

## GUIDANCE NOTE FOR CASE STUDY

The Case Study is a short, written narration of an actual business situation that presents a key problem and its related effects in an organisation, an industry or an economy. The teacher acts as a facilitator to teach problem analysis, solving and decision making techniques to management students. The objective of the exercise is to compel you to observe and narrate events from a management perspective. Therefore, you must avoid **hypothetical** situations and **plagiarisation** of other reports. In such cases, the Study will be **rejected**.

In writing the Case Study, you allow the reader to explore its issues from different perspectives, and at greater depth than is sometimes reported in a Term Paper. The final size may, however, be less than that of a Term Paper. Here are some guidelines to plan for, write and present a Case Study that has content, quality and effort. This Note prescribes the minimum components and standards for your Case Study.

For the purpose of this assignment, many conditions governing the preparation of Case Study have been simplified. Three distinct kinds of cases are suggested, depending upon your objective for the reader:

1. Situation Case: The objective is to **identify** issues that are not clearly identifiable. Not all the facts may be stated, and the reader would be required to consider such unstated issues as possible factors that may affect the discovery of problems. This type must not attempt solutions to the problems perceived by the reader.
2. Complex Case: The objective is to **diagnose** the issues that may be clearly stated, but difficult to measure. Most of the facts may be stated, but the student may assume some unstated issues that may lead to other alternative solutions, which need not be analysed or measured. The Case may contain irrelevant data or issues for the reader to notice but avoid.
3. Decision Case: The objective is to **generate** many alternatives for a specified situation. He must analyse the issues in the situation, exercise judgement, measure the impact of and offer suggestions, against the background of data in the Study. Not all the facts are stated, and the reader decides in the light of uncertainty. An action plan may need to be charted. Depending on the topic of study, it may be necessary to apply management techniques, sometimes quantitative, for the analysis of the alternatives generated.

When written in the story format, the Case Study is the easiest to write, and presents few problems. This does not limit you to artificial structures, and leaves you free to focus on the core objective. It must be narrated in the third person and in the past tense. It must not give a solution, unless it facilitates a discussion in the direction of other possibilities. It need not present too much detail, or avoids any specific solutions, even if the events had been historically recorded, elsewhere.

### **Beginning the Case Study**

1. Choose 3-4 **Topics** within each subject that you like **and** understand.
2. **Talk** to the Topic experts (academicians, managers and practitioners) around you for a problem related to each subject. **Read** your study material, textbooks and other literature for a better understanding of the problems in the Topic. Finally, **choose** one Topic that is most

attractive in terms of understanding, uniqueness, mystery, ease of study, and availability of data and experts. **Avoid** controversial topics. Whatever the problem area, maintain focus in writing.

3. **Describe** the Topic and problem area in 3 Paragraphs in one page. This will be your **Problem Outline**, which will serve you as your guide till you finish. This must contain the key issues that you propose to pursue in the Study. However, it is **not** a part of the Case Study to be presented to AIMA.
4. Now, find a **Title** for your Case Study, in the format 'Topic / problem / issue at Person / Firm / industry'. For example, **Appraisal System at Magna Foods Ltd.**

### Paragraph Styling and Spacing

Unless and otherwise stated here, the Paper shall be **only** in 12' font size (like this Paragraph), Times New Roman (like this Note), be left-and-right justified (like this Note), and in 1½ lines spacing (like this paragraph). **Paragraphs** and **Sections** shall **not** be numbered.

- **Paragraph** headings, if any, shall be left justified, and be in **bold** (as shown for these Paragraphs). A paragraph should have 3-5 sentences each, no more and no less. Allow a spacing of 3 lines before you begin a fresh Paragraph. A Paragraph **need not** have a heading.
- **Section** headings shall be left justified, in UPPER CASE (capital letters) and also be in **bold**. Allow a spacing of 3 lines (double the line spacing) before you begin a fresh Section. A Section **must have** a heading suitably descriptive of its contents. A Section must have more than 2 paragraphs.

### Structure of the Case Study

Write without bias. The Sections of Study are described below in their correct order:

- **Introduction:** This is a description of the problem, the site or organisation and the principal characters in the Case Study. Not more than 2-3 Paragraphs in one page.
- **Case Body:** Narrate the tale, in chronological order. Write in the past tense. If you are reporting communications between people, do not involve too many characters. Let the characters freely express their emotions in the discussion so that the events are captured in true perspective. Avoid too much detail, for it leads to predictable solutions. Not more than 5 pages.
- **Questions:** Generate not more than 5 questions based on the Study. The questions must be open-ended, and urge the reader to offer alternatives as solutions. Take care not to go beyond the conceptual parameters of the Case. Write so that the reader can understand on first reading. Avoid the use of jargon, unless they are already a part of the Case.
- **Teaching Notes:** This is a guide for the teacher of the Case. There are four subsections. All subsection titles must be left justified, in normal size and be in bold. In **Overview**, you will describe the management issues covered, the industry and the firm (and its department, if any) within 2 paragraphs. In **Application**, you will describe the profile of the reader (graduation? Management student? Requirement of experience, etc) to whom the Study is best suited for. In **Objectives of the Case**, state the type of Case (Situation / Complex / Decision). List and describe 3-4 key objectives in terms of what concepts and issues it will introduce to the reader, and what is expected of him. In **Teaching Suggestions**, you may explain the formulae and

solve numerical problems that may be needed for the Case. It may also be used to explain some of the concepts and issues that impact the Study of the Case.

- **References:** This is not necessary, but may serve to guide the Teacher towards reading matter that refers to the concepts and issues in the Study. These must be listed in alphabetic order of authors' last names. For more details, refer to your booklet on Case Study, or a good research journal. There shall be no line gaps between any two references, but each reference shall be printed on a fresh line.
- **Annexures:** It is not necessary to provide annexures, unless they support the matter in Case Body.

Sections such as Acknowledgement and Section index (to Contents) are **not** necessary. All pages shall be **numbered** from Introduction to References. All graphs, boxes and tables shown shall be numbered in distinctive series from 1 onwards, have a descriptive title, and be referred to in the Text of the Case Study.

### **Cover Page**

At the top will be the title of your Case Study in **14'** bold. Your name (**14'** bold) and registration number shall be in the middle of that page. The Code number and name of the Subject shall appear 5-6 lines below. At the bottom will be the full name of AIMA (**14'** bold), complete postal address with PIN, telephone and fax numbers, Internet address and Email account. Every line of the Page shall be centered.

### **Packaging the Case Study**

- The Case Study must be bound in a transparent plastic folder (through which the Cover Page must be visible) with appropriate binding such as spiral or spico, as need be.
- Scrutinise your Study for editing errors and grammatical mistakes, before submission. Your grades would be adversely affected even for such seemingly minor faults.
- Case Studies are evaluated by AIMA, **not** at Nodal Centers. Submit one copy of the Case Study, **only** to AIMA, and seek an acknowledgement.