of quotes will help you maintain your authority by putting anything judgmental in someone else’s words. Also, by putting any judgmental perspectives in a quote, you give the reader permission to question them. When these views are in the casewriter’s voice, it is much more difficult for the reader to question their validity. Finally, it is often much easier to convey complex information in a quote—you can use more informal language, shorter phrases.

Write the teaching note at the same time as you are writing the case. Teaching notes are documents prepared solely for use by faculty, to pass along the thinking behind the design of the case, and to describe the analysis that is expected from students. This will force you to constantly test the case against what needs to transpire during the student’s preparation and during class. If a particular piece of analysis is required, does the data in the case support the student’s ability to perform it? Of course, the portions of the teaching note that deal with how to manage the flow of discussion are more easily written once the case has been taught. But it is essential to have the key blocks of analysis articulated.
Think hard about the structure of the case. Once you have determined the story you will tell and the issues it will lead to, you must decide how to tell that story on paper. The most natural structure for most cases is chronological—telling the story in the order in which it transpired. However, there are often several considerations that argue for some modification of this structure. There may be background information on the industry, the company, and the protagonist that you want to convey before really starting to tell the story. Another typical issue concerns “foreshadowing” issues in the case so that students will know what to pay attention to. For instance, suppose the issue that the protagonist is wrestling with in the first paragraph is “whether to distribute the new product with a direct sales force or via manufacturer’s representatives.” A natural structure for the case might be chronological, describing the evolution of the new product as well as background about the company’s other products and sales strategies. However, in order to know what to pay particularly close attention to during this description, it may well help the reader to know more about the problem than the single-sentence description in the first paragraph. By articulating the fact that the protagonist is concerned about the loyalty of reps, or the ability to train them properly to sell a complex product, the reader will have a much better sense of the data they need to pay attention to as they read the case.

Carefully craft the exhibits. Exhibits are an important piece of any case. Some exhibits are “highly processed” data, which are designed to support a particular argument in the case. For instance, market share data may support the argument that the market is highly fragmented—or, highly concentrated. Other data are quite raw, requiring the student to think hard and to perform some analysis to extract much meaning. Five years of financial statements, for example, contain a massive amount of data that could be massaged: revenue trends, absolute and relative profitability, cost and margin drivers. You should be clear what purpose you want an exhibit to serve. If it is to support a conclusion, make it clear and easy to figure out. If it is to provide raw material for analysis, make sure all the required information is present.

Avoid jargon and technical terms. Most information can be articulated without the need for specialized jargon. Many companies and industries certainly use such words, and it can be tempting to parrot them in the case, to indicate familiarity with the industry. Try to avoid this. If you do have to use a technical term, try to define it immediately after you use it, employing parentheses to insert the definition in the same sentence.

Write in the past tense. If you say “John Jones was the vice president, Marketing” the case will always be factual, even if Jones is promoted or fired. Don’t use the word “currently” to describe an event transpiring at the point in time when the case is being written—it will be confusing when the case is read five years later. Instead, use “During 1999...” or “By the summer of 1999...” or some other phrase with the actual date you wish to signal. Quotes present the most difficult challenge—people don’t naturally speak in the same past tense. Consider the following example: “We are going to raise prices.” If you were writing this in the casewriter’s voice, you would say, “The company anticipated raising its prices.” However, when the phrase is in the present tense—as long as it is in a quotation—the reader understands that this was spoken at the time of the case. The phrase is anchored by the extensive use of the past tense around it.

Follow-up Work and Company Review

Sometime during the writing process, you will need to interact with the company again. Writing always highlights issues you didn’t know were there and data you didn’t know you needed. You
should always set these expectations up front, so that the company doesn’t think that the next thing they will be receiving after you leave is a finished draft.

It is often tempting to send the company a “working draft” that highlights missing data and issues. This can be a good idea or not, depending upon several factors.

First, judge how widely in the organization the draft will be distributed. If the case contains interviews with a dozen people in the company, you can be sure that lots of people are going to see it. Even if you are careful to communicate the stage of your work, the kind of feedback you want, your case will undoubtedly find its way into the hands of someone who didn’t get the message, and who is surprised and disappointed with how rough it is. When there is a large group of people who will read the case—especially if there are any lawyers involved—you should send the company as polished a draft as possible. This entails obtaining the information in a series of follow-up phone calls, emails, and faxes. etc.

On the other hand, if you are working with a senior executive in a smaller company, where she is the only person who will be involved in approving the case, and if you have a good relationship with her, and if you feel that you can communicate to the individual the purpose of sending her the draft, this is an efficient way to work.

Remember though, it is quite embarrassing to send someone a working draft on which you want just their substantive comments and have it come back line edited for style and punctuation. Don’t take this chance with a company relationship that is at all fragile. Better to do the extra work of polishing something that might get edited out than to jeopardize your image and the School’s and suffer the possible consequence of not getting the case released.

Agreeing on the Information that Will Appear in the Case

At some point in the process—usually when you are almost finished—the company will send you a draft back with large red lines through entire sections, or just a remark like “We need to talk about this” in the margin.

First, you should have immunized yourself against any extreme reaction with a good discussion before you ever started working on the case. If it was clear that the case would focus on the profitability of a product, and that the company would therefore need to release more financial data than had been previously disclosed publicly, you should have reached agreement on this before a lot of work was poured into the case. If you could not agree on this, then the work should not have been done.

However, individuals often get more reticent when they see their own words in black and white, and you may well have stumbled onto some sensitive territory that you did not know about when you started. Remember, we do have an agreement that we will not publish without the company’s consent. Often their concerns are completely legitimate. We do not wish to be the cause of a competitor learning some piece of information that damages the subject company’s competitive position, just because they were trying to help us.

The first response in this situation is to compromise easily on any information that is merely interesting, but is not essential to the teaching purpose of the case. Second, make sure that the company understands why a particular piece of information is critical: “The purpose of this case is to expose students to the benefit of a breakeven analysis—they can not perform this analysis without
the data on product margins.” When all else fails, it may make sense to consider disguising some aspect of the case.

