The AOM IM Division Teaching Committee How to Write Different Types of Cases Series Presents:

How to write and develop a video case? *The case of co-created video cases*

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1) Introduction

Written cases and video case studies have some common traits. They both need to be based on real-life business problems, offering company managers' alternative ways of decision making, as a solution to a specific problem. We also expect these alternative decisions to be based on a theoretical framework but this link between the case and the theory is usually left to the discretion of the academic while lecturing. However, video cases have unique features that need to be taken into consideration when selecting the case, developing and executing it in collaboration with the businesses. The following aims to provide a detailed account of some of the tasks involved in the development of video cases that have been co-created by academics and businesses. The below described procedure has been based on the original video case library called *Brands Whisper'g*® developed for marketing and its follow-up video case library called *MNC Whispering* developed for international business.[ii] The focus is hereby on the pre- and post-recording stages which are the most labor intensive and allow for the greatest academic influence. Figure 1 illustrates the process and how one step feeds into the other.

These video cases have been designed to follow a problem-solution structure, whereby the video case is developed by academics, asking questions to businesses and managers explaining what the company did when they were faced with the given situation. Based on these manager interviews and other secondary sources, cases are written by the academic but narrated by the manager for authenticity and higher student attention and engagement. In our two video case libraries, video cases are complemented by knowledge clips that explain the theory and the framework underpinning the case study, which are also prepared by the academic.

2) Pre-production (Preparation stage)

2.1) Finding the right company

One of the first steps in the video case development is finding a real-life situation that a company has experienced, which could be used as an example while teaching. But not all real-life situations have got a potential for being turned into a good video case. For ending up with a good video case:

- The real-life situation identified should be interesting, addressing to current business topics for catching students' attention.
- Companies chosen should be ready to reveal the problems faced as much as possible, talking about the whole situation openly and candidly.
- Companies should be willing to put in time and effort for content creation, giving full support during internal data gathering and data clearance stages.
- Managers who will narrate the video case should be good story tellers and they should not be camera-shy.

If a video case library will be developed, like in our two examples, companies could be chosen from start-ups to big corporations, including diverse industries to exhibit the wide range of business problems and solutions faced in real-life. Generally speaking, most written cases are based on big US corporations. However, most of the students will not be working in one of those big companies. As such, it is important to have a diverse portfolio of video cases in terms of topics, industries and countries covered.

### 2.2)   Writing/ preparing the script

Similar to written cases, a video case study also needs to have a script, which is written on the basis of preliminary research of the company and interview with the manager. However, in video cases this is written like a film script, incorporating audio and video elements. In other words, the audio side sets out the story; while the video side lets us know the relevant visuals, animations, and illustrations that will be accompanying the audio.

The academic identifies and approaches a business with a theme for a video case study. In conversations with the business, the theme is verified, and detailed examples are collected. As part of this process, the business may need to internally verify what examples and information can be shared through the video without, for example, infringing on current strategies or opening the business to libel. Through the conversations, the academic and the business agree on a narrative that introduces the business and industry, the challenge that is at the heart of the case, various scenarios the company considered, addressing the challenge (problem), and how the business ultimately decided (solution).

While the video case can be between 20-30 minutes, it is best to split up the script into various sections, which will allow for classroom or group discussions in between the sections and also improve viewers' attention as the maximum length of any section should not extend beyond 5-7 minutes. The length of the video also determines the length of the script. For instance, in English on average 125-150 words are spoken per minute; mainly depending on how fast the executive is talking.

Similar to written cases, the script structure is business driven, rather than theory centered. While in written cases, relating the case to the theory is left at the discretion of the educator, in video cases, the theory can also be explained with the help of separate knowledge clips, developed by the academic.

