

School of Government

MMPM 505
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
(15 Points)

Trimester One / 2010

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details

Course Coordinator: **Dr Richard Norman**
Room RH 1011, Level 10, Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus
Telephone: (04) 463 5455
Fax: (04) 463 5084
Email: richard.norman@vuw.ac.nz

Masters Administrator: **Darren Morgan**
Room RH 821, Level 8, Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus
Telephone: (04) 463 5458
Fax: (04) 463 5454
Email: darren.morgan@vuw.ac.nz

Office Hours: 8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday

Trimester Dates

Trimester Dates: Monday 1 March – Wednesday 30 June 2010
Teaching Period: Wednesday 24 February – Wednesday 2 June 2010

Class Times and Room Numbers

Module One:	Wednesday 24 February 2010	8.30am – 6.00pm
Module Two:	Wednesday 14 April 2010	8.30am – 6.00pm
Module Three:	Wednesday 9 June 2010	8.30am – 6.00pm

Locations: Classes will be held on the Pipitea Campus of Victoria University in Wellington and you will be advised of your classroom one week prior to each module by email.

Withdrawal Dates

Notice of withdrawal must be in writing / emailed to the Masters Administrator. Ceasing to attend or verbally advising a member of staff will NOT be accepted as a notice of withdrawal.

Students giving notice of withdrawal from this course after **Tuesday 9 March 2010** will NOT receive a refund of fees.

Associate Dean (Students)'s approval required for withdrawal from this course after **Friday 14 May 2010**.

See more information available via:

- **Withdrawal dates: Late withdrawals with Associate Dean (Students) permission (See Section 8: Withdrawals – from the Personal Courses of Study Statute)**
<http://policy.vuw.ac.nz/Amphora!~~policy.vuw.ac.nz~POLICY~000000001743.pdf>
- **Withdrawal dates: Refunds:**
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx

Course Content

Our time together consists of three very full days, a total of 22.5 teaching hours. Each module has preparatory work designed to help foster interaction, and help a diverse group of public sector managers debate issues they face, rather than spend time listening to lecture-based knowledge. Class time needs to be fun - fast paced, interactive and varied, and motivating to learn more and put ideas into practice. In line with this, the course has a focus on one of the most effective 'real life' learning techniques for managers, the teaching case study. During this course you will work with recent New Zealand cases, and learn how to develop and write a case relevant to your work.

One of the lessons of human resource management research is that tasks that get rewarded and noticed are more likely to be carried out than those that don't. In keeping with this principle, there is a small reward at each session for pre-reading, which also ensures we can use class time most effectively.

Near the beginning of each session, I will run a 20-minute closed book quiz, worth five marks per time and consisting each time of 15 questions which seek short answers focused on the main themes in the text and the readings. Marking of the quiz will help shape discussion for the day, identifying areas that are well known and subjects which create difficulty. Questions will be focused on the core concepts contained in Macky (2008), as listed at the end of the course outline.

You will need to attend class to take this test. In the interests of fairness to the whole class; individual sittings following the class will not be available. Should absence because of illness be an issue regarding a pass/fail grade, there will be an opportunity to consider an aegrotat grade based on marks for other tests and assignments.

BEFORE MODULE ONE

Human Resource Management dilemmas and potential cases, as identified in Assignment One, due for handing in on **Thursday 18 February 2010 by 4.00pm** so these can be assessed and incorporated into module one.

MODULE ONE

An overview of Human Resource Management

- Evolution of the term from 'personnel'
- Different types of HRM
- Contributors to HRM theory – scientific, humanistic, excellence schools.

Strategic Human Resource Management

- Private sector models of strategy and their applicability to the public sector
- The stakeholder approach (Beer et al)
- Contingency approaches
- Competitive advantage and 'resource based' theory (Pfeffer and others)

Discussion of issues arising from the preparatory cases / research analysis about HRM topics.

Readings

- Macky and Johnson, Chapters 1 – 3
- Hendry, Storey, Legge, Fisher et al, Beer et al, Gratton, Pfeffer, Ulrich
- Case study about George Hickton at NZ Employment Service. What strategic human resources strategies were adopted in this turnaround of the Employment Service?
- Case study about The Corrections Chief and the Minister. What strategic human resource management issues does the Department of Corrections have to tackle?

