

TIP SHEET: HOW TO WRITE A CASE STUDY

Case studies are a great way to make your program, policy or product come alive. A written case study can be a powerful promotional tool that lends credibility to your claims.

Case studies work because they tap into our innate desire to find out what others are doing. When they feature someone's real life experience they inject a human element into your concept or product.

A good case study involves:

- A problem.
- A solution.
- A result.
- A call to action.

Problem

The problem part tells readers about a particular issue or situation someone faced and how it stood in the way of them enjoying life, being healthy, running their business etc.

The case study should focus on one dominant problem and paint a compelling picture so readers see themselves in that situation. The reaction you want is "hey I can relate to that".

Solution

This part shows how someone has used your product, service or information to improve this situation.

Show how he or she:

- Became aware of your offer
- Took it up (ringing a hotline, visiting a website, buying a product, attending a clinic etc)
- Used your solution.

Result

This section describes the benefits when the person in the case study applied your solution.

Be as specific as possible about the impact. Use facts and figures, dollars and data wherever you can. If this is not possible (eg for a health issue) ask the individual to describe the improvement in their own words.

Call to Action

At end of the case study you must tell people where they can get more information, buy your product etc. In a business case study the call to action may also include a special price offer.

10 Writing Tips

- Cases studies of between 300 – 500 words work well.
- Begin with a headline that includes the words “case study”. This phrase holds out a promise to the reader of a real life situation, real people and real solutions.
- Choose a subject and situation your audience can relate to or sympathise with.
- Describe the individual in the case study in sufficient detail so people get a clear mental picture of their *before* and *after* situation.
- To appeal to the widest possible audience, avoid jargon and acronyms.
- Use personal dialogue and quotes to bring the text alive.
- Although your case study is based around *problem, solution, result and call to action*, it needs to have a conversational tone and read like a story.
- People want believability so don’t exaggerate the problem, the solution or the result.
- Include a graphic such as a photo of the individual being profiled or a table with figures showing what has been achieved.
- Recycle case study content in presentations, on your website, in media interviews, newspaper articles etc.
- Get written permission from the people in your case studies and tell them where, how and when you intend to use their material.

Maine Street Marketing helps organizations with tight budgets get better marketing results.

For more information visit www.mainestreet.com.au or email info@mainestreet.com.au