

Letter from the Editor

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Responding to reviewers

You have submitted your Case and Instructor's Manual (IM) to *TCJ*, and finally, the long-awaited e-mail arrives with the Editor's decision based on the reviews received. You nervously click to open the e-mail and read the first paragraph. Gosh, darn it! You did not get glowing praise and an immediate "Accept" decision! Your brilliant work received the dreaded "major revision" e-mail. The Editor has asked you to substantially revise your case and IM in light of the boneheaded reviewers' comments. Although you remind yourself that a request for a revision is better than an outright rejection, your anger increases as you read the misguided and inappropriate comments (at least in your mind) of the two reviewers. How could they have missed the point of your case? What were they thinking when they criticized the dazzlingly well-crafted opening hook of the case? How could the reviewers not appreciate the clever way you introduced "red herrings" in the case to make the analysis more challenging for students? How dare the reviewers dispute the teaching strategy you so carefully outlined in the IM? What now?

The next steps you take will determine the likelihood that your case will ever be accepted for publication in *TCJ*. You have several choices – first, you could hit REPLY and send a scathing e-mail back to the Editor challenging her intellectual ability to judge your work (not recommended and probably not very effective [...] see "burning your bridges"); second, you could "Unsubmit" your case and send it to another journal (again not recommended and most likely not effective); or third, you could decide to tackle the revision and resubmit your case (recommended).

Your next step is critical, but you are not sure you have the skills to successfully manage the revision and resubmission process. Everything you have read about the publication process emphasized the steps to take in readying an article for submission – not the revision process. How can you successfully manage the revision process to increase the probability that your case gets an "Accept" decision in the next round of reviews? It is the goal of this letter to provide guidance to authors at this precarious stage.

What not to do

By now, you have almost certainly realized that responding to a request to revise and resubmit in anger or defensively is not a successful strategy. Although it is reasonable to be angry, frustrated or annoyed by the demands the reviewers have made, it is not appropriate to give voice to your anger, frustration or annoyance in your response. Reviewers are unpaid volunteers who have spent between four to eight hours reading your case and writing their review. Their goal is to assist the Editor in determining which cases should be published and to point out areas that are satisfactory or problematic. As volunteers, reviewers deserve your respect and appreciation. The best response an author can give to reviews is to "view the comments as a gift from a well-meaning colleague who had donated time and effort to the paper and who has not benefited personally from that donation" (Kreiman, 2016). It is usually best to put the review comments aside for a few days until you are emotionally ready to accept the reviewers' "gifts."

It is also wise to remember that the case writing community and the cadre of reviewers are very small and close-knit. Before you vent about the lack of intellectual capacity of the reviewers for your case at a case writing conference, you might do well to remember that the reviewer might actually be sitting at your table (I have personally experienced this). The reviewer will not know that you are the author (due to blind reviews) but will recognize the subject of your case and his/her own review comments. Your inadvisable criticisms will not be appreciated and may impede your chances for future acceptance.

Another ill-advised response to a request for revision is to do too little to revise the case and IM. At *TCJ* and many other case journals, editors have two distinct types of revision decisions that can be selected – major revision or minor revision. A decision of major revision is most frequently



generated in response to the first submission of a case. The reviewers and the Editor's reading of the case and IM may suggest that a significant rewrite, restructuring or refocusing of the case and IM will be necessary to bring it to the quality level for publication in *TCJ*. A decision of minor revision typically indicates that grammatical errors, spelling errors or other small and easily fixed errors remain in the case and the IM. Usually, specific feedback is provided that would enable the authors to make the necessary corrections in a minor revision in very little time. Sometimes, the Editor will indicate that these corrections are so small that no subsequent round of reviews will be necessary. The Editor verifies that the requested revisions have been made and issues an "Accept" decision.