MODULE TWO

Brief presentations of dilemmas and research issues identified in Assignment Two.

As far as possible, presentations will be clustered into these HRM topics which will be the focus for the module:

- Employment relations
- Job Analysis
- Human Resource Planning
- Recruitment
- Selection.

Readings

- Macky and Johnson, Chapters 4 – 8
- Norman (2007) Managing Outcomes while accounting for outputs.
- Case study: From Transactions to Outcomes: Ministry of Social Development. What work design changes were involved in shifting the Ministry's focus?

MODULE THREE

Brief presentations of a selection of reports based on Assignment Three will be sought during this module.

Topics from the textbook to be specifically covered are:

- Performance management and appraisal
- Training and development
- Rewards and remuneration

Readings

- Macky and Johnson, Chapters 9 – 13
- Behn (2003)
- Case study: Cave Creek. Read Part A as background and focus particularly on Part B. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the organisational design and performance management system adopted?

More detail about the most critical sections of Macky and Johnson, and key concepts which you should have mastered by the end of the course, are provided in Appendix One.

Course Learning Objectives

This paper provides an overview of how the elements of Human Resource Management (HRM) relate to and affect organisational strategies. The focus will be on the strategic contribution of HRM rather than the development of operational skills. The paper will explore the policies and practices which need to be considered if the frequently-used phrase “people are our greatest asset” is to ring true for members of an organisation.

Objectives are:

- To apply strategic HRM models to dilemmas likely to be experienced by public sector managers, drawing in particular on experiences of class participants.
- To identify potential strengths and weaknesses of different strategies in the areas of employee influence, recruitment and selection, performance management, rewards and the design of work.
- To apply insights from theory and research to case examples of public sector practice and to your own organisation.

Course Delivery

This course is delivered in a modular format, which includes a minimum of 24 hours contact. The 24 hours are broken up into three separate days of eight hours each (a ‘module’). There are three modules in the course with approximately five to six weeks between each module. **Attendance is required at all three modular teaching days (8.30am – 6.00pm).**

Expected Workload

The learning objectives set for each course are demanding and, to achieve them, candidates must make a significant commitment in time and effort to reading, studying, thinking, and completion of assessment items outside of contact time. Courses vary in design but all require preparation and learning before the first module. Regular learning is necessary between modules (students who leave everything to the last moment rarely achieve at a high level). Expressed in input terms, the time commitment required usually translates to 65-95 hours (excluding class contact time) per course.

Readings

The course textbook is *Managing Human Resource. Contemporary perspectives in New Zealand*, edited by Keith Macky, McGraw Hill, 2008.

Also provided is a book of readings that focuses particularly on links between organisational and human resources strategies and provides ideas about other books and articles you might consult. For the most recent material, search the University Library's book collection under the subject term of 'personnel management'.

For those wanting to go more in-depth, a book authored by the course coordinator focuses on performance management issues in the New Zealand public sector – *Obedient Servants? Management Freedoms and Accountabilities in the New Zealand Public Sector* by Richard Norman, Victoria University Press, 2003. This can be obtained through Victoria Books, Capital Books, Featherston Street, Wellington and Bennetts Books, Lambton Quay, Wellington, but the author can also provide copies at a wholesale rate of \$30.00.

Assessment Requirements

The purpose of assessment is three-fold: to ensure that you have met the standard of work required by the course; to give you feedback on your performance to assist you with your future study; and to provide the teaching staff with feedback on the progress of the class. Meeting assignment deadlines is particularly important for an interactive course like this. Assignments are sought before each module, to make it possible to give you fast feedback and incorporate learning into discussions.

Assignments

Assessment for this course aims to give you a framework to think critically and creatively about a significant Human Resource Management problem, challenge or opportunity. You can choose to focus on your current work or a new area of interest, or if studying full-time, focus on past work experience, or an organisation you aspire to work for. The best possible topic is one that will engage your interest, and give scope to develop insights and skills for a challenge during the next year or two.

The three stage assignment aims to enable you to analyse a human resources management dilemma in progressively more depth during the period of the course. The end result will be an objective, descriptive case study, and a 'research note' in which you draw on at least twelve readings, to provide yourself with relevant theory and research evidence to help you tackle the dilemma.

