



Podcast transcript

The 4 Essentials of Case Studies

INTRO: I'm talking with Marcia Jedd, owner of Marcia Jedd & Associates, a marketing communications consultancy in Minneapolis. Our content strategy topic today is case studies.

(Interviewer JP): Marcia, what is a case study?

(MJ): Case studies are customer success stories that tell how a product, service or solution addressed and solved a particular problem. Case studies typically range from a few to several pages in length in an attractive layout with high-resolution photos and at-a-glance information. A short case study in overview form can be one page.

(JP): What are some do's & don'ts when creating case studies?

(MJ): Well, because there's a bit of an art to creating powerful case studies, I've found the best ones feature these four elements:

- 1) Use quotes that help engage the reader, just like a feature article. Don't just interview and type up your notes without attribution. The power of having your customers, vendors--and others associated with the project--cited in the piece helps with exposure.
- 2) Showcase results with metrics. If the customer doesn't have precise figures, use estimates. In addition to savings information, you can include time to achieve ROI and statistics or data related to increased efficiencies, or processes the solution replaced, for example.
- 3) Use call-out sections to highlight top problems solved, featured solutions or innovation. You can also list the project team especially if it's a large project like you see in the construction or engineering fields. Use subheads to advance the narrative.
- 4) Always ask for contributor feedback as well as approvals which may include routing to contributor's communications or PR departments. Fact check by having your sources review the draft and make corrections. Sources can also sign off on a permissions release.

(JP): How can firms maximize their use of case studies?

(MJ): In addition to posting on their website, one great way to get PR and media coverage (also known as earned media today), is to send the case study to an industry publication. Many trade journals are hungry for content and will run the piece as is or have their staff customize the content for their publication.

Don't just list the case studies on your website; include a short summary next to the download.

Re-use customer quotes in the piece as testimonials on your website. Repurpose the piece into blogs and other content. Encourage the customer or featured vendors to market the case study. It's all ready-made content.

Case studies benefit the sales side by acting as in-depth customer references and can be included directly with a response to an RFP.

(JP): In the grand scheme of things, how effective are case studies?

Case studies are one of the most valuable forms of marketing tactics out there today, supported by this fun fact: the Content Marketing Institute and Marketing Profs polled more than 1,400 B2B companies in 2012 and found that case studies are the second most effective form of content marketing, only behind in-person events. (<http://www.slideshare.net/CMI/b2b-content-marketing-2013-benchmarks-budgets-and-trendsnorth-america-14855770>)

(JP): We just heard from Marcia Jedd from Marcia Jedd and Associates on the topic of case studies.

What's in your content strategy? For assistance with your marketing communications, contact Marcia Jedd of Marcia & Associates LLC. She helps organizations worldwide improve their reach, reputation and revenues with insightful marcom that includes copywriting, PR and marketing research services. For more information, please visit www.marcajedd.com or call 612.805.1425.

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