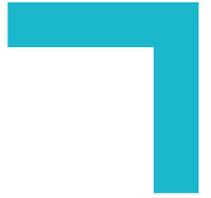


EIGHT CREATIVE WAYS TO USE CASE STUDIES TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS



1

What do you recommend to new companies who don't have much of a track record with customers yet?

Obviously, case studies are stronger when you have a few years under your belt, but you can really start doing some form of case studies as soon as you have customers. They'll just be a little less detailed and they'll just focus on what problem the customer was trying to solve and why they chose your company to solve it. So you can publish it as sort of a mini-case study, then in a few months, you can update it and expand on it once you have some results to talk about.

2

How often should we update our case studies?

Initially, I think you want to build a library of a few case studies – each representing a different audience or a different problem being solved – and then I think it's a good idea to write a few new case studies every year or one a quarter, whatever you can do. And if you have really long-term customer relationships, it might be a good idea to go back and update the case studies you have as often as the relationships change. So if the customer's company grows significantly, you might want to revisit the case study and update it with information on how you helped them through their growth.

3

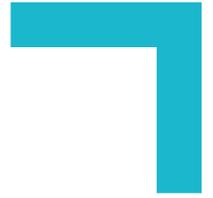
We've been thinking about doing video case studies. Is that a good idea, and how do you recommend we do it?

Video case studies are wonderful, but they're a little bit trickier. There are a couple of ways to approach this. You can do an informal approach, where you give your customers a couple questions to answer and then just have them record themselves using their cell phones, etc. Or you can hire a production company or professional video person to set up formal shoots with each participating customer; you want someone who knows how to do professional lighting, quality audio, etc. Another option is to catch your customers when they're all in one place, such as a trade show. You can set up a booth and hire a producer for the day to film several different people throughout the course of the day. That might be the most cost-effective way to do it.

4

How long do case studies take to write?

Start to finish, for me, it's usually a two-week turnaround time, but that depends on the customer's schedule and how many rounds of revisions you want. Typically it's a pretty quick process. It can get bogged down in the approvals—you want to make sure your customer approves it before it goes to print, and that sometimes takes time. However, generally, you're looking at 2-3 weeks.



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5

Should our case studies be text-only, or do we need to design them?

You want to design them a little bit, just to make them more engaging. Hostway has some really good examples on their site—they do a simple, clean layout with some icons and pull quotes down the side and then a visual example of the customer's hosting infrastructure at the bottom. You can extrapolate from that to figure out something similar for your company. Images that help explain the product or service being discussed are great as well.

6

Pictures are an important part of our "sell". Do you recommend limiting the case study to one page?

No, in fact, most of the case studies I write are 2-3 pages. If you have pictures that can help illustrate the products or services you're discussing, I think it's a great idea to include them.

7

How many newsletters should you send to your customers per month?

Unfortunately, there's no single answer for this. It really depends on your industry, who your customers are, and the type of information you're providing. A good place to start might be to survey your customers when they sign up for your email list—ask them how often they want to hear from you. You can also look at what others in your industry are doing. But remember there's a difference between newsletters and targeted emails. I think a lot of companies decide to do one newsletter per month (one newsletter per customer segment – you might be writing multiple newsletters but each customer will only receive one), and then touch the customer more frequently with targeted emails.