Writing a case involves a different discipline from writing an analytical essay, and is a valuable skill for becoming an evidence based and reflective practitioner. The case you choose should be about an issue or set of issues which have no easy, obvious solution as is the case with so much organisational and managerial work. Accurate, objective diagnosis, covering the 'facts of the case' along with viewpoints from parties involved, is the first step towards effective action. Use the case to record the concrete, 'real world' challenge, and the research note to analyse and theorise about how this challenge might best be tackled.

Your course coordinator hopes that some of the cases developed during this course can be revised for publication through the Australia and New Zealand School of Government, so they can be used with subsequent MPM classes. There is a high demand for topical, New Zealand-based cases. If you choose to quote anyone in your case study, please assure your informant/s that work is at this stage solely for class purposes, and if there is the possibility of publication, the work will be checked back with sources for accuracy and fairness.

There are three assignments, each of which has to be completed and handed in **BEFORE** the class meets. It is important that you keep to the word limits for the body of the case or the research note, but it is acceptable to provide supporting evidence in a limited number of appendices. Appendices will not be marked in detail, but used as supporting evidence for the important core material.

Before Module One

Provide an overview of no more than one page (400 words maximum) of a human resource management dilemma (5 marks)

Deadline: **Thursday 18 February 2010, 4.00pm**

Before Module Two

Write about the dilemma described in assignment one in the following sections:

- a) 1,500 word case study, describing the challenges and choices faced by the stakeholders involved in this dilemma (25 marks). Avoid using references to theory - focus on providing the context and facts.
- b) 1,000 words providing an overview of the management theory and research you expect to apply in more depth for the third and final phase of the assignment (15 marks)

Deadline: **Wednesday 7 April 2010, 4.00pm**

Before Module Three

- a) Prepare a revised and final case study of no more than 2,000 words (15 marks)
- b) A revised teaching note of no more than 2,000 words in which you analyse the case narrative and reflect on the options for decisions and/or actions (25 marks)

Deadline: **Wednesday 2 June 2010, 4.00pm**

Another 15 marks will be allocated to the short tests held in class time, five marks per module.

Assignment One (5 marks)

An overview of no more than one page (400 words maximum) of a human resource management dilemma.

Please describe a human resource management dilemma of interest to you as a focus for case development and research. Management tasks frequently require the reconciling of opposing claims for time or resources, and the short description of dilemmas by Charles Hampden Turner, below, will hopefully trigger ideas for you about possible dilemmas. The challenge for this overview is to briefly document an issue which provides a concrete example of Human Resource Management in action and comment on steps you expect to take in researching the dilemma during the course.

Identifying dilemmas

Extracts from 'Charting the Corporate Mind' by Charles Hampden-Turner. Free Press, New York, 1990.

(p6) Dilemma is from Greek meaning "two propositions". These seemingly "opposed" propositions are converging upon us simultaneously. If we give exclusive attention to either one in the pair, the other is likely to impale us.

(p7) While all of us need to reconcile value dilemmas as a part of daily living, those who lead groups or organisations are beset by many dilemmas, stemming from the opposing demands and claims made upon them. Confronting dilemmas is both dangerous and potentially rewarding. ... to resolve these same tensions enables the organisation to create wealth and outperform competitors. If you duck the dilemma you also miss the resolution. There is no cheap grace.

(p17) THE ROCK AND THE WHIRLPOOL

In early Greek mythology those sailors who tried to navigate the straits of Messina were said to encounter a rock and a whirlpool. If you were too intent upon avoiding the rock you could be sucked into the whirlpool. If you skirted the whirlpool by too wide a margin you could strike the rock.

These twin perils had markedly contrasting natures: the first was hard, static, visible, definite, asymmetrical, and an object; the second was liquid, dynamic, hidden, indefinite, symmetrical, and a process. Now anyone with a bias toward regarding either peril as more important puts lives and ship in danger. The notion that only rocks matter because they can be easily seen and touched is as perilous as believing that a feel for the pull of the whirlpool is of paramount importance.