Disguise

The technique of disguise can be quite useful. In the above example, suppose the company has a highly profitable line, and it does not want competitors to know it is so profitable. You can simply raise the costs and reduce the profits in the numbers that you present in the case. Again, you need to understand the teaching points of the case. For example, suppose the objectives are to get students to perform a breakeven and take the breakeven volume and map it against the market size and determine the market share they will need as well as assess how achievable it is. If the required market share rises from 4% to 5% as a result of your disguise, it is probably not a big deal. If it goes from 45% to 100% then this disguise is likely to distort the analysis and resulting conclusions too severely to be useful. Alternatively, it may be a very important piece of context that this is one of the company’s most profitable product lines, and therefore, any distortion of this fact is a compromise of the teaching objectives of the case.

When the issues in a case revolve around the costs or profits related to a particular division or product, this data may well be sensitive. As the example above highlighted, whether or not you can effectively disguise this data depends on whether that disguise will compromise the teaching purpose of the case.

If you do disguise some or all of the data in the case, you should mention this in the “credit line” on the first page of the case.

Company identity

An alternative approach to the problem, of course, is to simply change the identity of the company. Suppose the company in question is a commercial printer—there are certainly scores of firms in this business and it is unlikely the company would be recognized. On the other hand, if the company is “a leading cola business” or a “major automobile firm,” then it is hard to imagine an effective disguise. It is also true that many companies who are participating in a case are motivated by some benefit that requires use of their true name—it’s hard to get any recruiting or PR benefits from a disguised case.

Industry/product identity

It is sometimes desirable to change not only the name of the company, but also the industry and product. For example, suppose that the focus of the case is a racial discrimination lawsuit against a business by one of its employees, a lawsuit that was settled out of court, and thus, allow the company to avoid what it viewed as unfavorable publicity. The company might be willing to participate in a case, if it could be assured that the story would not reflect unfavorably upon it. And, indeed, it might be possible to change virtually every aspect of the company’s identity without compromising the interesting issues in the case.

Financial data

It can be easy or difficult to disguise financial data, depending upon the analysis that is required of the student. If the case focuses on an organizational or human resource issue, then the amount of financial data required is usually quite limited—certainly no more than would be routinely disclosed by a public company. For a private company, of course, any sales or earnings figures may be considered confidential, rendering a disguise more important.

In all situations, disguise should be seen as an accommodation to a reasonable concern on the part of a case subject. When the situation cannot be disguised without destroying the teaching objectives of the case, it is preferable to find another situation that is more conducive to meeting these
objectives. As always, knowing what those objectives are, and having a discussion with the company prior to beginning extensive work, will preserve the School’s relationships and resources.

Supplementary Materials For Cases

(B) Cases and Case Series

There are many cases that include an (A), (B), and (C) case, and so on. There are some points worth considering as you contemplate a case series, or at least multi-part cases.

First, there is often some merit in writing a (B) case that describes “what actually happened” with respect to the issue that is highlighted in the case. One reason to do this concerns the release process. If a company is sharing what it believes to be a difficult or thorny issue, they may be unhappy seeing a case which ends just when they are in the deepest throes of wrestling and worrying about it. By writing a (B) case that ties up how the company handled the issues, you bring some sense of closure and can at least tell the “happy ending” to the story (assuming there is one). In certain instances, this can make the company feel more positively about the output of the case development process, and make it much easier to get the cases released, assuming they see both of them together. This approach has benefits for the student as well. Assuming that the instructor believes that the students can learn something from the manner in which the company handled the issue, and if this is at all complex, a page or two may be necessary to capture it. The students benefit by being able to review this outcome in some detail.

There are more complicated case series that attempt to take on company issues in a more complicated way. First, there are “additional data” cases that typically include a page or so of data. This case is intended to be handed out during class, part way through a discussion, to both represent the reality of how the situation unfolded and to allow the students to deal with some new piece of information that bears upon the issue in some important and interesting way. This may be particularly true when the data—had it been included in the original case—would have precluded some avenue of analysis that the instructor wishes to pursue. For instance, suppose the issue is around pricing a product, and the instructor desires the students to perform all of the typical cost, margin, competitive, and value analyses. Then having reached a conclusion, a one-page case introduces the fact that a competitor has just introduced a new product with a very advanced set of features. Students can then focus on this one specific issue, what it means, what the company should do. Had this fact been included in the original case, its importance may have swamped the more mundane issues on which the instructor desires the student to spend some time focusing. This additional data can also enliven and reinvigorate a class discussion, and does simulate some of the real world aspects of business, in which data does tend to roll in as an issue is being discussed.

There are other types of case series that attempt to take one company/situation and break apart the issues into cases that will be taught over multiple days. There are pros and cons to this approach. On the positive side, many business situations do lose something when they are simplified down to the point where they can be addressed and discussed in a single case. So, a multiple-day case permits the instructor to build more complexity into the case, leveraging both his/her own research at the company as well as the student’s investment of preparation time. Presumably, a second day of discussion on XYZ Company can be deeper and more informed than a day class devoted to a new company and issue. However, the danger is that the students have been conditioned to getting a new company and case each day, and may lose interest in “another case on this same company.” If you do
select to develop a case series, you should be sure that the issues are interesting and different enough
to support the two or three classes you intend to devote to them.

Notes or Technical Notes

Notes or “Technical Notes” are typically written as a complement to a case or course module. In
many situations, they are analogues to a chapter in a textbook, in that they provide conceptual
overview, or the theory and principles which form the underpinning of case material.

Notes have some things in common with cases, at least from a “production” point of view. They
are produced on the case template, and, because they are often based on a public source, they must
meet rigorous standards of footnoting and attribution. They are assigned numbers on the HBS system
similar to those used for cases.

Many Notes used to be titled “Note on …..” but it is the current convention not to include the
“Note on…” as part of the title.

Courseware

Simulations can easily be built in to cases by means of spreadsheet or other data/tools that is
made available over the web as “courseware.” These tools are particularly applicable to certain
classes of problems.

- Analysis of financial data: when extensive analysis of financial statement data is desired as
  part of case preparation, it is often helpful to make this data available in electronic form. This
  allows students to spend more time manipulating and analyzing the data, and less time
  entering it.

- Introduction of new tools and models: instructors can also provide spreadsheet models over
  the web. For instance, students can be given models that derive present values or create
  various scenarios from a single forecast. In some cases, of course, students might be able to
  build these models.

Video and Other Media

Video can provide an effective complement to a case. Because video can be quite an expensive
undertaking, however, it is worth thinking quite carefully about how video will add to the student’s
learning experience. Video is particularly valuable for conveying some information that is difficult to
communicate with the written word. A complex production process or a particular personality or
leadership style lend themselves to video.

