Case Studies are powerful

in B2B marketing and sales



...but not <u>all</u> case studies are the same

How do yours measure up?

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Research shows *marketers* believe case studies are effective in business development

LinkedIn in 2013[1] (and previously in 2012) identified that over 80% of B2B marketers thought that case studies and customer testimonials were the most effective content marketing tools

CMI[2] and *Marketing Profs* found that 73% of marketers use case studies and 65% feel they are effective

1. http://www.slideshare.net/hschulze/b2b-content-marketing-trends-2013
2. http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/B2B_Research_2014_CMI.pdf

Research shows *buyers* find case studies very influential in their purchase decisions

Eccolo Media[3] researched 500 technology buyers in 2013 and asked buyers to rate the top content type; around half rated case studies or whitepapers as very or extremely influential

Demand Gen's[4] 2012 and 2013 surveys found that buyers rated the same top three in both years - case studies, webinars and white papers; all of these were 'relied on' in decision making by more than 70% of buyers.

3. http://eccolomedia.digarati.com/
4. http://www.demandgenreport.com/industry-topics/content-strategies/2087-2013-b2b-content-survey-trust-is-a-make-or-break-issue-for-todays-buyers.html#.UxCE6_I_t8E

Value comes from 4 key elements, buyers say

1. **Focus on value** – descriptive content is useful to set the scene, but buyers want to understand what the bottom line is

2. **In depth content is highly valued** – buyers want to understand how value is delivered, high-level testimonials like "*the team at Supercorp Solutions were great*" are not helpful and can even be counter-productive

3. **Trust is important** – sales messages destroy trust, many buyers are disappointed by lack of independence and unbiased information

4. **Make content more readable** – each sector is different, they have their own language and ways of thinking; present the information clearly and in a format that fits the audience

We did more research...

We surveyed* ***120 B2B technology buyers,*** from a wide range of UK businesses, with questions focused on the topics below:



- Are all case studies equally valuable?
- Are the case studies that they see persuasive?
- Where in the decision making process do they want to see case study type materials?
- What do they want to see in a case study?

*Metro Research study conducted January 2014

Case study content comes in all shapes and sizes...

Case study types	Description
1. Customer testimonial	These are general quotes from customers, often seen on websites and scattered throughout marketing and sales material
2. Descriptive	A few paragraphs of description about the company and the products used.
3. Benefits based	A 'one/two page' case study that includes some specific feedback on how the subject has benefitted
4. Return on investment	A 2 to 5 page in depth case study, produced by an independent agency, where: The context is clearly explained. Pros and cons of the product are discussed. A financial return on investment is included

Case study content comes in all shapes and sizes...