Another book¹, gives example of 'dilemmas of leadership'. "You are supposed to inspire and motivate yet listen, decide yet delegate, and centralize business units that must have locally decentralized responsibilities. You are supposed to be professionally detached yet passionate about the mission of the organization, be a brilliant analyst when not synthesizing others' contributions, and be a model and rewarder of achievement when not eliciting the potential of those who have yet to achieve. You are supposed to develop priorities and strict sequences, although parallel processing is currently all the rage and saves time. You must enunciate a clear strategy but never miss an opportunity even when the strategy has not anticipated it. Finally, you must encourage participation while not forgetting to model decisive leadership."

¹ 21 Leaders for the 21st Century. Fons Tompenaars & Charles Hampden-Turner, McGraw-Hill, 2002, p2.

Public organizations invariably face many dilemmas because of competing views from stakeholders about organizational priorities. Choose a dilemma which will capture your interest and prompt you to research relevant literature. Use the following criteria to organize your page.

	Marks Allocation	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
How clearly stated is the dilemma – the managerial or policy decision, the parties involved, the context?	2					
How much information is provided about the likely availability of sources of information for completion of the case for module two?	2					
Provide a one paragraph project plan for developing the case and exploring the literature. The mark will be based on how well potential difficulties are addressed.	1					

Assignment Two (35 marks)

a) Draft case study (25 marks). Ideas to help with case writing are in Appendix 2.

<i>Criteria below are drawn from Leenders et al, (a course reading)</i>	Marks Allocation	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
How well does the opening paragraph capture the essence of the dilemma in this case?	5					
How well is organisation background presented?	5					
How well is the specific problem or decision described, so that it can be seen to link to one or more learning objectives described in the draft teaching note?	5					
How well does the case communicate? How effectively does it convey to an outsider the essence of the issues in the organisation?	5					
Written communication - structure and expression and technical features such as accurate referencing, spelling, punctuation, grammar.	5					

b) Draft research note (15 marks)

	Marks Allocation	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
How well does the research note identify areas in which theory and research evidence might help tackle the dilemma?	5					
How well does this outline identify and briefly summarise the potential relevance of up to 6 'classic' references (drawn from references in the text book and the course reference list).	5					
How well does this outline demonstrate initial use of the university database, particularly ProQuest and Emerald, to identify up to 6 articles which are potentially relevant to the case topic?	5					

Assignment Three (40 marks)

a) Revised and completed case study (15 marks) (up to 1500 words, excluding appendices)

	Marks Allocation	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Please provide a short covering note explaining how you have modified the case in response to feedback at Module Two	2					
How strongly does the opening paragraph establish the purpose of the case and draw the reader into the issue?	3					
How well does the case perform as an objective diagnosis of the management dilemma, providing a briefing which could potentially be used by all involved as a 'fair and accurate account' of the issues involved?	5					
How well is the context described, so that readers can place themselves in the shoes of the person or management group facing the dilemma?	5					

b) Completed research note (25 marks) (Up to 2,000 words, excluding appendices)

	Marks Allocation	Excel- lent	Very Good	Good	Satisfact- ory	Unsatis- factory
In an executive summary of up to one page, state the research goal, and conclusions about how the literature analysed is relevant to the case dilemma.	5					
How well does the literature search identify 'classic' references relevant to the case?	5					
How well does the literature search demonstrate use of library databases to obtain recent relevant literature?	5					
How strongly does this research review relate to the concrete issues contained in the case? Is this the work of an effective reflective practitioner?	5					
Written communication - structure and expression and technical features such as accurate referencing, spelling, punctuation, grammar.	5					

Other assessment

Quick quizzes at each module. Five marks per module – 15 % total

Definition of ratings

Rating	Description
Excellent	The quality is performed to a very high level of proficiency, i.e. it is at a standard that makes it exceptional for the level of the class concerned.
Very Good	The quality is performed to a high standard. Students have reached a level which clearly exceeds "competency."
Good/competent	The quality is clearly demonstrated without being exceptional in any way. Students can be thought of as competent in respect of this quality.
Satisfactory	The quality is demonstrated to a minimally acceptable level. There may be flaws but these are not serious enough to "fail" the student on this quality.
Unsatisfactory	The quality is absent or performed to a very low level, or the performance is seriously flawed in this respect.