At the simple (and less expensive) end of the spectrum, case protagonists may visit class when the
case is taught. Their appearance can be videotaped and edited, and may provide a useful addition to
the teaching experience if the guest is unable to attend in the future (or, if the case is taught outside
HBS).

The release process for video is similar to that for a paper case, but in addition to the company
release, you need a separate sign-off from anyone who is identified and who speaks on the video.
(MBA Students may not be videotaped in the classroom.)
In other situations, video can provide an essential input to the student's preparation of the case prior to class. Video can be digitized and made available over the web for students.

Video is also a useful medium to model effective—or ineffective—interpersonal behavior: conducting an interview or performance appraisal, for instance, or running a meeting.

Because video is less “malleable” after the fact than the printed word, and because it is more expensive, you need to do careful thinking about what video you want to capture and how it will be used.

Preparing a Teaching Note

A teaching note is prepared for use by the instructor with a particular case. It goes without saying that teaching notes are confidential pieces of material that should not be widely distributed. HBS publishing only makes them available to individuals who they can verify are faculty members at an academic institution, and you should follow the same policy. Cases without teaching notes are much less widely sold and used than cases that do have teaching notes. While there is no single standard format for a teaching note, certain components (e.g., overview or synopsis, teaching objectives, pedagogical overview, assignment questions, analysis, and an eventual board plan) do help to present the information to other instructors in a useful way. These components and the role of teaching notes are presented in a companion piece to this note entitled “Teaching Notes: Communicating the Teacher’s Wisdom,” by Professor James E. Austin (HBS case # 5-793-105).
Teaching Notes: Communicating the Teacher’s Wisdom

Teaching notes are an essential companion on an instructor’s journey toward excellence in case method teaching. There is nothing automatic about case teaching; it requires careful planning and thorough preparation. Teaching notes capture and communicate the wisdom inherent in that process and constitute high-value intellectual capital for the teaching community.

Teaching notes play five important roles that justify the time and effort required to produce them:

Increase Teaching Effectiveness By making the why, what, and how of our teaching more explicit, teaching notes enhance our capacity to lead more productive learning discussions. The guidance provided by teaching notes increase the probability of classroom success, thereby enhancing the return on the investment made in developing the case study and preparing to teach it.

Save Time Teaching notes are not a surrogate for preparation, but they greatly enhance the efficiency of the preparation process. They provide the instructor with a running start. As one professor put it: “I spend 6 hours preparing; without teaching notes, another 3 hours would be required.”

Build Confidence By reducing the unknown and providing a map, the risk of venturing into the untried waters of a new case is lowered. The resultant increased confidence is particularly helpful to teachers new to the case method or to a particular case course. One new instructor stated: “I would have died without teaching notes. The teaching group discussions were helpful, but the teaching notes were essential.”

Guide Casewriting Case studies are prepared to serve “as the basis of discussion.” They are crafted as discussion vehicles, which is what creates their special literary genre. To fulfill this educational mission, they need to be prepared with the probable discussion dynamics in mind, both process and content. These dynamics are at the heart of teaching notes and therefore interact with case writing in an iterative fashion. One experienced case teacher put it plainly: “A case ought not be written without having its educational objectives and general teaching plan clear.”

Contribute Intellectual Capital Teaching notes are carriers of ideas and communicators of insights about both the subject matter and the pedagogy for disseminating it. As such they constitute another instrument to stimulate intellectual dialogue. Teaching notes are significant academic endeavors and should be viewed as an important part of a professor’s publication portfolio. The notes, even more than case studies, reveal quality of mind, pedagogical creativity, and communication skills. They can demonstrate conceptual ability, an administrative point of view, clarity in thinking, and skill

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Professor James E. Austin prepared this note.

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in organizing material in a user-friendly way. Teaching notes are a valuable part of the individual’s and institution’s intellectual capital and should be duly recognized and reviewed in promotion assessments.

Given the importance of teaching notes, there is a surprising and disturbing absence of guidance on what teaching notes should consist of. Yet there is a wealth of cumulative wisdom in the minds of case teachers who have been preparing notes throughout their careers. This paper is an attempt to tap some of that wisdom with the hope that it will provide helpful guidance and encouragement. What follows is based on interviews with a variety of my Harvard Business School colleagues, who have collectively almost 300 years of cumulative experience with the case method and who have demonstrated superior talent as course developers and teachers. I am merely the gatherer and quilter of this community’s collective knowledge about teaching notes, and my intellectual stitching will only do partial justice to the richness of their wisdom. There was considerable diversity of perspectives on teaching notes, yet there was a striking convergence on the importance of teaching notes and the central elements in them.

What Should A Good Teaching Note Contain?

A standard structure or format for teaching notes can facilitate preparation and usage but is not essential. The goal is to create a user-friendly document that will be helpful to other teachers and there are many forms to achieve that. Nonetheless, there are five main components critical to a teaching note’s utility: synopsis, positioning, learning objectives, substantive analysis, and teaching process. In effect, a teaching note explains:

- what the case is about
- where it fits in a course
- why we are teaching it
- what we are going to teach
- how we can teach it

Synopsis

This is a half-page summary of the case and its major issues. Its purpose is to provide the instructor with a brief overview of the case. Although it is generally preferable to have read the case before examining the teaching note, some find perusing the note first facilitates their study of the case. It is also useful to instructors who are “shopping” for cases that might fit their course needs and go to the teaching notes first to ascertain the relevancy.

Positioning

Teaching notes are generally written to guide the teaching of a case at a certain place in a specific course with a particular type of student. Pedagogical positioning fundamentally affects what goes into the note, so it is important that the reader understand this perspective. Such usage transparency will allow the instructor to make any necessary adjustments in the note’s teaching suggestions to fit his or her educational setting and needs.
Objectives

The educational objectives of the case are the cornerstone of the teaching note. Everything else should build off these. Clarity about the learning agenda creates focus for the teaching exercise. Too often objectives are vaguely stated or left implicit. Such vagueness creates ambiguity and confuses teaching direction. We must be clear why we are teaching the case and what we expect the students to learn.

Clarity is enhanced by specifying the type of learning sought. Three general categories are useful: skill building, knowledge enhancement, and attitudinal development. There are a multitude of critical managerial skills case teaching aims to build, such as problem or opportunity identification, strategy formulation and implementation, function-specific analytical techniques, and more generic analytical capabilities. Knowledge enhancement encompasses theory, frameworks, concepts, and information. Attitudinal development involves dealing, for example, with values, beliefs, self-awareness, intellectual openness, and receptivity to change. The overarching educational goal of a management education program is to develop the capability to analyze problems, make decisions, implement them, and lead organizations. The teaching note’s objectives should specify with precision the skill, knowledge, or attitude development that is sought and that will contribute to the overall educational mission.

