



The Content Man

The information you need to optimize your web content.

Four ways to spice up a customer Case Study

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Some people will want to read the case studies you post on your site. Most, however, just want to know that you have customers, that you've worked in industries like theirs, and that you've been successful.

For this second group of people, you want to make your case studies as easy as possible to scan quickly. Don't make this group read very much--because they won't!

Here are four ways to make your customer stories instantly "readable":

Include a capsule summary. Put this at the top of page one, in a highlight box. The capsule summary should include: Company (one sentence), Challenge (one sentence), Solution (one or two sentences), and Results (one or two sentences).

Tell the story in subheads. Break your story into sections with subheads, and write your subheads so they tell a complete story by themselves. An example of a series of subheads that do this: A retail firm faced new competition... It was time to upgrade the tracking software... Profits have increased and customers are happier... Support made the transition easy... The retailer plans to expand the applications.

Use lots of customer quotes. Customers say great things (or you shouldn't be doing a story on them!). I like to use a customer quote about every other paragraph in a story. Example: The tracking software provided a new capability to see and understand inventory levels at a glance. "It's given our company a powerful tool for managing costs, and we're seeing results already," says Mr. Smith.

Use quote boxes. Choose a few of the best customer quotes in the story to highlight, and put them in boxes (as I've done here). A few customer quotes can be worth a whole story by themselves!

"It's given our company a powerful new tool for managing costs"

If you do these four things, your case studies will work hard for you--whether people actually read them or not!