



Seven Tips To Get The Most Value Out Of Your Case Studies

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Case studies are among the most credible sales tools you'll ever put in front of prospects. They reap the "equity" you've earned by solving your customers' problems. And they showcase the economic, business and technical benefits you delivered to a real-live customer.

Best of all, technology buyers read them. According to a recent survey, 67 percent of respondents reported that they often read case studies.¹ Forty-seven percent go one step further and frequently pass along case studies to co-workers and colleagues.²

One of the things I like most about case studies is that marketers and PR professionals can use the content in so many ways. It's one of the few tools that allows you to amortize the cost of creating the piece over the many different ways that the content is used. And you achieve even more impactful results when case studies are leveraged across many content distribution channels to support your marketing, sales and thought leadership programs.

Here are a few ways to get the most out of your case studies.

Repurpose the content in other communications deliverables

1. The challenge—solution—results case study format is ideal for the creation of a **press release**. When I write a press release based on a case study, I cull out the main themes and juiciest quotes. I also sprinkle in some of the metrics the solution delivered to lend credibility and enhance the newsworthiness of the release. This increases the chances it will get published (in some form) in newspapers, trade journals and online sites.
2. Because case studies are, at their heart, a story, they are easily converted to an **article** for publication in your company newsletter or ezine. Given the real-world slant of the story, these are often the most-read pieces in these publications. After all, it's your customer that's telling the story so the "third-party" perspective is more interesting than an obvious corporate puff piece. Internally, a case study can make a fine sales education tool,

¹ "Issue One" How Technology Marketers Meet Buyers' Appetite for Content, March 2007, KnowledgeStorm Inc., & MarketingSherpa, p. 14. Accessed at http://www.knowledgestorm.com/search/viewabstract/87939?pos=1&referer=SEARCH_RESULT_S&trkpg=search_results_abstract on 08-22-07.

² Ibid, p. 16.

demonstrating successful sales strategies and tactics that earned the win.

Seventy-four percent of technology buyer's research and information gathering is done online.³ Savvy marketers align their content distribution tactics with how their prospects consume that content by posting their case studies to relevant online sites. For example, leading technology vendors publish their case studies at www.knowledgestorm.com as well as www.bitpipecom. Add niche sites tailored to your specific industry as well.

3. Case studies also provide excellent synopses for executive **presentations** to shareholders, potential investors, analysts, employees and prospects. They easily adapt to PowerPoint slides and serve as credible proof points for executive claims.
4. Quotes in case studies are also excellent for use in **other marketing collateral** like ads, brochures and websites. You will naturally want to get permission to use them in these ways, but the credibility a happy customer praising your solution is hard to beat.

Use it across your enterprise

5. As a **sales tool**—salespeople frequently share case studies with people considering their company's products and services. This is particularly true for high-tech products where the sales cycle requires overcoming the concerns of skeptical left-brained engineers and technical people. Some may think that “pushing” such content from a vendor is not an effective content distribution tactic. Fortunately, research shows that “79 percent of technology buyers receive 25 percent *or more* [emphasis added] of their information from vendor-sponsored content.”⁴

In addition to providing a .pdf detailing a similar implementation to that the prospect is considering, sales people often use case study slides in their presentation decks. Moreover, case study handouts at tradeshow are more likely to survive the attendee's hotel room trash bin and be read.

6. Case studies in .pdf format provide relevant, targeted and contextual content on technology product and service **web pages**. Together with white papers and solution briefs, they round out your case for why a prospect should consider your services.

³ Ibid, p. 11.

⁴ Ibid, p. 3.

7. A detailed case study makes a good **giveaway item** along with white papers. Use it to motivate prospects to respond to your online & offline promotional campaigns.

In these seven ways, you can leverage the success you've achieved with current customers to positively influence other technology buyers to consider—and buy—your products and services.

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