Clarity of objectives is often hindered by a failure to distinguish case issues from learning objectives. Issues represent the topics around which a discussion can focus; the educational objectives specify the type and nature of learning to be gleaned from that examination. For example, in one case the central issue concerned “the strategic and organizational responses to globalizing consumer, economic, technological, and competitive forces.” Simply preceding this with the phrase “To examine” would not create a useful learning objective. This particular teaching note went on to provide the needed specificity of objectives in terms of conceptual knowledge enhancement and skill building: “...to reinforce the concept of a company’s ‘administrative heritage’ as an asset that must be captured and used rather than denied”...“to illustrate the concept of worldwide learning as an important source of competitive advantage for MNCs”...“to sharpen skills in analyzing the diverse environmental forces driving globalization, and their limits.” For each of these objectives the note briefly elaborated the substantive nature of the expected learning.

Objectives can also be clouded by confusing what the students will do in the discussion with what they will learn from it. For example, one note specified as an objective “Review issues in .....” The reader is left not knowing what is supposed to be accomplished educationally by reviewing the specified issues. The phrasing of objectives often begin with similar action verbs: explore, examine, identify. This is okay if they are followed by the “why” that explains the learning target. For example, one note stated that the students “will identify two very different approaches to quality...” It went on to explain “by comparing these two approaches, students should develop a greater sensitivity to the different meanings of the term quality, as well as an improved understanding of their relationship to firms’ manufacturing strategies.” This elaboration makes the learning agenda clear. Another example: “Introduce students to the different kinds of work marketing managers do in order to aid students in making career choices.” Information was being disseminated to improve students’ decision-making capability.

A final cautionary note on learning objectives: don’t overload the session with too many objectives. More than four probably places you in the overly ambitious zone. It may also be useful to prioritize the objectives, if some merit more emphasis than others. Another type of pedagogical objective is worth mentioning, even though it might not always be incorporated into a written teaching note. Whereas
the above mentioned objectives deal with substantive learning, the case teacher is also managing an on-going learning process. To optimize this, the instructor may have process objectives having to do with, for example, student participation, classroom dynamics, or discussion norms. Early on in a course he or she may be striving to ensure that all students will have participated in class discussion. Or students may not have been relating adequately their remarks to their classmates’ comments made previously. Such concerns lead to process objectives that affect the way the instructor should conduct the class. Because they are so situation specific, these objectives seldom appear in written teaching notes but should always be in the instructor’s personal teaching plan. They are helpful to put in teaching notes prepared for use by various instructors teaching multiple sections of the same course and possibly facing similar process challenges.

Substantive Analysis

The note needs to lay out the analysis of the case’s key issues that are tied into the learning objectives. There is a divergence in preferred presentation style for this component. Some prefer to have separate sections for analysis and teaching process, while others like to integrate the two. In the classroom, the two ultimately fuse together, and so even if presented in separate sections, it is helpful to give adequate guidance on their integration.

The substantive analysis should be thorough, clear, and tailored to the note’s mission. One is not writing a journal article but rather giving analytical guidance about material specific to the case and its use. Two considerations are useful to keep in mind in developing the analytical section: what kinds of analyses will contribute to the specified learning objectives and what analytical processes will the students likely go through as they prepare and discuss the case. Putting yourself in the shoes of the student is particularly important so that you can pinpoint the areas where greatest difficulty or confusion might arise and where the richest discovery opportunities are. Empathy with the intellectual challenges and learning process is central to presenting a thorough and relevant analysis in the note.

Pointing out alternative paths of analysis that might be followed and the pros and cons surrounding issues is helpful. This broadens the reader’s awareness to possibilities that might arise. Similarly, flagging discussion danger areas due to confusing facts, intricate numbers, or conceptual complexity is always appreciated. Forewarned is forearmed; better still, give advice on how to handle the possible problems. Cases with considerable quantitative data require exceptionally thorough data analysis in the teaching note. Calculations should be clearly laid out in terms of where the numbers come from in the case and how they have been manipulated. Again, pointing out likely tripping points for students is helpful.

Case exhibits often contain information central to the analyses. It is often useful to include the exhibits in the teaching notes and annotate them such that the relevant data are flagged and their meaning interpreted in hand notations on the exhibits. The note’s textual analysis can elaborate further on how to use the data from the exhibits, but annotating the exhibits themselves will make the reader’s examination of them much more focused and efficient.

Either within each analytical subsection (often corresponding to a key issue) or as a separate subsection, it is helpful to distill out the potential main lessons or “intellectual take-aways” from the analysis. These generally will be elaborations of and responses to the learning objectives. These should not be seen as the answers or solution to the case. There is never a single set of “right” answers; the organic and dynamic nature of the discussion process produces its unique set of insights and conclusions. Nonetheless, having some of the possible lessons in mind facilitates focus, which is critical.

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to an effective discussion. The cautionary note is simply to remain intellectually open and inclusive to the additional insights that the discussion can generate.

Users of teaching notes may have varying degrees of knowledge of the particular technical material or contextual setting of the case. As an assist to those lacking such background, it may be useful to include as an appendix to the note optional readings (or at least their bibliographical references) to provide supplemental information.

**Teaching Process**

Teaching notes without process guidelines are only half-finished. The importance of process was highlighted by one colleague’s comment: “We’re smart enough to do the analysis; I want to know the teaching plan, and this is often missing.” As another put it: “We use the how to get more out of the what.” Substantive expertise is no guarantee of teaching effectiveness. Case discussions are guided inquiries with purpose and structure. Classroom execution can be enhanced by providing guidance on eight aspects of the teaching process: teaching strategy and discussion structure, question plan, special techniques, opening, transitions, closing, board plan, and audio-visuals.