In responding to a request for revision, it is crucial to understand what is being asked of you. Are you being asked for a minor revision? If so, it would be reasonable for the Editor to expect that a revised manuscript could be submitted within the next week or two. If you have been asked for a major revision, expect that it will take significantly more time to complete. The Editor will not be happy if you resubmit your work within hours of receiving the request for a major revision and will most likely return your work unreviewed. Revisions that only correct grammatical errors or verb tenses but ignore substantive issues identified by the reviewers are disrespectful to the reviewers and a waste of their valuable time. While you are not required to incorporate all of the reviewers' comments in your case and IM, you may not simply pass over them. Disregarded reviewer comments are seldom forgotten by the reviewers and can generate a significantly more negative recommendation on your revised case. If you choose not to take into account reviewer criticism, you are obligated to provide an explanation of why you did not do so.

Now that we have covered some of the things not to do when responding to a request for revision let us discuss the ways that authors can thoughtfully and strategically respond. Some editors suggest that the response to a request for revision requires a "nuanced reaction" that many authors have not successfully developed (Perlmutter, 2008; Hardré, 2013). The goal of the next section is to provide guidance that will help the authors increase the probability of eventual acceptance.

What to do

TCJ authors are given the following directions for submitting a revision:

You will be unable to make your revisions on the originally submitted version of the manuscript. Instead, revise your manuscript using a word processing program and save it on your computer. Please also highlight the changes to your manuscript within the document by using the track changes mode in MS Word or by using bold or colored text. Once the revised manuscript is prepared, you can upload it and submit it through your Author Centre. When submitting your revised manuscript, you will be able to respond to the comments made by the reviewer(s) in the space provided. You can use this space to document any changes you make to the original manuscript. In order to expedite the processing of the revised manuscript, please be as specific as possible in your response to the reviewer(s). (Morris, 2019)

This information contains good advice regarding your response to the request for revision. First, authors are asked to highlight the changes that are made either by using the "track changes mode" or by using bolded or colored fonts. This helps the reviewer identify the changes that have been made and can significantly shorten the time needed for subsequent reviews. If the changes are substantial, the track changes view can be overwhelming, but the reviewer can easily change to an unmarked view with one click. Second, authors are prompted to "respond to the comments made by the reviewer(s) in the space provided." Many authors overlook this important directive and choose to let the revisions they have made (or not made) stand on their own. There are better ways to manage this aspect of the revision. Several journals have published "rules" or guidelines for writing a response to reviewers. These will be described and adapted for case writing in the following section.

Five simple rules for writing a response to *TCJ* reviewers

Rule 1: be polite and respectful of all reviewers (Noble, 2017)

This has been covered above but bears repeating in this list. Authors should keep in mind that if the reviewer failed to understand something, the fault lies on you for not making the case or IM clear enough. If the reviewer lacks the expertise to review in an area, remember that most students will also lack this same expertise. It is your job to make the work clear and accessible to all readers. It is also a good idea to thank the Editor and the reviewers for their work.

Rule 2: accept the blame

Related to Rule 1, this rule asks you to apologize to the reviewers if your case or IM is unclear – even if the reviewer has misunderstood or simply missed something. Even if it seems unnecessary to make the revision, show the reviewer you have listened to their comments by making the changes.

Rule 3: make all the easy changes first (Perlmutter, 2008)

Carefully go through the case and IM and make all the corrections to grammar and verb tense first. If your reviewers did not give you line-by-line directions but instead wrote “Past Tense Please Throughout,” you will have to carefully go through your work word by word to make the corrections. Using the “Find” and “Replace” function in your word processor can help make sure you have not missed anything. For other types of grammatical fixes, consider using software such as Grammarly to make the changes. Reviewers become increasingly frustrated with authors who do not carefully attend to these changes. Recently, a reviewer declined to do subsequent reviews because the work still suffered from grammatical errors in the fourth round of revisions. This may be a massive setback for the authors as a new reviewer may need to be brought in. Fresh eyes may notice different mistakes.