Please submit ALL assignments IN HARD COPY to:

Post Experience Programmes,
School of Government,
Victoria University of Wellington,
Level 8 Reception,
Rutherford House,
23 Lambton Quay,
P.O. Box 600,
Wellington.

Assignments that are submitted in person should be placed in the secure box at School of Government reception (Level 8, Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus) during office hours of 8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday. The assignment box is cleared daily, and assignments will be date stamped.

***Note:** Your assessed work may also be used for quality assurance purposes, such as to assess the level of achievement of learning objectives as required for accreditation and audit purposes. The findings may be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of FCA programmes. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the course.*

Students should keep a copy of all submitted work.

Class Attendance

The School expects you to attend all three modules for the course. If, before enrolment for a course, you are aware that you will not be able to attend a module, you must notify the Director of Master's Programmes when you enrol explaining why you will not be able to attend. The Director of Master's Programmes will consult with the relevant course coordinator. In such circumstances, you may be declined entry into a course.

If you become aware after a course starts that you will be unable to attend a module or a significant part of a module (i.e. more than two hours in any given day), you must advise the course coordinator before the module explaining why you will be unable to attend. The course coordinator may excuse you from attendance and may also require you to complete compensatory work relating to the course content covered during your absence.

Deadlines and Failure to Meet Due Dates

The ability to plan for and meet deadlines is a core competency of both advanced study and public management. Failure to meet deadlines disrupts course planning and is unfair on students who do submit their work on time. It is expected therefore that you will complete and hand in assignments by the due date. Marks will be deducted at the rate of five per cent for every day by which the assignment is late and no assignments will be accepted after five working days beyond the date they

are due. For example, if you get 65% for an assignment, but you handed it in on Monday when it was due the previous Friday, you will get a mark of 50%.

If ill-health, family bereavement or other personal circumstances beyond your control prevent you from meeting the deadline for submitting a piece of written work or from attending class to make a presentation, you can apply for and may be granted an extension to the due date. You should let your course coordinator know as soon as possible in advance of the deadline (if circumstances permit) if you are seeking an extension. Where an extension is sought, evidence, by way of a medical certificate or similar, may be required by the course coordinator.

Mandatory Course Requirements

Submit or participate in all pieces of assessment required for this course.

Communication of Additional Information

Additional information will be conveyed by email or via Blackboard.

Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and the Use of Turnitin

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not.

'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must still acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- material from books, journals or any other printed source
- the work of other students or staff
- information from the Internet
- software programs and other electronic material
- designs and ideas
- the organisation or structuring of any such material.

Acknowledgement is required for all material in any work submitted for assessment unless it is a 'fact' that is well-known in the context (such as "Wellington is the capital of New Zealand") or your own ideas in your own words. Everything else that derives from one of the sources above and ends up in your work – whether it is directly quoted, paraphrased, or put into a table or figure, needs to be acknowledged with a reference that is sufficient for your reader to locate the original source.

Plagiarism undermines academic integrity simply because it is a form of lying, stealing and mistreating others. Plagiarism involves stealing other people's intellectual property and lying about whose work it is. This is why plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria.

If you are found guilty of plagiarism, you may be penalised under the Statute on Student Conduct. You should be aware of your obligations under the Statute, which can be downloaded from the policy website (www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/students.aspx). You could fail your course or even be suspended from the University.

Plagiarism is easy to detect. The University has systems in place to identify it.

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine www.turnitin.com. Turnitin is an on-line plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted materials on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions will not be made available to any other party.

There is guidance available to students on how to avoid plagiarism by way of sound study skills and the proper and consistent use of a recognised referencing system. This guidance may be found at the following website: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx.

If in doubt, seek the advice of your course coordinator.

Plagiarism is simply not worth the risk.