**Teaching Strategy and Discussion Structure**

Providing an initial overview of the teaching approach and structure of the discussion gives the reader a useful map for the class session. This lays out the sequence in which major topic areas will be discussed and explains the pedagogical logic for following this path. It is helpful to indicate the nature of the discussion dynamic and process in each topic area and how this shifts during the class, e.g., from problem identification and causality analysis to option specification and debate over action recommendations. One can indicate the required degree of instructor directiveness and how this might change throughout the class. It is important to recognize that a planned structure should not be viewed as rigid. The learning map has many possible routes and the class discussion may turn in directions quite different than the path originally planned in the note. The instructor should be willing to explore spontaneously these alternative directions to see if they lead to collective progress. Teachers must share with students the task of guiding the direction of the discussion. To the extent that the teaching note can flag such alternative routes (perhaps based on classroom experience with the case), the instructor will be better prepared to go with the flow intelligently and willingly.

Some colleagues refer to the discussion areas as “pastures” in which the class is intellectually “grazing.” The students play a central role in deciding where to graze. The teaching note can indicate whether the sequence in which pastures are grazed is pedagogically significant or whether the order is flexible. The note should also indicate where the “gates” between the pastures are and what words or topics might signal the desirability of moving from one pasture to another under the watchful eye and gentle prodding of the “shepherd.” (See subsequent section on Transitions.)

The discussion “map” should indicate where the discussion’s greatest tensions and puzzles are likely to be and how this will affect the students’ behavior in terms of degree of engagement. Just as it is important to highlight substantive “traps,” so too is it helpful to point out the process pitfalls—the areas where discussion problems might occur, e.g., sinking into a swamp of conflicting or confusing number crunching or emotional explosions due to sensitive topics being touched. The warning signs are important, but suggestions on how to deal with these pedagogical challenges should also be given. A final dimension of the map should be a time line. Class time is the inescapable finite resource, so
managing it carefully is wise. The teaching strategy should estimate how much time should be allocated to the different discussion areas. It is also useful to flag particular areas that classroom experience with the case indicates as time-problematic, in that discussions can get stuck there and absorb much time. It can also be helpful to suggest which topic areas can be dropped or added if the instructor runs short or long on time in the class.

Question Plan

The primary instrument of the discussion leader is questions. These drive the collective discovery process and so merit major attention. As James Thurber wisely observed: “Better to know some of the questions than all of the answers,” which stands in contrast to the admonition to lawyers, “Don’t ask a question to which you don’t know an answer.” The discussion leader’s task is not to know all the answers but to trigger productive exploration by the students.

Teaching notes generally include two sets of questions. The first are Assignment Questions distributed to the students in advance to help focus their analysis of the case. The second are Discussion Questions to be posed by the instructor in class. The first are sometimes, but not necessarily, a subset of the second. Posing relevant questions that the students have neither seen nor thought of is a way to evoke in class greater interest and real time thinking.

It is important to think carefully about the type and wording of questions because these can lead to very different types of discussions. One is not running a question and answer session; we are generally seeking questions that can be discussed rather than simply or definitively answered. A typology of questions used by various colleagues includes the following:

- **Information-seeking** These are the “who, what, when, where” questions that elicit factual responses, which can highlight certain particularly relevant pieces of information and ensure a common data base. However, they also can result in unproductive regurgitation of already known case facts. This almost inevitably triggers boredom. Students tune out and their listening acuity plummets.

- **Analytical** These “why and how” type questions provoke diagnostic, causal, and interpretive thinking, which is often central to achieving mental skill-building objectives.

- **Challenge** These are “why” questions to force students to extend and deepen their analyses by giving supporting statements or by responding to counter arguments. When a student is pushed intellectually that individual’s level of involvement and the class’s collective attention and tension heightens.

- **Action** These “what would you do when, how, and why” questions press the students into making decisions and dealing with implementation processes. Students almost always have a high interest in action recommendations, so these questions are useful if you want to recapture and focus a wandering discussion.

---

Hypothetical  These “what if” questions allow you to create new situations that force the students to extend their thinking under different assumptions; this is a way to go beyond certain factual constraints or information gaps in a case.

Predictive  These “what will happen” questions force students to plunge into uncertainty and to substantiate their forecasts. These may be useful when the instructor knows what actually happened and wishes to reveal that after the students have given their prediction, thereby enabling a comparative discussion.

Generalization  These “what general lessons” questions push the student into a more abstract level of cognitive reasoning, which is often particularly helpful to achieve knowledge-enhancement objectives dealing with conceptualization. These are generally very open-ended questions; narrower, more restrictive questions, in contrast, might be appropriate for highly technical parts of a class discussion. The abstract question generally requires the students to reflect, so they will cause a pause in the discussion while the students cogitate. Thus, they affect the pace of the class.

The type of questions chosen will shape the nature of the discussion and learning process in each topic area. In formulating your questions, you should ask what type of thought processes and substantive analysis will this wording elicit. Additionally, how will the question affect the pace, tone, and attentiveness of the class. For example, do you want to accelerate pace with an action question or slow it down with a reflective generalization question? Or intensify debate and attentiveness via a series of challenge questions?

Generally each discussion block or “pasture” will be initiated by a primary question, with a series of follow-on questions. These should be laid out sequentially with the expected type of student responses indicated. This might mean cross-referencing back to or distilling from the Analysis Section of the teaching note, unless the analysis was integrated with the Process section. It can also be useful to include as a separate annex to the teaching note a sequential list of the questions indicated and explained in the text. Some instructors use variants of this question plan as a visual summarizing vehicle for the teaching note. For example, on a single page they would place the key discussion questions for each pasture, the corresponding time allocation, and the discussion linkages or sequence among the pastures. This “snapshot” serves as a review sheet or an in-class reminder sheet. It is also helpful to add to the main discussion questions some “reserve questions” that could be used by the instructor in case the discussion unexpectedly covered the planned areas rapidly, thereby confronting the instructor with dreaded dead time. Even if not used in the discussion, these reserve questions might be posed to the students at the end of class as areas meriting further contemplation.

Most colleagues incorporated their classroom experiences with the case into the teaching note, which is particularly useful in suggesting how students tend to react to certain lines of questioning. Even though each group of students is unique and classroom dynamics are never identical, including these experiences in a teaching note does alert the instructor to possible reactions and patterns that otherwise might not have been contemplated. This experiential information can spark ideas for different types or sequencing of questions.

Special Techniques

In addition to questions, the note might suggest other techniques for managing the discussion. For example, role playing can be used to foster greater empathy with a case protagonist or to set up an interchange between different case actors, such as a business manager negotiating with a government
official. Such role plays can be assigned to individual or groups of students spontaneously during class or prior to the session. This technique almost always increases class attentiveness.