Rule 4: respond to every point raised by the reviewers

One approach to responding to reviewers is to create a table with the comments of each of the reviewers in the first column, the page and line number of the change in the second column, what you did in response in the third column and any comments you would like to make in the fourth column. Authors then sequentially respond to each of the reviewers' comments, providing a clear indication of what changes have been made and where the reviewer can find the change. Because it is considered unacceptable to simply ignore a problematic point, the final column permits the author to provide a rationale for not making the change. Reviewers will sometimes ask authors to make up a perfect quote to advance the case narrative (the authors should not make this change as *TCJ* does not publish fictionalized cases) or to include financial statements (which may not be available to the authors). This last column of the response allows the authors to respectfully explain why they are not making the changes in a way that permits reviewers to move forward. It lets the reviewer know that you have taken their feedback seriously, but you are unable to make the change for good reasons.

Rule 5: throw away your first response to the reviewers (Noble, 2017)

Carefully read over your response to the reviewers. Have you kept the snarkiness out of your response? Have you remembered not to pit one reviewer against the other? Have you mentioned some points from each reviewer that improved your work (there is always at least one even for the most clueless reviewer)? If you have not done these things, open a new document in your word processor, and start over. Cut and paste the “good” parts of your first attempt to the second. Reread it one more time to make sure you have set the right tone before uploading it to Scholar One.

These five steps should significantly improve your response to the reviewers. While a better crafted response letter may not result in acceptance, it may be instrumental in reducing the number of rounds of review. It may also keep the original reviewers interested in working with you, thus negating a need for a new reviewer. A carefully crafted and respectful response to reviewer comments will most certainly avoid the dreaded “Reject” e-mail. Editors often move to reject cases when it is clear that the authors are unable or unwilling to address reviewer concerns. Remember that *TCJ* is a developmental journal. Our goal is to improve your case to its best possible form. When you receive a revise and resubmit decision, please use these five steps to get your case accepted for publication. It is a “win-win-win” for you, for *TCJ* and our reviewers.

In this issue

This issue includes seven cases (see Table I) focused on a wide variety of companies, locations and issues. Each case has a strong IM providing effective teaching strategies, theoretical linkages and complete answers and analysis to all discussion questions. *TCJ* IMs have been rigorously peer reviewed to ensure that adopting faculty can teach these cases as well as the authors. Enjoy!

