



Streamlining the Case Study

A Case for the Mini-Case

DESIGNAROUNDS

Your one-stop learning and development partner

25 years of demonstrated commitment to maximizing individual and organizational potential in multiple industries

Consistently delivering learning that's:

Absolutely relevant

Engaging, efficient, challenging and fun

Meaningfully interactive

Rich with choices, practical tools and real-world strategies

Focused on results

Designed around you

Let's face it: training audiences seem to be demonstrating increased levels of attention deficit disorder these days. Content must be extraordinarily engaging and activities have to move at an ever quicker pace. Add to this dynamic organizational pressure for shorter training times and this leaves many learning professionals feeling that their only recourse is to deliver content rapidly and send learners on their way.

Yet, years of experience tell us that behavior change on the job jumps significantly when learners are able to apply new knowledge, concepts, or skills in the training environment first.

Question: So, how can learning and development professionals respond to these seemingly contradictory conditions? Answer: Offer an effective mini-case study that allows for the delivery of content as well as rich dialogue and immediate application.

Become a Drama Queen - or King Start with a Strong Story Line

Quickly engage learners with a central story line that captures their attention. One of the best case writers we know starts with the question, "What tree is the character up?" Starting with an appropriately complex and realistic problem provides a backdrop for your true objective: to highlight and allow participants to work with essential 'make or break' content and solve problems similar to those faced on the job. A handful of pointed questions direct participants toward intended outcomes.

Crisp Characters/Fuzzy Features The Devil is in the Details

An effective mini-case has believable characters to whom participants can relate - characters who face pressures, are imperfect, make mistakes and try again. Details in the character profile enhance interest.

Details in other dimensions of the case can be a distraction. To the greatest extent possible, make locations, divisions, functions and groups a little fuzzier. Otherwise, you may be faced with the knee-jerk reaction, "that's not how things work here."

Gray Matters

There is Rarely One Right Answer

In real-life, few challenges or problems have only one correct solution. Ours is a world full of shades of gray. Ensure that your case is not too simplistic or one-dimensional by introducing the possibility of multiple approaches, avenues of discussion and right answers.

Think Reader's Digest One Page Please

It's easier to create a lengthy case study than to write one that is brief. But with time and attention levels working against us, less is more - much more. Edit, edit and edit again until you can deliver the details of your case on one page.