Examples of other in-class techniques are (a) taking votes on a decision or issue in order to create polarity or identify consensus; (b) breaking into diads or triads to get everybody to focus on and discuss a particular issue and then regroup to debrief; (c) having one group of students present their collective analysis and then defend it against the rest of the class. Special techniques are used as mechanisms to foster certain learning process dynamics that will enhance teaching effectiveness. The nature and form of these special discussion enrichers are limited only by our own creativity.

Opening

Every class has a beginning, and that moment is perhaps the only one that is entirely in the hands of the instructor. So we better make the most of it! And we should, because how a class starts off can significantly affect the tone, interest, and focus of the entire session.

Although the nature of openings should always be subject to adjustments called for by the on-going dynamics and situation peculiar to each instructor’s class, the teaching note should provide suggested ways for starting class, for which there are many options. Referring back to previous cases might be desirable where the case is part of a linked series of cases building up related techniques or concepts. Laying out the session’s agenda might be useful where the material is dense and greater structure is demanded. Providing a quote or reading a relevant literary reference are ways to capture interest or add some new perspective on the case issues. Starting by directly asking the first discussion question signals immediate substantive engagement. As mentioned above, the type of question you choose to open with will affect the nature of the class’s initial engagement. Great beginnings don’t guarantee great classes, but they sure help. And the better you plan them, the better they will be.

Transitions

Thinking through how to move the discussion along from one topic area to the next helps smooth the flow and ensure progression. Sometimes the transition will occur organically in the discussion process by a student moving into the next topic area with little direction from the instructor. The note might flag certain cues or discussion points that would signal the transition point. Sometimes the nature of the material or the discussion plan call for more explicit transition planning. For example, for a complex or technical discussion area a helpful transition might be a brief summary of the salient points followed by the primary question for the next topic area. Another transition form that the note might indicate is a linking comment relating the exiting and entering topics. If the discussion topic areas are tightly related and the logic of the questioning sequence readily apparent, the instructor can make a transition simply by asking the next primary question. Finally, if the discussion plan requires a major shift, the note might indicate that one should be explicitly directive and state that we will now turn to the next topic.

Closing

As with beginnings there are always endings. Although these are less controllable, being the caboose trailing the discussion train, they should be planned and indicated in the teaching note. What form the closing ultimately takes should always be subject to on-the-spot adjustment depending on
what happened in the class discussion. Still, various types of closings can be designed to serve a variety of purposes.

A summary of the salient points or lessons might be presented by the instructor, either verbally or from prepared transparencies. There is a risk that such “precanned” lessons will vary from what actually emerged in the discussion, thereby discounting the merit of the discussion. The instructor should be advised to expand the prepared points through references to insights generated by the discussion. An alternative mechanism is to have a student or several students do the summarizing and lesson-generating. The instructor might make linking comments tying this case to previous ones, which might be a particularly appropriate way of getting closure at the end of a module of cases. The linking might be prospective to alert students to the following set of cases and issues. In some instances an update about what happened subsequently to the company in the case can be of interest to the students and provide additional insights. A mini-lecture relating the case to larger bodies of literature or theories might be appropriate. To leave the students thinking, you might pose additional questions that broach issues not covered in the discussion.

The impact of a session is disproportionately affected by how it ends. Ending without finishing fosters frustration. Planning the closing pays good learning dividends. A teaching note that gives no guidance on how to close remains incomplete. It should, at a minimum, suggest optional ways to close. Even better, it should offer a very detailed closure. Not all users of the note will utilize this specifically, but for many it will be a treasured time-saver.

**Board Plan**

Recording discussion points on the chalkboard serves multiples functions. It serves as the class’s collective memory, thereby facilitating linkages, cohesion, and a sense of progress. It is a control mechanism for the instructor by creating and communicating order, structure, and importance. The medium becomes the message.

It is never possible to predict precisely how a discussion will unfold and therefore what specific points will be raised and recorded. It is, however, generally possible to predict the main categories of discussion and therefore create a layout of the topics headings under which specific points discussed in class can be recorded. The importance of this is captured by a colleague’s comment: “When not planned, the boardwork can really constrain quality. If you haven’t thought it through and fill up the board too soon, you’re screwed.” It is useful to think through what should go on which boards when and which should be visible at what time as boards are moved or flipcharts flipped. Some colleagues caution against creating too detailed board plans because of the risk of becoming a prisoner to them or leading the class to conclude that the discussion is “preprogrammed,” thereby stifling creativity. The board plan is a means not an end.

**Audio-Visuals**

There are a multitude of other audio visual teaching aids that can be used to enrich or supplement the discussion process. Transparencies can be used for information transmittal and hard copies should be included as annexes. Video and audio tapes can be shown to capture the dynamics not transmittable via paper cases. Computer models can be used with projection equipment to facilitate in-class data analysis, scenario-building, and discussion. The teaching note needs to describe these aids thoroughly and explain how, when, and why they are to be used. Duration and any special equipment operating instructions should also be provided.
The foregoing section described what ought to go into a teaching note, and the paper’s opening section explained why we should prepare notes. The final section provides some brief thoughts on the process of preparing them.

How to Prepare Teaching Notes

Preparing teaching notes should be conceived as an integral part of writing cases. The note’s conception and construction evolves in conjunction with the development of the case. The formulation of the learning objectives may even guide the search for case leads. The issues and managerial problems uncovered in the initial case research process should be reviewed in terms of both their substantive content and how they might be discussed: what the important issue areas are and what the discussion questions might be. These preliminary notes for the teaching note are tentative. They interact with the emerging case material and case writing; the iterative process shapes each other. For example, the learning objectives guide what goes in the case and what to leave out; case construction involves “deanalyzing,” removing some information or analyses so as to avoid robbing the students of their own discovery opportunities. The case research often uncovers new issues that cause the instructor to broaden or reformulate the initial learning and discussion topic agenda. Having discussion questions in mind helps the case writer think through what type of information the student will need or not need in the case to respond adequately. This helps discover holes and fat in the case draft. A case writer should be able to explain why each piece of the case is needed in terms of contributing to the discussion and learning process. It should be noted that teaching notes can also be prepared for existing cases. The task and the process is different and more difficult in that the case information and structure is a given that the note must work with rather than shape.