Figure 1: Video case development process
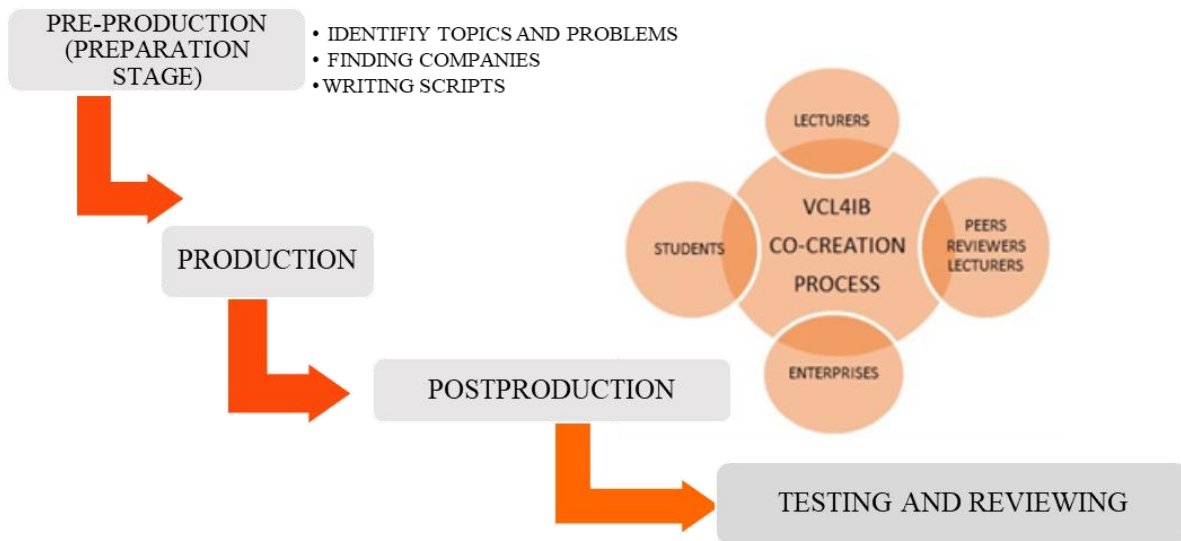
Source: *MNC Whispering* and *Brands Whisper'g®*

Furthermore, the narrator(s) of the video case has to be carefully selected among managers who like to talk before a camera and who are naturally good speakers. If managers are not fluent in English and to make videos more authentic, it is recommended to record the video case in the executive's mother tongue. In this case the narrative can be dubbed with an English voiceover and captions could be added. The dubbing process will also allow for any necessary amendments to be made in the original video recording.

The managers should be personally involved in the business challenge discussed. Having agreed on the content and general structure of the script, the academic writes the first draft. In some instances, businesses may want to write the case themselves. If possible, the script writing should not be left to the business. Mainly because the video case will be used as a teaching material and the academic is in a better position to know the requirements of the curriculum. Furthermore, businesses are used to writing corporate press releases and promotional material which have a very different style than case writing. Therefore, it is recommended that the script is structured around the problem in a comprehensive way; with follow-up questions that address the theme and agreed business examples. Drafts of the script are revised by either party until both agree on the script to be covered. Also, all information to be included in the script, is internally verified and approved by the business.

3) Production

The production stage mainly consists of the video recording process. After the academic and the business agree on the script, the video shoot day is set. The video shoot can be done: 1) by a professional production crew or 2) by using the production teams and facilities found in universities or 3) by the academic himself/herself, if the academic is confident to do so. Some universities have blended learning, online teaching or video departments/services, which provide such professional service, or has video recording equipment at the academic's disposal. It is imperative to use a good camera, which will allow the video recording to be done from multiple viewpoints. Using a 4K camera, for instance, will make it possible to switch to a different shooting angle on edited scenes and will make the edited parts less noticeable. In

addition, it is critical to use a professional clip-on microphone. Students may not expect the top video production quality, but if they cannot hear what is being said, they will stop watching it immediately.