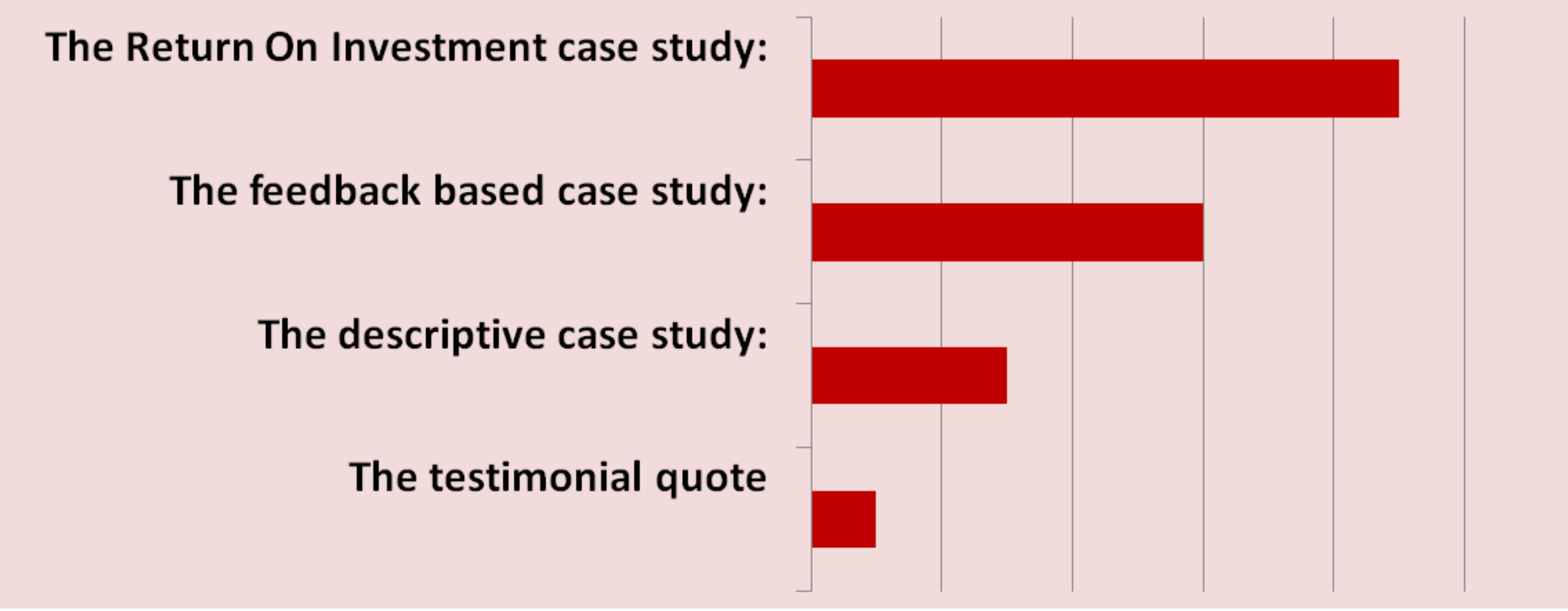
Our respondents' views:

Case study types	Pros	Cons
1. Customer testimonial	Quick to read	Generally, of little value in decision making Revealing, but not always how intended *"you can see when they've really struggled to get any positive comments"*
2. Descriptive	Shows that products are being used and by whom	Limited value in decision making as benefits rarely explained clearly. Case study only truly works if it is 'an exact fit' for the buyer's business
3. Benefits based	Helpful in decision making, as demonstrates what the benefits are and how they were achieved Important that the benefits are assessed in some way, rather than *'just using quotations'*	May lack depth so reader can see applicability to their business Rarely include any measurement of return on investment Sometimes too positive to be believable
4. Return on investment	Powerful in making the full case for a product Independent so trustworthy Includes financial ROI so extremely clear on benefits	Rarely available

90% **of B2B technology buyers say that a Return On Investment Case Study would be 'a powerful persuader'** in helping them make a purchase decision*

*Our 2014 survey of 120 B2B technology buyers

Q How influential would this type of case study be in buying decisions?



Base 120; Average scores on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is not at all and 5 is extremely

