

A CASE STUDY is...

Simply stated, a case study is a STORY that deals with characters (people) and some leadership conflict or issue or problem that they must solve. It describes the people, the issues involved, and the various positions that people took. Usually a case study involves an objective statement of facts and reporting of opinions and positions (pro and con) stated by those involved. A case study does not seek to solve the problem; it merely states the problem in a story form. If you would like to change the names of people so that they are not easily identified, please feel free to do so. However, please be sure to show you part in the situation.

The time frame for a case study can be days, weeks, months, or years even, and deals with a particular leadership problem, issue, and/or scenario.

A case study follows a person, several people, or even a group through a period of time in an organization as they go through the given interpersonal and/or organizational leadership problem(s), issues and struggles. A case study states clearly what the people did, how all those involved acted and reacted, and what the results of their actions were on people, events, morale, the organization, and other things and/or people. Basically, state what the effects were on everyone and everything germane to the organization.

A case study presentation itself does not present a conclusion or resolution to a problem. The issue is left open for discussion with the group who is studying the case study in order for the group to determine how best to resolve the issues. Do not state in your case study what the resolution of the problem was.

A case study is prepared ahead in order to have all the pertinent information available with which the group can interact. Write out the case study in full. Chrysalis Ministries will duplicated it for distribution to participants.

In order to maximize involvement of the Institute Participants, the case must be one with which most if not all will find some affinity. It should be one with which most participants can identify as either one they have encountered already or are likely to encounter. Please do not write up some esoteric, totally culturally or organizationally specific issue that the rest of us cannot identify with. I am sure that any leadership issues that you have faced in the last 18 months will be more than O.K.!!

Your case study should cover at least all of the following items:

- a. Who are the principal people involved?
Why are they the principals?
What THEIR roles are or were in the organization. Roles can be of two natures. One is the official role (e.g., associate pastor or vice president) and the other is the functional role (e.g., gate keeper for the pastor or the president or the one who is always being an obstructor, or the opinion leader but not a formal leader, etc.)
- b. Who if any are the minor people who exert a strong influence regarding this particular case study issue?
What influence did they show over the situation?
- c. What are the issues involved? Be clear as you can be regarding these.
What conflicts, problems arose? Describe the various perspectives.
How are the principal people involved in the issues?
On which side are each of the principal people?
- d. How did those involved attempt to resolve those issues, or solve the problems, or accomplish the desired outcomes, etc.?
- e. What options did the people suggest in order to resolved the issues, solve the problems, etc.? What conflicts or differences in opinions or what arguments were made for and against the options?
- f. As you look at the situation, what were some of the major causes of the problem, issue, etc? Was it personality, theology, perspective, age, male vs female, cultural, social, financial, or what?
- g. How did or still does (or at least how could) this case impact your leadership in the organization and/or your ministry? What were the affects on your organization and/or ministry? Were these good, bad, indifferent, or what?

DO NOT resolve the issue in your write-up of the case study. You will be asked during the discussion, probably towards the end of it, to tell us how the issue was resolved. But keep us guessing as we discuss your case.

Be prepared to add details when we discuss your case. It is highly unlikely that you will give us all the information we need to discuss your case, so we will probably ask some information-based questions of you.

You will not need to lead us through your case study, but you will be the resource person to help us understand it.

Hopefully a helpful suggestion:

Do not look at writing a case study as some onerous term paper. Rather, think of it as telling some friends about a leadership issue that you encountered in the last 1- 1½ years of your ministry.

So, keep things simple. Do not write too much, but do not write too little.

Depending on the complexity of your case, you will need from 3-10 pages of text, SINGLE SPACED. Ten pages is really LONG so be sure that you need that many pages to describe the situation. Three pages is cutting it a bit short, but is O.K. if all the pertinent data are present. Aim for about 5-8 pages (between 2250 and 4,500 words), single spaced, 2.5cm (1 inch) margins.

If I see any major problem with your case study write up, I will email you.

If English is not your first language, and for most of you it isn't, don't worry about your English. If your English writing is really messed up, I will fix it. If it contains typical "English as a second language" writing, I will leave it alone. No one will be offended and all of us make mistakes in our writing. (Case in point: this document!!)

Further questions? Email me.

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