Before the video shooting starts, all mobile phones, laptops need to be switched off. The venue should be quiet. It is generally a good idea to put a sign up, saying "video shoot is in progress" to eliminate the noise outside of the venue. Furthermore, although the camera will be focused on the narrator, the background setting is also important. There should not be anything on the background which will grab the attention of the audience from the narrator. The narrator should not wear striped tops or ties, since stripes have a flickering effect on the screen.

During the recording, it is suggested that the narrator is seated opposite the academic and together they engage in a conversation along the lines of the script. This also helps the manager not to talk looking directly at the camera. If managers use their own words instead of reading from a prompter, this will make them look as if they are talking naturally and spontaneously. It could be necessary to do few retakes, to make sure that the content and the delivery of answers are adequate. Therefore, the manager narrator should be prepared for possible retakes before the video shoot starts. In addition, it is important to have some time in between questions or retakes. If there are pauses in between, it will make the editing process much easier at the post-production stage. It is a good idea to start off with some ice breaking questions and make sure that the narrator is relaxed before answering questions. Because the entire footage will not be used in the edited version, this small talk helps in improving quality of the video. Just before finishing off the video shoot, it is a good idea to stop the shoot for a few minutes and go over the script quickly to make sure that all points are covered.

4) Post-production

In an ideal world, it would be possible to have the final video immediately after the video shoot. However, due to retakes or footage which will not be used in the final version, editing is necessary. The most efficient way of editing could start by the academic, doing the editing on paper first. After getting the video shoot's transcript, the academic can edit it, using track changes, which is then shared with the post-production team for the actual editing. In addition, the video footage is edited, overlaying with complementary information and visuals according to the script. Having these complementary visuals such as stills and videos (also called B-roll), explaining what the audio says at that specific moment also improve the attention span of viewers. Similar to the production phase, post-production can be undertaken by a professional team or by the academic. There are plenty of free or relatively inexpensive software packages for video editing. The learning curve might be a bit steep for the academic, but once they start using them, he/she can build on the experience easily.

5) Testing and reviewing

The video case can be watched in parts, making use of its problem-solution structure. The video can be paused after each section, allowing for students to come up with solutions to specific business problems, before watching the company's solution. It is therefore strongly recommended to test the newly developed video case with students to make sure that all elements in the video serve the intended purpose. Similarly, getting peer feedback from other educators and from businesses is one of the best methods for improving the video cases before finalizing them. Even then, this is an iterative process, and it can be further improved as video

cases are used for teaching/training purposes in different learning ecosystems. This iterative process will also allow for the creation of useful written information for students and lecturers. Students indicate that they typically like video but also prefer some complimentary written material as information is easier to find on paper than in a video. Teaching notes are obviously also required to help lecturers to use the video case as intended, in various teaching formats.

6) Conclusion

Video cases can be an attractive case format for students. Although it might require some learning on behalf of lecturers to develop and teach using video cases, most academic institutions have developed or are developing departments to assist in their development and uptake. Depending on the options chosen, a video case can be developed at a low cost although a professionally produced and edited video case might cost up to US$5,000. The cost will differ depending on which country it is being produced in, the length of the video and how much post-production editing is required. Generally speaking, the main cost item in video cases is not the production costs but rather the script writer's intellectual property input that goes into it, including data collection, pre-talks with executives, scripting of the video as teaching material, taking part in the video shoot, post-production and editing stages, rewriting the script after the video shoot, revising, writing/producing teaching notes and preparing the metadata for the upload. Therefore, total cost needs to be worked out carefully before the work is initiated. Video cases can be offered free of charge on video platforms such as You Tube, through dedicated websites or both if they are produced with the help of a grant like the Erasmus+ funding received for the *MNC Whispering* video case series. In addition, video cases can also be offered through case study platforms for their global distribution. The Case Centre, for instance, undertakes video case distribution in a similar manner to written cases, which is how the *Brands Whisper'g*® video case study collection is currently being distributed.

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[ii] Further information for either projects can be found here https://www.brandswhispering.com/, https://www.mncwhispering.com/