Case Study - Definition

A case study is an analysis (study) of a particular situation (case).

At a minimum, it should answer two questions:
1. What is the case?
2. What does the case study demonstrate or prove?

A company case study should compare the company to its peers and explain why the company’s performance is different.

An issue case study should demonstrate why the particular situation (case) is representative or unique.
COMPANIES INTERNATIONAL
“BP sacked 252 for unethical behaviour”

Financial Times
Tuesday, April 12, 2005
Choose the Topic of the Case Study

Option 1 – Company Specific
Case study focusing solely on BP, citing its CSR reporting policies/practices and comparing them to best practice / international standards.
Proposed Title

Option 2 - Comparative
Case study comparing the CSR reporting policies/practices of BP with XX company.
Proposed Title

Option 3 – Issue
Case study about the issue of corruption and cite data on various companies, countries, industries, etc.
Proposed Title

Write the Outline of the Case Study

Address the following issues:
Type of case study (company-specific, financial issue, legal issue, social issue, other)
Negative vs. positive example
Research material (depth, breadth, time sequence)
Research skills necessary (financial, legal, linguistic, statistical, etc.)
Comparative analysis – Peer analysis
Comparative analysis – Comparison with international standards
Comparative analysis – Comparison with best practice
Compliance analysis – Compliance with national/international law.
Write the Outline of the Case Study

Type of case study
(company, financial issue, legal issue, social issue, other)

Option 1 – Case Study of One Company
In-depth analysis of BP. As you read BP’s CSR report you will learn more about other issues that emerge. As you research the information available, you may choose to limit the case study to one, two or more aspects of CSR reporting: corruption, ethics, etc.

Company specific

Write the Outline of the Case Study

Type of case study
(company, financial issue, legal issue, social issue, other)

Option 2 – Case Study Comparing Two Companies
It will involve comparative analysis of BP and XX company. As you read each company’s CSR report and other information, you will learn more about other issues that emerge. You may have to limit the case study to one, two or more aspects of CSR reporting: corruption, ethics, etc. that can be compared.

Two specific examples
Option 3 – Case Study of the Issue of Corruption

Establish, explain, define and analyze the general framework about the issue. Then, cite numerous examples.

From the general issue to specific examples

Write the Outline of the Case Study

Type of case study
(company, financial issue, legal issue, social issue, other)

Negative vs. positive example(s)

Company specific case studies
At this stage, you know that there is negative information about each company. One important aspect of the case study will to examine if trends (in reporting on CSR, in incidents reported, in the scope of activities covered in the CSR report, etc) at each company are negative or positive.

Issue case study
Corruption is a negative issue per se. However, perhaps there are positive examples of companies/countries effectively combating the problem.
Write the Outline of the Case Study

Research material (depth, breadth, time sequence)

BP has published a CSR report since DATE.
XX company has published a CSR report since DATE.

Cite relevant institutions recognized as experts. For example:


Write the Outline of the Case Study

Research skills necessary
(financial, legal, linguistic, statistical, etc.)

Company specific case studies
Read and analyze each company’s CSR report. You should also read each company’s annual report and financial statement. You may have to read about legal matters outlined in the reports.

Issue case study
How will I set the parameters? What is the reference point?
Write the Outline of the Case Study

Comparative analysis – Peer analysis

Company specific case studies
Since this is a case study of two companies, you will consistently compare each company to the other.

Note: Compare like with like; compare BP’s 2004 CSR report with XX’s 2004 CSR report; annual report with annual report, etc. If there are differences in the scope of the reports, this should be noted at the outset.

Issue case study
How will you limit the comparative analysis? How many data points can you cover?

Write the Outline of the Case Study

Comparative analysis – Comparison with international standards

As noted above, you will investigate Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and other institutions that set standards. For example,

Transparency International Surveys and Indices
Corruption Perceptions Index
Bribe Payers Index
Global Corruption Barometer
Country Surveys
Comparative Analysis

Comparative Analysis
Write the Outline of the Case Study

Comparative analysis – Comparison with best practice

Investigate independent (non-company) sources such as the media, industry publications, the above-mentioned NGOs, other NGOs, research institutions and other sources to analyze the perception of best practice in the industry. Cite references to best practice and compare these with the practices at BP and at XX.

For example:

In a *Financial Times* four-part weekly series entitled, Mastering Corporate Governance, the title of part three (Friday, June 3, 2005) was “The divided world of corporate social responsibility.” Thomas Donaldson, the Mark O Winkelman Professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania’s article entitled, “Defining the value of doing good business …”

Write the Outline of the Case Study

Compliance analysis – Compliance with national/international law.

Company specific case studies

Analyze whether each company’s CSR report references national/international law. Study whether there are there any major differences in the reports.

Issue case study

Analyze whether the respective organization (Transparency International, GRI, etc.) references national/international law.
Conduct Research for the Case Study

Explain what kind of information you will need to write the case study.

Research – BP’s Website
Research – XX’s Website

Flesh-out the Outline of the Case Study

Company specific case studies
Content of the company’s/companies’ CSR reports
Comparison of the report/reports with peers
The evolution of CSR reporting at the company/companies
The evolution of CSR behavior at the company companies.

Issue case study
Content of the report(s) of the respective organization (Transparency International, GRI, etc.)
History of the reports/reporting
Industry recognition of the reports as an acceptable standard
Approach

As noted above, there are several approaches one can take. For example, the research can move from the:

Specific $\rightarrow$ General

or from the

General $\rightarrow$ Specific

Will you begin by conducting an examination of a specific issue and then add to it some general analysis?

Or, will you begin by conducting a general analysis, and then choose one element for more detailed examination?

Final Outline of the Case Study

Question:

Has the research produced any new information that may lead to a change of the initial hypothesis?
Writing the Case Study

As previously mentioned, a case study is an analysis (study) of a particular situation (case).

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