Even though the preparation of the case and the teaching note march forward together, the note should not be finalized until after the case is finished and taught. The teaching plan embodied in a new note is an untried set of ideas; like a new product, it must be tested in the market place. Trying it out in the classroom yields valuable insights that invariably lead to alterations in the note. Multiple classroom trials produce richer data on what works, what doesn’t, what’s possible, what isn’t. This fact highlights a distinctive characteristic of teaching notes as a literary form: a note is an organic document subject to continual revitalization through the new insights gained from the teaching experiences of the original author of the teaching note or other instructors who teach the corresponding case with the benefit of the note’s guidance.

Teaching notes are living, ever-evolving creatures. They should be subject to continual revision and updating to incorporate the new insights gleaned from the classroom experiences. After class most effective teachers jot down notes on the discussion experience: new substantive or process aspects or ideas that emerged, the results of trying some new pedagogical twist, special problems that arose, etc. These generally have to be recorded soon after class because their half-life is shortened by the imperative of the next day’s preparation. For multi-instructor courses, allocating time in teaching group meetings for a collective debriefing of the group’s classroom experiences with the case can provide a rich offering of improvement possibilities. These insights too often, however, remain as handwritten notes stored away in the instructor’s personal teaching file. These “shadow notes” too seldom make their way back into the formal teaching notes that reside in the public domain, accessible to the larger community of teachers. Unlike journal articles, teaching notes can and should be revised subsequent to their initial publication. If a note remains unrevised two years after its publication date and the case is still being taught, then it is almost certain that accumulated teaching wisdom is not being adequately tapped. It is hidden away in the informal shadow notes.
The challenge is to create the incentives for on-going revitalization of teaching notes. Giving significant credit in the promotion process and recognition in the institutional culture for preparing and revitalizing teaching notes will encourage such investments. This should also include encouraging instructors to revise or develop new versions of teaching notes prepared by other colleagues. It often takes greater pedagogical creativity to develop an innovative way to teach a classic case than to devise a note for a new case. Teaching notes are individuals’ creative products, but they become part of the community’s intellectual capital. They are used by many, and those users, in turn, need to enrich the notes further. They are part of our “educational commons” and we all have a shared responsibility for the upkeep.

We end with a final comment on the use of teaching notes. They are not substitutes for preparation or surrogates for creative reflection. Rather, they are preparation accelerators and pedagogical stimulators. They are reference maps, not drama scripts. They provide valuable guidance that should expand rather than constrain the user’s teaching frontiers. Teaching notes are our communicators of pedagogical wisdom and are essential to achieving individual and institutional excellence in teaching.
四、关于撰写英文案例的注意事项

1. 案例选题

在中文/一般案例选题的基础上，注意种族、文化、政治、性别等的问题，以免引起不必要的冲突。

2. 写作规范要点

- 时态：案例正文应用过去时（past tense）撰写。教学笔记可以用现在时态（present）或过去时态（past tense）书写。
- 应避免使用俚语或口语术语和表达。
- 不应使用特定于国家/地区的术语。例如，印度英语中的 lakh（十万）或 crore（一千万卢比）。
- 案例长度：哈佛标准，案例长度在 6000 英文单词以内，少于 15 页（包括附录）；毅伟标准：8-15 页（包括附录）。
- 案例版式：参考案例中心英文案例格式与排版，附录：中英文案例正文及教学指南版式。
- 如案例用于投稿：提交文件前应彻底校对，以确保语法和句法的完整性。
五、案例库资源及扩展阅读材料

1. 案例库资源

- 哈佛案例库：[hbsp.harvard.edu](http://hbsp.harvard.edu)

  To order you must be signed into HBSP online as an educator. The "Sign In or Register Now" button is top right.

  如需要在课堂使用哈佛案例，请教授至少提前一周与授课项目教务老师联系。各项目教务老师将向中心提出购买申请。中心随后会将案例正文反馈给项目老师。

- 中国工商管理国际案例库：[www.chinacases.org](http://www.chinacases.org)

  学院统一采购了“中国工商管理国际案例库”（ChinaCases.Org）的案例使用权限，使用期限为三年半（2021年4月1日-2024年9月30日）。案例中心已统一为在职教授办理注册，也已将登录信息发至各位教授邮箱。

  新入职或未注册的教授请与案例中心联系：casecenter@gsm.pku.edu.cn

- 中国管理案例共享中心（CMCC）：[cmcc.dlaky.cn](http://cmcc.dlaky.cn)

  中心已为在职教授开通账号。若不清楚用户名和登录密码等信息或发现未注册，请教授发送需求至邮箱 casecenter@gsm.pku.edu.cn 申请。

2. 扩展阅读材料

  HBS 的 CHRISTENSEN CENTER FOR TEACHING & LEARNING 网站集合了目前 HBS 关于案例教学的相关文章。我们已经筛选并摘录了其中的几份文章，但网页中还有更多关于案例教学、学习、写作的洞察。您可以按需查看。

  网页链接：[Resources - Christensen Center for Teaching & Learning - Harvard Business School (hbs.edu)](http://Resources - Christensen Center for Teaching & Learning - Harvard Business School (hbs.edu))
“到底该怎么整理这项决策议案?” 张建奇看着办公桌上的两份调研报告，思绪时断时续。时间不能再拖了，明天就要由项目指挥部向公司总部提交决策建议。今天必须拿出一个明确议案。他对项目的工艺装备、安全水平、环境影响和工程建设等“硬规划”都早已了然于胸，信心十足。但是，现在面临的是一个“软规划”的挑战。

张建奇就任于一家外资公司，最近刚被任命为 PX 化工项目的负责人。三年前该 PX 项目曾选址于一个沿海发达城市，然而由于遭到当地民众的强烈反对，最后被迫停建并计划迁址到一个偏远的小岛。受此抵制风波的影响，银团冻结贷款，供应商要求索赔，原 PX 项目裁员使公司背负巨额损失，彼时主管 PX 项目的负责人俞新昌业已辞职。屋漏偏逢连夜雨，就在该 PX 项目重新启动筹建期间，国内各地的 PX 项目纷纷陷入了“上马一个，市民抵制一个”的困境。
…

一．一级标题

1. 二级标题

自 XXXX 年以来

三级标题

……
附录 1：表格样式（推荐使用三线表）

表 1：表名

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>指标 1</th>
<th>指标 2</th>
<th>指标 3</th>
<th>指标 4</th>
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<td>19</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>111.2</td>
<td>15.63</td>
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</table>

