How I write case studies: As a story where your customer is the main character (part 1)

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So, the first thing you should know is that I've been writing case studies for almost 20 years. And, IMHO, case studies are one of the more interesting long-form pieces to write because they tell a story.

And that's how I look at a case study when I sit down: I'm about to tell your customers a story that has an introduction to a main character (your client that has the problem, natch), a big challenge the character tried (and failed) to overcome, and then the exciting reveal of how the character and its partner (your business) accomplished the un-accomplishable! #WINNING

Here's how I start a case study... YOU choose your main character

On one of my first client meetings when I started freelancing, I met with the business owner of a new security startup. His company was about to launch a new product/
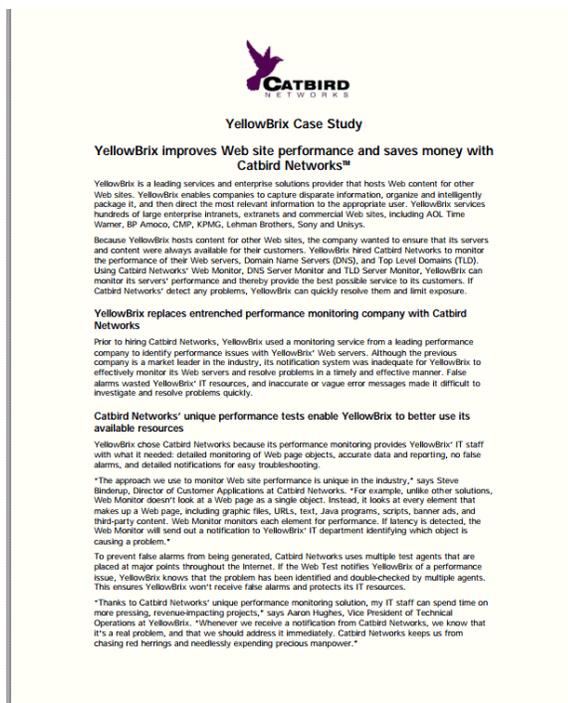
Messaging ✎ ⚙

using a new type of security: cloud security.

We chose the main character (my client's customer which was a local bank[...] the bank faced, and how my client) helped solve it.

The challenge

The cloud was still a new concept. Back in 2002, there was no DropBox, G[...] Box, OneDrive, iCloud, or anything-in-the-cloud, nor were companies as f[...] security as they are now.*

My client, a startup security company, was naturally a little nervous becaus[...] still relatively new to businesses in general, much less the financial world ([...] notoriously risk-averse because, well, they're banks!) He wanted to demon[...] tradeshow how cloud security was effective, could protect banks more com[...] off-the-shelf client solutions (what bank management favored), or existing[...] solutions (what IT favored).

CATBIRD
NETWORKS

YellowBrix Case Study

YellowBrix improves Web site performance and saves money with Catbird Networks℠

YellowBrix is a leading services and enterprise solutions provider that hosts Web content for other Web sites. YellowBrix enables companies to capture disparate information, organize and intelligently package it, and then direct the most relevant information to the appropriate user. YellowBrix services hundreds of large enterprise intranets, extranets and commercial Web sites, including AOL Time Warner, BP Amoco, CMP, KPMG, Lehman Brothers, Sony and Unisys.

Because YellowBrix hosts content for other Web sites, the company wanted to ensure that its servers and content were always available for their customers. YellowBrix hired Catbird Networks to monitor the performance of their Web servers, Domain Name Servers (DNS), and Top Level Domains (TLD). Using Catbird Networks' Web Monitor, DNS Server Monitor and TLD Server Monitor, YellowBrix can monitor its servers' performance and thereby provide the best possible service to its customers. If Catbird Networks' detect any problems, YellowBrix can quickly resolve them and limit exposure.

YellowBrix replaces entrenched performance monitoring company with Catbird Networks

Prior to hiring Catbird Networks, YellowBrix used a monitoring service from a leading performance company to identify performance issues with YellowBrix' Web servers. Although the previous company is a market leader in the industry, its notification system was inadequate for YellowBrix to effectively monitor its Web servers and resolve problems in a timely and effective manner. False alarms wasted YellowBrix' IT resources, and inaccurate or vague error messages made it difficult to investigate and resolve problems quickly.

Catbird Networks' unique performance tests enable YellowBrix to better use its available resources

YellowBrix chose Catbird Networks because its performance monitoring provides YellowBrix' IT staff with what it needed: detailed monitoring of Web page objects, accurate data and reporting, no false alarms, and detailed notifications for easy troubleshooting.

"The approach we use to monitor Web site performance is unique in the industry," says Steve Binderup, Director of Customer Applications at Catbird Networks. "For example, unlike other solutions, Web Monitor doesn't look at a Web page as a single object. Instead, it looks at every element that makes up a Web page, including graphic files, URLs, text, Java programs, scripts, banner ads, and third-party content. Web Monitor monitors each element for performance. If latency is detected, the Web Monitor will send out a notification to YellowBrix' IT department identifying which object is causing a problem."

To prevent false alarms from being generated, Catbird Networks uses multiple test agents that are placed at major points throughout the Internet. If the Web Test notifies YellowBrix of a performance issue, YellowBrix knows that the problem has been identified and double-checked by multiple agents. This ensures YellowBrix won't receive false alarms and protects its IT resources.

"Thanks to Catbird Networks' unique performance monitoring solution, my IT staff can spend time on more pressing, revenue-impacting projects," says Aaron Hughes, Vice President of Technical Operations at YellowBrix. "Whenever we receive a notification from Catbird Networks, we know that it's a real problem, and that we should address it immediately. Catbird Networks keeps us from chasing red herrings and needlessly expending precious manpower."

My client wanted[...] case studies on several of his customers who:

- Weighed the pros and cons of cloud security

- Researched what little there was to research

- Wanted to take the risk and essentially bet the farm

He wanted about a dozen case studies completed in a few weeks for the trade show he was about to attend. He realized that a few weeks wasn't a lot of time, but given my experience (he and I had worked together at the universal messaging company), he believed I could do this no sweat.

Next week, find out how my security client and I accomplished the un-accomplishable...

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startup I worked at. At the startup, a product manager was using clouds to
universal messaging and how messages could be temporarily stored in serv
scattered around the world as they were being translated from fax-to-email,
SMS, and -TIFFS.

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As a long-form copywriter for 20 years I have written dozens of case studi
including Uptake, Aginity, SPSS (now IBM), Catbird Networks (now Cyxt
Don't be the sad sack waiting in line behind your competition! First vis
www.krop.com/hsuan **to look at some case studies, then contact me at**
hsuanmin.chou@yahoo.com.

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    B2B Marketing Leader
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    Great piece! It's so easy to write a case study where your organization is the s
    the impact that makes it worthwhile to others who want to learn something.   🔗 **Copy Link to Comment**
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