

High Impact Projects

A Newsletter About Solutions and Creating Exceptional Value

A Case Study About Using Case Studies!

Creation of 5 Outstanding Case Study / Success Stories
Yields Surprising Comments

"I like the clarity of a real-life example. We want to help the customer paint themselves into the picture of how we help solve a whole set of their problems. The cases help because they show how we have solved their problems before."

Don Romine, President, Web Converting

Tom Ingram, PMP

"If our customers and potential customers understood what we do, we wouldn't have any competitors. This helps us communicate what we do."

**Jim Harrison, General Manager,
Web Converting, Dallas Plant**

At the risk of trying to be funny, I thought a short case study on the greatness of case studies would be in order. For my friends that think I am too serious, too much of the time – this one's for you.

J.C. Cardone, senior sales executive and Jim Harrison, general manager of Web Converting's Dallas plant retained me to write up some success story / case studies about their customers. The outcome was excellent and can be viewed at:

<http://www.tomingraminc.com/newsletterindex.htm>

I have had several people read these cases and tell me what a great writer I am. The fact is that Web Converting provides EXCEPTIONAL service to its customers, and my job was easy.

Today, I had the chance to ask Jim and J.C. where they found value in the effort.

Following are their responses:

Immediate Sales Tool: My first priority in providing this service is to quickly provide a usable sales tool. Superstar sales people can benefit from having these cases, but it is the new sales person and the struggling sales person that can see the most immediate benefit. This gives them confidence that their company really does perform as promised, and a third party is willing to stake his reputation on the claims made.

Jim Harrison made some very kind comments about our working relationship. "I was amazed at how quickly you understood our complex business. You are a good listener, and you don't talk down to people or make them feel dumb by using acronyms and technical jargon. The writing is understandable to our people and our customers."

While I certainly appreciate Jim's kind words, I need to point out that his senior sales executive, J.C. Cardone, did a magnificent job of quickly educating me on what I needed to know. This allowed us to complete excellent case studies very quickly and stay within a reasonable budget.

Differentiating From Commodity Competitors: Jim Harrison observes that, “These cases show all the things we do beyond our competitors. I think our competitors will look at this and be discouraged. They know that they cannot compete with us on service.”

J.C. describes the same issue somewhat differently. “Jim and I came to Web Converting a couple of years ago. Back then, if you asked someone what we did, they would say that, ‘we sell machine time to convert large rolls of material to small rolls of material.’ [a commodity service.] We still have a few people that think this way, but tools like these case studies show where we really add exceptional value beyond the commodity service. They can help us with our customers and in training our internal people.”

Credibility / Proof Source With Customers: J. C. explains that, “We have had a third party go to customers to provide credibility for our claims. These cases are fact-based and documented.” As Jim Harrison puts it, “People tend to believe what they read.”

I will add that my hope is that these cases will provide a proof source for good sales people representing honorable, customer-driven companies. I want to equip sales people to be credible with their prospects, to sell consultatively and to rise above the trap of selling just on price and features.

Proof That You Really Are Customer Driven: J.C. observes that, “These case studies show our strengths and customer successes. They show that we really are customer driven and we really do perform – unlike many of our competitors. This is tangible proof that our customer’s business really does come first.”

“We are modeling the successes that we want the organization to produce. In pointing up the success stories, we are helping to get the company moving in the right direction.”

J.C. Cardone

Provide:” Don Romine, president of Web Converting, explains that the case studies help with a mental model of how to think about the business. “We want our people and our customers to think of us in terms of the whole basket of what we provide – not just a single commodity service. The case studies show that we have provided value to our customers far beyond those commodity services. This is useful both for our customer’s thinking and our internal thinking.”

“The case studies show that we provide a whole ‘basket’ of services to our customers – far beyond the basic commodity service of “slitting”.

**Don Romine, President,
Web Converting**

“Painting the Customer Into the Picture of How We Solve Their Problems”: Romine goes on to explain that, “We want our story to become their story. We want the customer to quickly see how our previous successes allow us to quickly tailor a solution to their problems. The cases help them make that leap.”

Help Move the Organization Where it Needs to Go For the Long Term: J.C. explains that, “I see real value in these success stories as an internal training tool. We are modeling the successes that we want the organization to produce. In pointing up the success stories, we are helping to get the company moving in the right direction.”

Jim Harrison describes the same concept. “These people will work if they know that what they do makes a difference. [Our dock man] will stay after 5 p.m. if he knows it makes a difference. These cases help.”

Third Party Validation and Feedback: J.C. describes some of the reasons it made sense to use a third party for this effort. “We thought we were doing well, but we wanted to know for sure. We wanted to know the good news and the bad. There is definite value in

having an independent person verify and endorse that these were the results achieved, and these words are what the customer actually said.”

Jim also observes that, “You probably got better quotes than J.C. would have gotten if he had asked directly. I think customers will tell a third party things they might not tell us.”

Cherry Pick and Replicate: “These cases certainly ‘cherry pick’ our best customers and successes. This is not a bad thing. We need to replicate these successes.

Don Romine

Roadmap For CEOs: J.C. comments that, “The CEO’s job boils down to increasing revenue, decreasing cost, improving profit. These case studies provide a roadmap to increased customer satisfaction and reduced costs. If these successes can be replicated, we have pointed the business in the right direction.”

“If these successes can be replicated, we have pointed the business in the right direction.”

J.C. Cardone

“Note also that the case study / success stories provide a benchmark that tells us when we are headed in the wrong direction. If we cannot get happy customer comments, demonstrate clear benefits or show solid

paybacks for our customers, we are doing something wrong.”

“Using your service helped me get these case studies done. **This is something that most smaller business can’t do or won’t do – they just don’t have the resources.** Otherwise, it wouldn’t have gotten done – or would have taken years.”

Jim Harrison

Getting Published / Free Advertising:

One of Jim Harrison’s goals is to get articles published about the excellent work that Web Converting is doing. “This gives us solid material for trade magazine publication. It can provide us with free advertising and credibility we can get no other way.”

“These cases show all the things we do beyond our competitors. I think our competitors will look at this and be discouraged. They know that they cannot compete with us on service.”

Jim Harrison

Regarding the Cost: Developing case studies is not cheap, but it is not unreasonably expensive, either. J.C. comments that, “After I saw the drafts of the first couple of newsletters, I could see the value and the price was not a concern.”

About this Case Study...

The research for this paper has included multiple interviews and sources of data to help provide a balanced picture and confirm key assertions. It is written as a teaching and communication tool and is not intended to fully describe exact details or dialog. Contact Tom Ingram & Associates, Inc. if you have questions about this case. **You are free to duplicate and**

