

Letter from the Editor

The value-added instructor's manual

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Novices to case writing are often surprised to learn that writing a great case is only part of what is needed for publication. Authors must also write a great Instructor's manual (IM). The IM, also known as a Teaching note, is a required component for publication in any of the case journals and is especially important for publication in *TCJ*. It is also an important part of scholarship as the IM is the element of case writing that makes cases acceptable scholarly contributions from the perspective of academic institutions and accrediting bodies such as the AACSB (Vega, 2013; Cook *et al.*, 2006).

Because the IM is never published, but released privately to adopting instructors, new case writers sometimes overlook the contribution of a well-written IM to gain acceptance of their cases for publication. They spend most of their writing time working on the case itself while the IM is often submitted with parts missing or with a very low level of analysis. This is a mistake. Journal reviewers often begin their reviews by reading the opening section of the case and then switching to the IM to see the intended audience and the types of analysis that will be required. Half of the review form reviewers use is concerned with the quality of the IM. Reviewers are asked to judge whether the case and IM make an important contribution to the literature as part of the publication decision.

Differentiating the case

I believe that there are at least two ways to distinguish a case from others through the IM – by providing a superior discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of the case analysis (also by choosing to utilize newer or more novel aspects of theory) and second by providing innovative and interesting teaching strategies for the case. This paper will focus on the latter approach.

Innovative and interesting pedagogy can be an effective way to distinguish a case from other submissions by providing the adopting instructor with more tools to use in teaching the case. These tools might include innovative teaching strategies such as board maps, role plays, video clips, small group exercises, experiential exercises, internet research activities, in-box exercises, icebreaker questions, data sets and other interesting teaching approaches. One of the best-selling cases at NACRA (Seiloff and Lassk, 2011) provides adopting instructors with a spreadsheet-based data set that permits students to perform statistical analysis of focus group data. A case, Morris (2015), with social responsibility overtones may include a stakeholder's role play to assist students in gaining additional insights into the complex tradeoffs that may be required when trying to balance different stakeholder perspectives. Video clips that can be used to introduce the case or icebreaker questions that engage students in the case situation can assist new instructors or those teaching the case for the first time. For those that teach online, internet research activities that require students to do a comparative analysis of competitors after accessing company websites or exploring the ease of doing business in a country that the case company is considering for market expansion can provide students with a learning experience that is even closer to "real-world" experiences. Teaching tips such as these are meaningful ways to add value to a case. Author(s) who demonstrate a commitment to the scholarship of case teaching are more likely to receive favorable reviews and ultimately case publication.

Adding innovative pedagogy to the IM

The first step is to develop the written materials students will need to engage in the exercises to be included in the IM. These handouts will be reproduced in the IM so that other instructors may also use them. Remember that the focus of the IM is to enable the instructor that has never taught the course before or previously utilized the case to teach it as effectively as the case authors. Complete and unambiguous instructions are important to enable others to expertly



teach the case. Handouts in the IM that are easy to reproduce and distribute make the instructors' job that much easier.

Next, classroom test your case and innovative exercise. Make note of any information the case author/instructor adds to the case discussion. Often these additions should be incorporated into the case itself so that other users will have this important information. Also observe the student reaction to the pedagogical exercises – did the students have difficulty in completing the exercise? Did the students learn the intended concepts as a consequence of the exercise? Did the exercise engage the students in the case discussion? Modify the teaching materials for the exercise to improve them before submitting the case to a journal. Be sure to include observations from the classroom testing of the exercises in the IM. Instructors considering adoption of the case will be more confident in utilizing the teaching approach if at least anecdotal information is provided about the success of the approach. Reviewers will also look more favorably on both the case and IM because it has been classroom tested.

Finally, be sure to utilize key words or sentences in the abstract or case synopsis to highlight the innovative pedagogy included in the IM. Since most case catalogs are provided online in searchable databases, it is important to provide instructors with enough information about what makes the case special so that it can be found and adopted. Many instructors read the abstract/synopsis and make a decision to adopt a case solely on the information provided therein. It is important to make sure that the pedagogical contributions of the IM are easily found in database searches and quick case reviews. During the journal review process, key words and descriptions of pedagogical enhancements in the abstract/synopsis establish the authors' professional credibility as case writers and teachers. Reviewers appreciate the generosity of the author(s) in sharing effective teaching strategies with others and will be more inclined to give the case a positive review.

Desired outcomes

In order to get the case published, both the case and the IM must meet the quality standards of the journal. Neither part alone will be sufficient to obtain an acceptance letter. Too often, authors labor to enhance the case while giving short shrift to the IM. Reviewers will no doubt recommend a "revise and resubmit" in this instance and the author(s) will find that the focus of the revision directives will be on improving and or completing the IM. Authors would do well to remember that it is the IM that distinguishes case writing from storytelling. The IM is considered the scholarly contribution of the case. If authors want colleagues to consider their published cases as scholarly contributions for tenure and promotion, spending more time in carefully crafting an effective IM seems like a worthwhile endeavor – increasing the likelihood of getting the case published and in demonstrating scholarly work for career advancement.

This issue – The cases included in this volume represent a wide variety of issues, geographic locations, academic disciplines and industries. There is something for everyone!

