

Chartered Institute of Personnel Management Sri Lanka (Inc.)

Chartered Qualification in Human Resource Management

Case Study / Assignment Guidelines

ART OF WRITING A CASE STUDY

Steps of Case Study Methodology

Step 01 – Read the case study at least three times

Step 02 Identify what the key issues or problems of the case are

Step 03 - Prioritize the problem, i.e., in some cases there may be several problems discussed

Step 04 - Determine the cause of the problem

Step 05 - Brainstorm the options available

Step 06 - Evaluate the options

Step 07 – Select the Optimum Solution

Step 08 – Describe how the solution should be implemented

Writing the Case Report

To improve the quality of the report;

- You could reconstruct the material given in the case and use it in support of your arguments.
- Write your ideas by using concepts selected from theory. Apply facts to theory.
- Maintain a logical flow of reasoning and balance of emphasis.
- Plan of action should logically follow problem identification and analysis

- Not all details given in the case are relevant and useful. Analyze, what is important and relevant.
- You can arrive at assumptions to fill the gaps of information as it is not possible to provide all the required data in a case study
- Graphs, charts, and tables could be included in the annexure
- Length of the case analysis depends on nature and complexity of the case.

An effective case study / Assignment report should;

- Clearly identify the core problems
- Analyze the issues underlying the problem
- Discuss and justify alternative solutions using theory/experience
- Present feasible recommendations
- Be presented in an appropriate format

Main Components of a Report

- Introduction** – Overview of the situation and identification of the key issues
- Main Body** – Present and analyze issues
- Conclusion** – Summarize main findings
- Recommendations** – Must be in line with the analysis
- References** – A list of sources referred according to APA system of referencing
- Appendices** – A compilation of supplementary and illustrative materials

Typical Structure of the Case Report

a) Cover Page

Include the report title, Details of the students (You can download from your LMS Logging / www.cipmlk.org)

b) Acknowledgments

Appreciate those who assisted in the Case Study /Assignment

c) Executive Summary

Give a summary/ outline of the report -purpose, research method, findings, main conclusions , and recommendations. Should be written in the past tense although it is presented at the beginning of the report. Write a brief description of the report (maximum 250 words) that summarizes the purpose of the case, key results, and conclusions.

d) Contents page

Main Contents of the case, including List of Diagrams/Tables/Figures (Shows the sections of the report)

e) Introduction

Overview of the situation and identification of key issues underlying the problems of the case study.

f) Literature Review

Include all key literature you have found. Compare, contrast and evaluate what is found - show understanding. Create a discussion where possible.

g) Analysis

Understand the degree of relationship and influence among variables discussed in the case study. Use graphs, charts to perform your case analysis.

h) Conclusions

A brief statement of what was found present the conclusions reached about the case question. Explain how these conclusions were derived. The results and conclusions should flow smoothly and logically. Compare the results with theoretical values, commonly held beliefs, and/or expected results.

i) Recommendations

Suggest suitable changes/solutions. Should be in line with the analysis.

j) References

A list of sources referred according to APA system of referencing

k) Appendices

A compilation of supplementary and illustrative material (Attachments of additional information)

Conclusion

In summary case studies are considered useful in research and management. They are also criticized for their inability to generalize their results. As an alternative to quantitative or qualitative research, case studies can be a practical solution when a big sample population is difficult to obtain. They present data of real-life situations and provide better insights into the detailed behaviors of the subjects of interest. Case studies will support students to understand abstract theories and practical application of theories in organizational settings.

Case study method has always been criticized for the tendency for a researcher to have a biased interpretation of the data. Grounds for establishing reliability and generality are also subjected to skepticism when a small sampling is deployed. They are also criticized for their inability to generalize their results.

Despite these criticisms, researchers continue to deploy the case study methods particularly in studies of real-life situations governing management, social issues, and problems.

Students are advised to read the following textbooks to get more insights into the art of writing case studies.

References

1. Sri Lankan Cases in Management – Gunapala Nanayakkara 1994
2. Case Study Research Methodology -Bill Gilham 2nd Edition 2005
3. Case Study Research –What, Why, and How- Peter G.Swanborn - South Asian Edition 2012
4. Because Wisdom Can't Be Told by Charles I.Gragg HBR Article