Other Information

For the following important information, follow the links provided:

- **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx
- **General University Policies and Statutes**
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy
- **AVC (Academic) Website: information including Conduct, Academic Grievances, Students with Impairments, Student Support**
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx
- **Faculty of Commerce and Administration Offices**
www.victoria.ac.nz/fca/studenthelp/
- **Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme**
www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/mentoring/

Appendix one: Key concepts and terms from Macky (2008), for the class tests

Ch 1. Introduction

Competitive advantage
Decentralisation
Devolution
Employment relations
Fit
Human capital
Outsourcing
Personnel
Pluralism / Unitarist
Retention management

Ch 2. Strategic Human Resource Management

Best fit or contingency
Best practice or universalist
Black box problem
Core competencies
External or vertical fit
Harvard framework
Internal or horizontal fit
Path dependence
Psychological contract
Resource based view of the firm
Social legitimacy

Ch 3. The international context of Human Resource Management

Cultural intelligence
Culture shock
Globalisation
Host country nationals
Polycentric
Regiocentric
Third country nationals

Ch 4. Managing Employee Diversity

Affirmative action
Discrimination
Equal employment opportunities
- liberal, radical and reactionary perspectives

Quotas
Social responsibility
Work-life balance

Ch 5. Employment relations

Collective bargaining
Conflict frame of reference
Employment Court
Employment Relations Act
Employment Relations Authority
Fixed term employment
Good faith
Individual contracts
Mediation
Personal grievance
Probationary agreements
Unions

Ch 6. Human Resource Planning and Job Analysis

Competencies
Dual labour market
Internal labour market
Job description
Overstaffing
Person specification
Succession planning
Work intensification

Ch 7. Employee Recruitment

Realistic job preview
Recruitment channel
Recruitment message
Selection ratio
Threshold competencies

Ch 8. Employment Selection

Behavioural interview
The 'Big Five'
Construct validity

Criterion-related validity
Inter-rater reliability
Motivation
Person-organisation-fit
Predictive validity
Reliability
Structured interview

Ch 9. Performance Management

Appraisal errors – strictness, leniency, central tendency, halo
Critical success factors
Goal setting
Management by objectives
Multi-source appraisal
Performance equation
Performance feedback
Procedural fairness
Productivity ratios

Ch 10. Human Resource Development

ADDIE
Bloom's taxonomy of learning
Boundaryless careers
Coaching
Contingent work force
E-learning
Groups and teams
Kirkpatrick's four levels
Learning organisations
Leadership development
Mentoring
National context of HRD
Needs assessment
On-the-job training
Organisational culture
Socialisation

Ch 11. Remuneration

Base pay
Benefits
Benchmark jobs
Broadbanding
Discretionary effort
Equity theory
Extrinsic rewards
Incentive / variable pay
Profit sharing
Job evaluation
Competency based pay
Team based incentives

Ch 12. Healthy and safe workplaces

Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)
Epidemiology
Ergonomics
Occupational disease
Occupational overuse syndrome (OOS)
Psychosocial environments

Ch 13. Evaluating HRM

Effectiveness
Efficiency
Formative evaluation
Outcome evaluation
Process evaluation
Summative evaluation
Transaction costs

Appendix two: Case writing format

An extract from Leenders et al in the course reading provides more detailed information, but this summary, prepared by Janet Tyson, editor for the Australia and New Zealand School of Government Case Programme, is a helpful checklist.

THE CASE PLANNING PYRAMID

Opening paragraph (OP)

- Situation summary
 - Engage the reader
 - Key decision-maker with title, place, date – starting point
 - Dilemma or question – trigger point
-

Background – macro

- Information for readers who do not know this organisation
 - Information about organisation
- Relativities: size, budget, staffing; usual/unusual; new/routine
 - Political and cultural aspects to be considered
- The aim is to provide sufficient information to enable discussion and analysis – and to dispense with material not relevant for this purpose.

Background – more specific

- History of incident / dilemma
 - Key people with some context e.g. length of experience; relationships with others
 - Key events: e.g. new legislation, natural disaster, official report
-

Dilemma or decision to be made

- Circumstances
- Options, reasons for choice
- Data for analysis i.e. to amplify discussion over teaching points
- Colour material e.g. newspaper clippings or video coverage for presentation
 - Sequence of events

Note that in this format, no information should be included that is not known or available to the protagonists. If something happened later than the date of the case, it should go into an epilogue.

- Immediate actions/decisions
-

Conclusion: return to decision point

- This is virtually a rework of the opening paragraph, brings case story full circle and can conclude with the same question.