

Enlist Your Customers to Grow Your Case Study Library

When it comes to producing case studies, two of the biggest challenges are identifying promising stories and getting customers to participate. Yet, according to a [MarketingSherpa survey](#) of nearly 1,000 B2B marketers, encouraging customers to submit testimonials and case studies ranked #2 of the most effective tactics for developing marketing content.

That said, there are good – and bad – ways to solicit customer stories. SAS, a technology company selling to other businesses, does a fantastic job of killing two birds with one stone by promoting and “selling” its customer reference program online.

Invite Participation

On its [main customer success page](#), SAS invites customers to “share their success” (lower right in the screen shot below). Once customers click on the link, they’re taken to an overview of the customer reference program. By soliciting customer participation in this way, SAS alleviates its sales organization of needing to continually identify case study candidates.

By focusing case studies on your customers’ successes, you give customers incentive to participate

The screenshot displays the SAS Customer Success page. At the top, there are two featured case studies:

- Banking:** A photo of Bernd Schmitt, Director of Sales, with the headline "Saving millions of dollars – on-demand". The text below states: "Daichi Sankyo achieves 319 percent ROI using SAS® Drug Development to manage clinical trials data, according to a Nucleus Research case study. [More...](#)"
- Retail:** A photo of Su HJ, Director, Customer Relationship Manager, with the headline "A hole in one". The text below states: "Golfsmith International atop SMB leaderboard with scores like this: response rates up by 60 percent, report preparation 70 percent faster and data merging costs down by 50 percent. [More...](#)"

Below these are search filters for "INDUSTRY", "SOLUTION", and "TECHNOLOGY". The main content area is divided into several industry categories, each with a list of customer names and a "More..." link:

- Banking:** Bank Leumi, Danske Bank, Northwest Federal Credit Union
- Capital Markets:** EDAF, GE Money, Hua Nan Financial Holding Company
- Communications:** Going social the Organic way, Telefonica O2, Telcel
- Education:** High Point Central High School, Plano Independent School District, Western Kentucky University
- Government:** Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, Land Registry, US Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Health Care:** Express Script®, Health Data Essentials, Lillstreet Hospital
- Insurance:** Charis, Eurovida, OneBeacon
- Life Sciences:** AstraZeneca, Celion, Livzon Pharmaceutical Group
- Manufacturing:** Amway China, Finmeccanica, Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corporation (SMIC)
- Retail:** Casella Sport, GS Home Shopping, SGM Distribution
- Services:** CU Internet, CNV, TrueCar
- Utilities:** ConocoPhillips Norway, E.ON, EDF Energy

On the right side, there is a section titled "A WORLD OF SUCCESS" with the following text:

SAS customers represent many of the most innovative and successful organizations in the world.

- 93 of the top 100 companies on the 2010 Fortune Global 500 List.
- More than 50,000 business, government and university sites rely on SAS.
- Customers in 127 different countries use SAS.

At the bottom right, there is a red call-to-action button that says: "Share your SAS Success. Share your SAS Success story and be recognized as a technology leader in your field."

Focus on the Customer

At a high level, SAS focuses on [what’s in it for the customer](#) – for example, by “spotlighting your organization...and you” – and outlines

the benefits of participating. In doing so, it offers the customer an incentive to participate, instead of making the customer feel as if SAS is the only one that will see value.

Execute a plan to help your customers get the recognition they deserve

Plan to Spread the Word

Next SAS spells out all the opportunities for getting the customer visibility, including media coverage, speaking engagements, and even applying for industry awards. I particularly like this statement: “By telling your story – the way you want it told – you give SAS the power to help you build recognition for yourself and your organization.” Equally impressive, it creates a [communications plan](#) detailing how it will get the word out.

Set Expectations

To address common concerns about the level of time and effort required on the customer’s end, SAS spells out the process for both [written case studies](#) and [video testimonials](#). It covers everything from how long the interview will last and what types of questions to expect, to what to wear for a video shoot and what happens after the interview. It also points customers to published case studies and videos so they can get a firsthand feel for them.

Change the Dynamics

The information that SAS shares on its site helps put customers at ease. But equally important, by detailing this on its website and inviting customers to submit their successes, SAS changes the dynamics by treating the process as a two-way street. And let’s face it, when customers voluntarily raise their hand to participate in a case study, you’ve likely got a great story on your hands.

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