资料来源：按参考文献格式

附录 2：图、照片样式

图、照片（居中）

图 1：图名

资料来源：按参考文献格式
参考文献

教学手册

案例题目

作者姓名1，作者姓名2

一、案例概要

二、教学对象与适用课程

三、教学目标

四、讨论问题

五、教学计划

1. 课前计划

2. 课中计划

本案例由北京大学光华管理学院（作者姓名）教授、管理案例研究中心研究员（研究员姓名）根据企业访谈/公开二手资料整理编写。案例中的人物为虚构角色，不代表PX项目任何相关利益方的观点和立场。案例仅用于课堂讨论，而非管理决策或活动是否有效的证明。

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3. 课后计划

六、讨论问题分析

七、课程总结、推荐阅读资料及补充材料

八、推荐阅读材料及补充信息
"How to sort out this decision-making proposal?" Zhang Jianqi looked at the two research reports on his desk, thinking intermittently. The time cannot be delayed any longer. Tomorrow, the project headquarters will submit a decision-making proposal to the company headquarters, and a clear proposal must be presented today. He has long been aware of the "hard planning" of the project's process equipment, safety level, environmental impact and engineering construction, and is confident. However, what is now facing is a "soft planning" challenge.

Zhang Jianqi, who took up a job at a foreign company, was recently appointed as the head of the PX chemical project. Three years ago, the PX project was located in a developed coastal city. However, due to strong opposition from the local people, it was finally forced to stop construction and planned to relocate to a remote island. Affected by this boycott, the syndicate froze loans, the suppliers demanded claims, and the layoffs of the original PX project made the company bear huge losses. At that time, the person in charge of the PX project, Yu Xinchang, had resigned. The house leak happened to rain...
overnight. During the restart of the PX project, the PX projects all over the country fell into a vicious circle of "launch one, citizens boycott one, and shut down one", and the implementation of the PX project became more and more difficult.

Learning from the previous experience, before the project is about to be put into production, the enterprise must formulate a complete set of communication solutions according to the situation.

......

First-level title

Secondary Title

Since XI......

Third level title

......
Appendix 1: Table Style

### Table 1: Table Name

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>X1</th>
<th>X2</th>
<th>X3</th>
<th>X4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>102.6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>111.2</td>
<td>15.63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Write in reference format.*

Appendix 2: Figures and Photos

**Figure or Photo**

Figure 1: Name

*Source: Write in reference format.*
References


The format of the references is as required in Quick Harvard Reference Guide
Teaching Note

Case Title

Author 1, Author 2

1. Summary of the case

2. Teaching objects and applicable courses

3. Teaching objectives

4. Discussion Questions

5. Teaching plan

5.1 Pre-class plan

5.2 In-class plan

This case was compiled by Professor (author's name) of Guanghua School of Management of Peking University and Researcher (researcher's name) of the Management Case Research Center of Peking University based on corporate interviews/public secondary sources. The characters in the case are fictional characters and do not represent the views or positions of any relevant stakeholders in the PX project. The cases are intended for classroom discussion only and are not proof of the effectiveness of management decisions or activities.

The copyright of this case belongs to the Management Case Research Center of Peking University. Please contact casecenter@gsm.pku.edu.cn if you wish to use this case. Reproduction, preservation, distribution, or use of this case or any part of the case text in any way without the authorization of the Management Case Research Center of Peking University is prohibited.

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5.3 After-school program

6. Analysis

7. Course summary, recommended reading materials and supplementary materials

8. Recommended reading materials and supplementary information
This quick guide provides examples to help you create references for information sources most frequently used. This follows the Staffordshire Harvard Referencing Style, except for the capitalization of authors’ / editors’ names.

Please Note: Harvard does not dictate any particular style of punctuation. The generally accepted rule when using Harvard is to be consistent in your style and use of punctuation throughout your assignment.

- **In-text Referencing**: involves citing references within the text of your work where you have used ideas or material from other sources.
- **End-text referencing** (also known as your Reference List): includes all materials used in your document. It provides the full information of reference sources necessary for a reader to locate and retrieve them.

### Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>In-Text Referencing</th>
<th>End-Text Referencing (Reference List)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Book: Two or three authors</strong>&lt;br/&gt;Three authors: Optical network is defined as…. (Ramaswami, Sivarajan and Galen, 2010) or Ramaswami, Sivarajan and Galen (2010) stated that…</td>
<td>Two authors: Richardson, N. and Gosnay, R. (2011) Develop your marketing skills. London: Kogan Page.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper articles (print and online)</td>
<td>Newspaper article (print): The effectiveness of vocational study… (Ng, 2011) or Ng’s (2011) article reports that…</td>
<td>Newspaper article (print): Ng, E. (2011) ‘Vocational study boost: curriculum to provide skilled workforce’. The Star. 10th September, p. 8.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** When writing your reference list, do not present them in different sections based on the types of information sources. All sources of information must be presented in a single list in ascending alphabetical order.

**SOURCES OF INFORMATION TO AVOID WHEN MAKING REFERENCES**

Avoid the following sources for references in your assignment, Final Year Project or dissertation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wikipedia</th>
<th>About.com</th>
<th>123helpme</th>
<th>QuickMBA.com</th>
<th>Wisegeek</th>
</tr>
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<td>Investopedia</td>
<td>Ask.com</td>
<td>Ezine Articles</td>
<td>Tutor2u.net</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PLEASE ASK YOUR RESPECTIVE LECTURERS TO KNOW WHAT SOURCES OF INFORMATION TO REFER TO.**
案例确认书

致：北京大学管理案例研究中心

关于：
案例名称：____________________
版本日期：____________________
作者姓名：____________________

本案例确认书确认人同意并认可______（作者姓名）______围绕本企业（组织、机构）撰写上述案例（以下简称为“案例”），校方或作者对案例拥有完全的版权（著作权）。

如本案例搭配音频、视频资料，则针对音频、视频中有部分采用本机构提供且拥有版权的音频、视频的情况，我们声明对该企业音频、视频拥有著作权，有权并认可校方不必支付版税且拥有对该企业视频进行剪辑，以及用于音频、视频案例的权利。

我们在审核后确认对案例涉及的内容资料及文字叙述没有异议，并同意校方或作者及其授权的第三方可以对案例进行非实质性的修改，包括但不限于文字与视频等形式互换和修改，修订文字和语法错误，调整段落和句子的位置、图表和其他案例要素的内容。但对于案例实质性内容的修改，不在本段无异议和同意范围之列。

案例企业（组织、机构）名称（盖章）：

经办人（签名）：

经办人职务：

日期：