CASE STUDIES/STORYTELLING

Stories convey not just information but meaning and tacit knowledge as the information they contain that is seamlessly incorporated into the story is context. Stories for this reason have been a powerful tool throughout ages to pass on chunks of knowledge as they are easy to make sense of, retain and pass on.

Stories are effective in sparking insights as listeners react to stories differently: although they are told within their own context, listeners make linkages with their own context and interpret the messages that have meaning and insights to their own situations. At the simplest level, consider parables, fables, tales or children’s stories that have very clear messages embedded that are aimed to be universally meaningful in different contexts...

How to Use

Storytelling in the knowledge management context has received considerable attention with many experts sharing their practices, most notably Steve Denning formerly of the World Bank using stories to enable his colleagues to see the benefits of KM to transfer learning from one development project to another in a different geographic location. Similar messages clearly have a role in healthcare.

In the simplest terms, storytelling is about constructing a piece that reflects some real event in the past. Then considering the messages from that event you want to convey and re-write it to better convey those messages.


Hints and tips for developing case studies

This document provides clear guidance on this process to ensure you capture the context, problem or issue, solution and outcomes.

The guidance includes some top tips for case study writing, including:

- Plan the structure and content before starting
- Stick to the context, problem, solution and outcome
- Try to tell the story in a compelling and engaging way
- Do not focus on too much technical detail
- Try and show in real terms the impact of any action taken
- Ask a colleague to read it to make sure it is clear and informative
Identifying suitable case studies

Does your case study:

- Support service delivery and potentially improve practice?
- Stimulate new thinking, ideas and actions?
- Use information to improve care, directly or indirectly?
- Demonstrate best practice for peer use and information?

Developing a case study

Your case study is likely to follow the style or structure of a story by having a start, middle and end. It should engage the reader or listener and this will ensure their attention is maintained throughout.

The first step is to plan your case study. The best way to do this is to identify:

- The context – or background to the case study. This can be a brief history of the situation to help the reader understand the context
- The problem, issue or challenge – what were you faced with which led to you taking the specific course of action?
- The solution – what you did, implemented or undertook to solve the specific issue, challenge or problem?
- The outcome – what happened as a result of the action taken?

In simple terms you need to consider:

- What?
- Why?
- How?
- Benefits

The next step is writing up the case study. Try and show in real terms the impact of any action taken.

- Ask a colleague to read it to make sure it is clear and informative
- Ensure you proof read your case study before uploading

What structure should I follow?

The title should reflect the content without being too lengthy.

At the start of your case study, it is useful to provide a brief summary. As a guide this would be around 30-50 words (maximum 60) providing an overview of the case study including key search words or terms.

The main element of the case study is the description. This would include details of the context, problem or issue, solution and outcomes which collectively show how information was used to enhance or improve health care.

There is also the opportunity within the description section to provide background
information as an author, should you wish to do so.

Finally your case study should provide some detail on impact, results or benefits. This can include cost/time savings, statistics and figures, or simply anecdotal information on the outcome of a specific approach or course of action.

**Style**

As well as effective planning, it is important to ensure the most appropriate tone and style which resonates and engages with the reader or listener.

It is important to incorporate the key details of the case study in an informative and interesting way. This means keeping the content succinct but with sufficient detail to ensure understanding and learning by those reading the case study.

It is advisable to avoid extensive use of jargon, acronyms and technical detail to encourage interest and appeal to the widest range of readers.

Try and describe or explain the outcomes in practical terms to showcase the impact of your action or initiative effectively.

A case study can take many forms, it can be short and succinct highlighting key insights and learning, or it can be more detailed and analytical.

**Length**

This can be communicated in a short, succinct way with key points to note or in a longer narrative format. As a guide only we would suggest the minimum word count for the description is 250 and maximum is 1500 words (including the biography).

**Podcasts**

A podcast is an audio or video file which can be listened to or watched online.