- Governance and decision making at Carris Reels (Daphne Barry and David FitzGerald). Carris Reels, a reel-manufacturing company headquartered in Vermont, had long-standing goals of being employee owned and governed. They also had a strong organizational (ownership) culture. The Corporate Steering Committee, a committee composed of representatives from management and non-management employees, and the board of directors had a decision to make about adding two new members to the board. With these new members, the board of directors would be made up of both members of management and non-management employees. Was Carris forfeiting wiser outside counsel in favor of company insiders?

Graduate or Undergraduate: Strategic Management, Social Responsibility, Social Enterprise

- Deutsche Bahn AG: A former monopoly off track? (Carolin Berlich, Felix Daut, Anna Freund, Andrea Kampmann, Benedict Killing, Friedrich Sommer, and Arnt Wöhrmann). The case focuses on the opportunities and challenges faced by Deutsche Bahn AG (a former German railroad monopolist until deregulation in 1996) with regard to its position in the German individual transportation market. Increasing competition in short- and

long-distance traffic threatens its strong business position. Deutsche Bahn also has internal problems that endanger its image as a service company. A lack of service quality and the technical condition of its trains has led to rising numbers of customer complaints. In addition, staffing and punctuality problems have exacerbated the situation. One of the main technical issues the company faces is that ordered trains have not been delivered on time.

Graduate or Undergraduate: Strategic Management

- iDE in Nicaragua: quest for sustainability (Vijaya Narapareddy, Nancy Sampson, and S.R. Vishwanath). International Development Enterprises (iDE), a non-profit organization, won numerous awards for its poverty alleviation efforts through the sale of low-cost irrigation technologies to the Base of Pyramid (BoP) farmers around the world. This case discusses iDE's entry into Nicaragua and the challenges this global social enterprise faced in bringing drip irrigation and other water technologies to the rural subsistence coffee farmers in Nicaragua. It presents the tough decisions it faced in 2012 regarding the future of its for-profit social business, iDEal Tecnologias, in Nicaragua. This case captures the tension in hybrid social enterprises.

Executive, Graduate or Undergraduate: Social Entrepreneurship, Non-Profit Management, Managing Sustainable Business, International Business, Strategic Management

- Republic Electric: energizing vendor assessment (John Timmerman, Serhly Ponomarov, and Frank Morris). Republic Electric is faced with the need to engage in a systematic process of evaluating vendors for its JIT manufacturing. The case gives students the opportunity to think through the process for vendor selection in the context of real-world constraints for a specific organization, to become acquainted with the Delphi technique for developing consensus, to gain hands-on experience with linear averaging, to engage in calculations of value indexes, and to recognize the marketing implications of effectively evaluating vendors. A key takeaway for students is the fact that vendor selection decisions are multifaceted and will vary among organizations depending on each organization's particular strategic needs, operational constraints, and human judgment.

Undergraduate: Marketing, Materials Management, Supply Chain Management

- Accounting towards sweet success: Treadwell's ice cream (Miranda Lam, Hongtao Guo, and Paul McGee). Tom Gould, an entrepreneur, had been operating Treadwell's, a small ice cream restaurant since 2000. Treadwell's had been preparing its financial statements under cash basis. Tom turned over all his receipts, both personal and business expenses, to his bookkeeper who entered them into QuickBooks. However, the bookkeeper had not been separating operating from non-operating activities, and had been using multiple accounts to record the same or similar costs. Therefore, the current income statement and balance sheet were not appropriately categorized and organized. In addition, business expenses had been mixed with Tom's personal expenses on the income statement. As Tom and his wife were considering turning over more operations to his son and hiring a manager, he would need the books to provide an accurate picture of the business.

Undergraduate: Financial Accounting, Tax

- Getting back on track: Change management at AfrobitLink, Ltd (Olugbenga Adeyinka and Mary Kuchta Foster). AfrobitLink Ltd, an information technology firm with headquarters in Lagos, Nigeria, experienced rapid growth as it expanded to serve telecommunications firms taking advantage of the deregulated market. However, this rapid expansion resulted in many challenges for AfrobitLink. Poor hiring practices, inadequate training, excessive spans of control, low accountability, a subjective reward system, and other cultural issues, such as a relaxed attitude to time, resulted in low motivation, high employee turnover, poor customer service, and financial losses. By 2013, the firm was operating at a loss and its reputation was in shambles. Ken Wilson, the founder's son, was hired in 2014 to help get the firm back on track. As a change agent, Ken had to decide how to address the issues facing the firm and how to achieve profitable growth.

Graduate or Undergraduate: Change Management, Organization Development, Organization Behavior, Leadership, International Management

Compact case

- And the crowd goes wild: examining a successful crowdfunding campaign (Kathryn Woods and Terry Damron). This case explores the concept of crowdfunding by examining the background of the fundraising model in addition to the successful campaign, “Let’s Send Kids to Harvard: Vidal Scholarship Fund”. In this campaign, Brandon Stanton leveraged the large following of his photo blog, “Humans of New York,” to raise more than one million dollars for students in an inner-city middle school. The fundraiser received national attention and broke the record for the most contributors to a single campaign on the popular crowdfunding website, Indiegogo. Students are encouraged to think critically about what elements work together to create a successful crowdfunding campaign.

Undergraduate: Marketing, Social Media, Public Relations, Entrepreneurship

References

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