Table I Cases in this issue

<i>Case title and target audience</i>	<i>Authors</i>	<i>Synopsis</i>
Title: To B or Not to B: Etsy's decision whether to re-incorporate as a public benefit corporation and maintain its B Lab Certification Target audience: undergraduate- or graduate-level courses in business law, commercial law, legal environment or auditing	Ronnie Cohen	This teaching case addresses the decision faced by Etsy, Inc. when it became a publicly traded corporation. In order to maintain its certification as a socially responsible corporation by B Lab, it would have to re-incorporate as a Delaware Benefit Corporation. In making this decision, the company had to consider various measures used for corporate social responsibility reporting and transparency and how these might affect Etsy's stakeholders
Title: Outcast Conflict Target audience: undergraduate- and graduate-level courses in leadership and management	Jason Bogardus	The case describes the dilemma a young leader, Captain Bryson, faces after a few months in his new organization. Amid a routine meeting, two of CPT Bryson's direct reports get into a verbal (and nearly physical) altercation over a relatively benign issue. CPT Bryson must decide how to handle the conflict at that moment. Further, the organization is resource constrained, so the personnel will be working in the same organization for at least the next 6 months. Therefore, CPT Bryson must try to diagnose the types and sources of conflict so that he can decide on how to manage the conflict in both the short- and long-term
Title: EDP – Portugal's main energy producer that everyone loved to hate Target audience: undergraduate and graduate courses emphasizing the energy sector, privatization issues and government support	Joao Silva	This business case portrays the problems that an energy producing company faced in Portugal, in its transition from being a public company to becoming privatized. The Portuguese Government issued EDP with generous subsidies to guarantee its future profits and privatization success, but a few years later, after EDP was fully privatized, there was great political pressure to downsize such subsidies. The case describes the main steps taken by EDP from its creation and privatization, culminating at the end of 2017, where it was heavily criticized by media and political parties due to high value of subsidies that had been granted to the company by the Portuguese Government in the past, while it was still a public company, and the renegotiation of those same subsidies after it had been privatized. EDP's president António Mexia was under police investigation due to having led the renegotiation talks in 2007, and it was feared that EDP's investors could refrain from investing in the company. Should EDP campaign to clear its good name, or would it be better to let the matter fall with the passing of time? Could the share value be affected? Should EDP prepare itself for loss of revenue due to an eventual downsizing of the subsidies?
Title: UrsaNav: the power of the bear Target audience: advanced undergraduate or graduate students in corporate finance or entrepreneurship courses	Susan White	UrsaNav is a US-based, international provider of advanced engineering and information management consulting services in the naval navigation industry. After about a decade of operating and growing, the firm had become successfully diversified, however it had also grown too large to manage effectively. Thus, the company was spun off into three separate segments: Tagence, Geodesicx and UrsaNav. These segments went "back to the basics," and focused more on serving customers, with each having a more defined company focus. Is this a move that created or destroyed value? How could it create value for the firms' founders?
Title: Pacific Market: invest, sell, or stay the same? Target audience: undergraduate- or graduate-level students in strategic management courses	Armand Gilinsky Jr	After a career as a turnaround specialist for Silicon Valley high-tech start-ups, Vasudev Narayanan (Vasu) acquired Pacific Market, a failing two-store chain in Sonoma County, California, in 2013. By fall 2017, rival local chains had expanded, on-line vendors threatened in-store shopping, the Amazon-Whole Foods combination threatened disruption, and consumers increasingly insisted on "buying local." Vasu aimed to grow revenues 50 percent by 2020, and fund Good Karma Foundation, a charity in his native India. Strategies to achieve these objectives included infrastructure investments, employee profit sharing, changing the mix of products and amenities, or finding a buyer for the operation
Behind Closed Doors: The DC-10 and the Demise of McDonnell Douglas Target audience: undergraduate organizational behavior courses, graduate-level course in leadership or organizational change, graduate-level managerial economics	Jamie O'Brien	This case explores the accidents of two McDonnell Douglas DC-10s in the early 1970s at the onset of the jumbo jet race between Boeing, Lockheed, and McDonnell Douglas. It explores the series of events during the 'Windsor Incident' in 1972 and the subsequent accident over Paris in 1974. It explores the reasons why the cargo door on the DC-10 was faulty and subsequently why the door was not fixed. It examines the interplay of industry suppliers such as McDonnell Douglas and how they interact with oversight authorities such as the Federal Aviation Authority. The teaching note focuses on the economic thinking at McDonnell Douglas, behavioral ethics, and organizational culture

(continued)

Table 1

Case title and target audience	Authors	Synopsis
<p><i>Compact Case</i> Title: F*ck Off Google": protest against Google Campus Berlin Target audience: undergraduate and graduate-level classes in strategic management, consumer research and public policy courses This Compact Case was initiated in a Compact Case Hackathon session conducted at the University of Cologne in October 2018</p>	<p>Martin Fritze, Gertraud Gänser-Stickler, Sarah Türk and Yingshuai Zhao</p>	<p>In November 2016, Google announced its intentions to rent a building in the Kreuzberg district of Berlin to open a Google Campus, a business incubator for tech start-ups that would offer entrepreneurs support, workshops, and access to networks. Following the announcement, dissatisfied local communities organized protests, in which leaders complained that "It is extremely violent and arrogant of this mega-corporation, whose business model is based on mass surveillance and which speculates like crazy, to set up shop here" (<i>Business Times</i>, 2018). Berlin's government supported the Google Campus plan; inhabitants rejected it with fierce and persistent protests. In the face of this challenge, was it still possible for Google to continue its plans in Berlin?</p>

References

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