Effectiveness depends on the content

90% said that the **ROI case study *would* be 'a powerful persuader'**

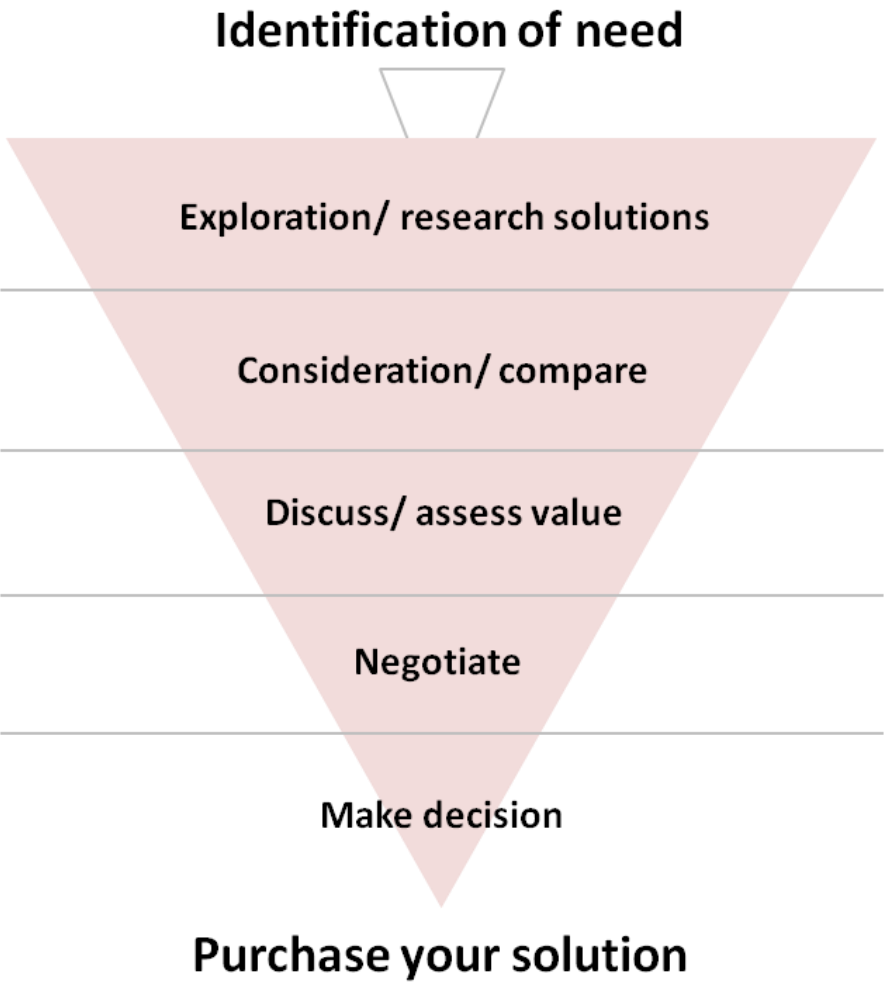
51% said that the **benefits-based case study *could* be 'persuasive'**

72% said that descriptive case studies were **of some value in understanding the use of the product** but lacked proof of value and suitability to their business

84% said that testimonial quotes were **little value, at any stage**. Many were cynical about how these were generated or if they were even genuine

Base 120

Q Where in the decision process do case studies help buyers?



1. The customer quote or testimonial:
2. The descriptive case study:
3. The benefits based case study:
4. The return on investment case study:

Buyers felt the *ROI case study* is valuable throughout the purchase process

Base 120

Q What do buyers want to see in a case study?

Top content is:



- *How effective the solution is* in meeting the customer's objectives
- *What the financial benefits are* of using the solution
- *Details of the context*: what the customer does, how big/how many users, how they use the solution and for how long, have they used any competitor solutions. *With these details they can see how relevant the case study is to them.*
- *Independent,* trustworthy assessment
- *Clarity*, focused on the core content, well-written

Base 120


Q
How do your case studies measure up?

8 point checklist for your case studies

"Your marketing and sales case studies..."	Check as applies
Are in depth	
Include explanation of usage context	
Are clear and easy to read	
Are formatted specifically for the customers in your sector	
Are produced or validated by an independent agency	
Include objective assessment of benefits	
Include real data from customers	
Focus on value: include real measurement of return on investment in financial terms	

Return On Investment Case Studies

Rationale

A business case study that focuses on ROI is a powerful tool to drive sales

If you believe in your products, show your prospects the bottom line benefits

It's hard to beat business benefit as a reason to buy

How it works

Prospects learn that buying your products will provide a return that can be measured on the bottom line in terms of cost savings, customer satisfaction or increased profit.

Prospect decision makers will be persuaded by strong ROI arguments in favour of your solutions and in comparison the competitor will have little to offer.

In a choice between demonstrated benefits and uncertainty, 99% will choose certainty offered by your solutions.

The case study is produced and validated as accurate by a reputable independent agency using real data collected from your customers

EVERY business produces data that can be linked to performance and used to measure benefits

Ask us to help you develop validated

Return On Investment Case Studies

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