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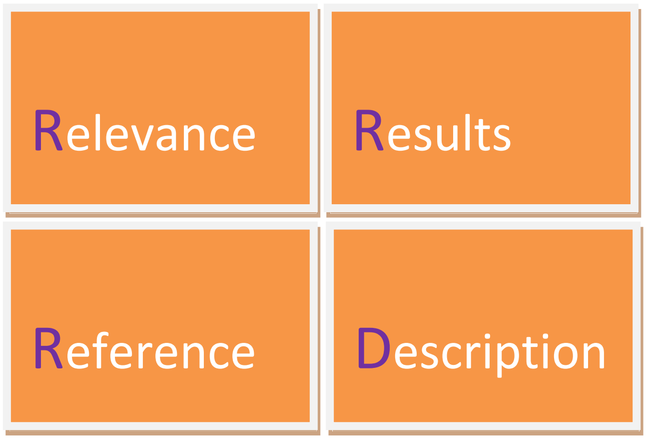
Create, Convert, Retain business

How to write case studies with impact

Why do we write case studies? To demonstrate credibility and prove to the perspective buyer you are the 'low risk' option. Put yourself in the buyer's shoes. Everyone will tell you their product or service is the best, but when you have reputable and relevant case studies with 3rd party testimonials from satisfied customers, this confirms what the seller is saying and makes them a low risk option for you, the buyer.

Case studies are often stored on a company intranet where they can be accessed easily and inserted into a brochure, bid or proposal at any time. By doing this they become, in essence, "boilerplate" or "cut and paste". When you consider the importance of case studies and how persuasive they can be in demonstrating your credentials, by taking this approach you are weakening what should be a key strength.

In addition, when reading a case study often the reader will only skim read. So how do you write case studies with impact, which get the pertinent points across and show you are the best provider? The key is to write them so the important and relevant information is easily readable and up front, followed by the detail. A useful tool you can use to help you create case studies with impact is the 3RD Box Model ©.



The 3RD box model © - creating case studies with impact.

Relevance

To capture your buyer you need to highlight upfront how the case study you are using is directly relevant to them. This does not take time to do, and yet if you do this, it achieves great results. By showing the relevance up front you demonstrate you understand their project; their world and you have encountered and overcome similar challenges. This draws the reader in. Rather than a standard case study, where the reader has to read it in its entirety and make their own deductions, you are actively demonstrating the direct relevance of your previous experience to their project, or in the case of a brochure, their sector.

There are many forms this can take, such as a small paragraph, bullet points or a graphic, such as a tick list.

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Results

If the relevance is the “how”, then the results are the “why”. Andy Bounds, author of the Jelly Effect, refers to results as the AFTERs. This is because the most important facts to tell a client is what they will get AFTER you have done your work. Look at anything we buy: we don’t buy the solution but the results we will get after we have used their product or service. This is what clients are buying.

Taking into account that some readers will only skim read the case studies, then if the only thing the client has read is the relevance of the case study you are using to their project and the results you have achieved then you will have demonstrated your credentials and direct experience on similar projects, making you the low risk option.

Reference

You have captured the reader’s attention and demonstrated you have proven results; the next step is to back this up even further with a great quote from a happy customer. The best quotes are not those that simply say, thank you, you did a great job, but a quote that refers to the results you helped them achieve. For example, “working with company XXX our proposal win rate increased to 65%”. The reference is the “who”. To create maximum impact use referees that your client will know or is a peer.

Description

You have established the relevance of the case study to the reader, the results you achieved and have backed this up with a quote from a happy customer. Now is the time to go into the detail, describing the project. Depending on the target reader(s) you can vary how much detail you go into. In essence this is the “what”.

Take a look at the case studies you are using. Are they the same case studies “cut and paste” into different materials or are they specific to the client and the project you are targeting? If not why not try the 3RD box model ©, this ensures you are creating case studies with impact, catering for every reader with maximum effect.