**Professional Development Workshop Proposal**

**Compact Cases in Three Parts**

Part I: Writing Compact Cases

Part II: Compact Cases Hackathon

Part III: Compact Cases Roundtable

Submitted by:

In 2020, the case method will celebrate its 100th birthday in business education. Little has changed in case writing from that time. Cases are typically 10-20 pages long with another 20 or so additional pages of exhibits. Students are expected to carefully read the case prior to class and to develop recommendations for what the case protagonist should do.

While the case itself is little changed, recent studies suggest that today’s students are less likely to have read assigned readings (or cases) before coming to class (Baier et al., 2011, Aagaard et al., 2014). Anecdotal experience suggests that many students are relying upon their personal experience with case companies rather than arriving at an in-depth understanding of case issues. From the students’ perspective, reading cases is often seen as not worth the effort as they are able to achieve an acceptable grade without ever doing the work.

It seems that it is no longer enough for professors to assign cases and hope students will read and prepare them—we must make case preparation a higher priority and necessity for students. In pedagogy, we can link case preparation explicitly to assessments and grades. As case writers, we can write more engaging cases by making them shorter, more relevant, and better connected to important course topics. Case writers are compelled to address these issues to improve student learning and learning outcomes.

With these issues in mind, *The CASE Journal* (***TCJ***) launched Compact Cases with the goal “to make cases accessible and readable by the students …to encourage better learning and stronger learning outcomes” (Vega, 2015). Compact Cases are limited to 1,000 words or about two pages. Students respond strongly to Compact Cases and seem better prepared to actively participate in case discussion. The discussion is lively, students are more engaged and thinking critically about the case situation.

***TCJ*** has published a dozen Compact Cases in the two years since the form was introduced. A Compact Case was one of three finalists for the Emerald Publishing Outstanding Case award in 2017 (an award honoring the best case published in the journal for the previous year). We strongly believe this format works well for teaching and learning and would like to encourage other case writers to develop Compact Cases. Thus, we are proposing a series of Professional Development Workshop (PDW) sessions for the 2018 EAM Annual Meeting. The three sessions to be offered and the anticipated learning outcomes of each are described below:

**Part I: Writing Compact Cases**

**Duration: 2 to 4 hours**

**Setup: Classroom**

**Scheduling: Morning session early in the conference would be preferable**

Writing compact cases can be challenging—how do case writers provide sufficient information to permit the analysis of an issue in only 1,000 words or less? Is it possible to write something that is still engaging in this compact form? The focus of this session is to provide tips and suggestions for successfully writing, teaching and publishing compact cases. Basic tenets of case writing will be covered while emphasizing the unique aspects of compact cases. This session will be open to all participants and those who attend will develop basic case writing skills while gaining tips for keeping the case short and tightly focused. The importance of the teaching note and its difference from traditional instructor’s manuals will also be covered.

**Part II: Compact Cases Hackathon**

**Duration: 4 hours or more**

**Setup: Round tables for small group work, Internet Access**

**Scheduling: Afternoon session early in the conference would be preferable**

A hackathon is a sprint-like event in which participants collaborate intensively to create a useable project. This session challenges participants to develop a compact case in a collaborative small group setting. Participants must preregister to participate in this session so that they may receive relevant materials prior to the meeting. When preregistering, participants will be able to select from several potential compact case situations and to gain access to background materials (journalistic articles, industry reports, YouTube videos etc.) that will provide the source material for the onsite development of a compact case during this session. The presenters (and possibly mentors) will develop appropriate materials for a variety of compact cases in different firms, industries and academic disciplines and make these materials available for participants prior to the conference via electronic file sharing (Dropbox or other means).

Participants will be encouraged to bring their laptops to work in small groups of 4-5 persons to develop and write 2-3 learning objectives and the accompanying compact case. Internet access will be necessary for participants to conduct online research to complete their work. Case writing mentors will be available for consultations with groups as needed. The final product of the session will be a compact case and partial teaching note (at least the learning objectives for the case). Participants will be encouraged to continue to work on refining the case and completing the teaching note before submitting the compact case to ***TCJ*** for consideration for publication.

Ideally, this session will be scheduled for an afternoon time slot with no sessions following in the same room so that participants can work on their compact cases as long as necessary. Emerald Group Publishing has agreed to sponsor snacks and refreshments for a fun, high energy and dynamic work environment.

**Part III: Compact Cases Roundtable**

**Duration: 2-3 hours**

**Setup: Round tables**

**Scheduling: This session should ideally be scheduled near the end of the conference to permit groups to finalize their compact cases and to allow distribution of completed cases to mentors and other participants prior to this session.**

Participants in the Part II session of this PDW series will have the opportunity to have their compact case and learning objectives critiqued in a traditional case round table. Case writing mentors will be assigned to facilitate the critique (one mentor for every 2-3 compact cases). The compact cases will be distributed to each participant and mentors electronically via email and perhaps in hard copy prior to the session.

Each compact case group will provide a short presentation of the case (less than 5 minutes) and identify any particular issues they would like to receive critical/creative assistance for further development. Roundtable participants (other hackathon groups, mentors, observers) will then provide specific, developmental feedback with the goal of refining the compact case to make it ready for submission for publication. Discussion will also cover suggestions and recommendations for the further development of the teaching note. A recorder will make notes of all comments and suggestions and share these with the compact case group. Each compact case will receive a minimum of 15-20 minutes of discussion.

It is anticipated that the roundtable session will serve much like a preliminary peer review round and that each group will leave the conference with specific feedback for refining and further developing the compact case for publication. All hackathon compact cases submitted to ***TCJ*** prior to a specific deadline and subsequently accepted for publication will be eligible for special prizes provided by Emerald Publishing Group.

**References**

Aagard, L., Connor, T.W. II, and Skidmore, R.L. (2014). “College textbook reading assignments and class time activity”, *Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 132-45.

Baier, K., Hendricks, C., Gorden, K.W., Hendricks, J.E. and Cochran, L. (2011). “College students’ textbook reading, or not!”, American Reading Online Yearbook, Vol. 31, available at: americanreadingforum.org/yearbook/11\_yearbook/documents/BAIER%20ET%AL%20PAPER.pdf.

Vega, G. (2015). “Editorial”, The CASE Journal, Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 233-4.