

Public safety. Few factors are as visible or as important to the quality of life in our communities. Around the country, justice agencies are striving to improve public safety by sharing information across the boundaries of organizations and jurisdictions. These efforts reflect a broad consensus that integrated justice information has the potential to save lives, time, and dollars.

Achieving the benefits of integrated justice information can be a difficult and complex task. The technical and organizational challenges require sustained commitment from key people and organizations, as well as investment of resources and changes in the way work is done. None of these are easy to come by. Success depends on making a clear and compelling case that persuades many different players to participate and collaborate. A well-crafted business case is a powerful communication tool that can increase support for the effort. This Guide provides advice and tools that will help you design and present a strong, persuasive business case to public officials, community leaders, and justice professionals.

An effective business case is a multi - purpose communication tool that generates the support and participation needed to turn an idea into reality. It explains why integration should be supported and how it will improve the business of the justice enterprise. It casts the explanation in terms of the specific circumstances and opportunities of a particular time and place. The case recognizes conflicts and competition for resources and suggests strategies for dealing with them. The case presentation can be tailored to the different audiences whose support is essential to success.

What we are calling a business case includes elements that you may find in a business plan or a business strategy. You may recognize them, perhaps labeled differently, from your own experience with program development and planning, budget development and justification, legislative negotiations, acquisition planning, or any number of tasks in which you have both expertise and experience.

The basic idea for this Guide came from deliberations at national conferences, sponsored by the US Department of Justice, involving dozens of justice professionals from a wide range of state and local agencies. Considerable additional research and lessons from successful integration experience have gone into the Guide's development. We used materials and lessons learned from more than 20 state and local integration initiatives. The Guide also reflects the results of a national workshop at which elected and appointed officials met with justice professionals to help them identify more effective ways to present a business case. The result is a Guide that is grounded in the lessons of real life integration initiatives and the advice of seasoned policy makers and justice professionals.

Building your business case for justice integration

The kind of case we are describing here requires careful design and construction. In many ways, the architects of the business case face problems similar to those of an architect designing a building; the same kind of care and deliberation go into both processes. The design and detailed planning of a building must take into account the desires and the resources of the customers, the setting for construction, the nature of the land and materials, the climate, and the skills of the builders. Similarly, the architects of the business case must take into account the desires and resources of the decision and policy makers who must pay for the integration initiative, as well as the political climate, the organizational landscape, and their own needs, materials, and resources.

The idea of architectural design can also be used to describe some of the components of business case development and the design of information integration initiatives. For example, justice information systems integration can require architects of public policy, architects of data networks, architects of new business processes and procedures, architects of new coalitions and collaborations, architects of public opinion, and even architects of new mechanisms for conflict resolution. In all of these areas, the architect brings training, expertise, and experience to bear on the complex design task. It is a task that requires creativity, innovation, and attention to details and practical requirements.

The architectural metaphor incorporates other useful ideas. Good architecture provides the potential for renovation, expansion, and ongoing development. It depends on the quality and adequacy of the "foundation" or physical infrastructure. Architectural design is, after all, something you have to "live with." We use this architectural metaphor as a way of describing the various concepts, methods, and tools used in building a business case.

Organization of the guide

This Guide presents an approach to the development of a business case along with supporting methods and

tools. It does not present a complete case or recommend one single model of what a case should contain. The range of possible local circumstances and integration objectives is far too broad for a single business case or approach to work. Instead, the Guide presents a way of designing and building a business case that can be adapted to a very wide range of particular circumstances. We also include examples of cases and materials that have been developed in a variety of state and local situations.

The approach to business case design and development is presented in three phases.

- The first is an **analysis** phase that includes attention to the **situation** in which the integration is to take place, the **market** demand for and willingness to pay for integration, and the **risks** involved in the undertaking. The results of the analysis phase enable a clear identification of the **objectives, opportunities, strengths, resources, and constraints** guiding the integration initiative.
- The second phase includes the **design** and development of the business case itself based on the information resulting from the analysis phase. In the design phase, you articulate the details of your **approach** and its **rationale**, and compile and organize all your **basic case-building materials**.
- The third phase customizes the message, materials, and methods needed to **present** the case to different audiences in order to secure their commitment and ongoing support.

The relationship among the phases is shown in the figure on the left. This figure shows the basic logic of how the material is presented in the Guide. The figure may imply that building a business case consists of these three phases (**analyze** , **design** , and **present**) occurring in simple sequential order. The actual work of building a business case, will, of course, be more complex, with a considerable amount of iteration among the phases. The results of work in the analysis phase are used in the design process. But the design activities often reveal gaps in the analysis, or produce new information that influences the objectives. So results from the design phase can loop back to a new analysis, which then feeds into subsequent design activities, and so forth. The same idea applies to the flow of design results into the crafting of presentation materials, with looping back to the design or analysis phases.

Following the three main sections of the Guide described above, you will find additional supporting material in the appendices. Appendix A describes specific tools and skills that may be useful in designing and building the business case. Each section includes a brief description, a discussion of how the tool can be used, and references to more detailed sources for further exploration. Table 1 summarizes these tools and their purposes.

Other appendices include examples of business cases and supporting materials that have been developed and used successfully in a number of states and local jurisdictions. These illustrate the range of approaches and proven strategies that have been used. In addition, there are key references and links to Web sites, print resources, and organizations related to information integration in the justice field or generally in state and local government. These can be used to explore specific topics in more detail than can be included in the Guide itself, and to check on current developments in organizations and locations involved in integration. Taken together or individually, these supporting materials and references may be useful in the analysis, design, and presentation of your business case. They may also be useful in the important work of establishing and nourishing the collaborative relationships required to sustain a successful integration project.

Suggestions for using the guide

Just as there is no one-size-fits-all business case, there is no one best way to use this Guide to building a business case. There are at least three ways to use the Guide.

One is as a tutorial, primarily for those new architects with limited experience in designing and presenting a business case. In using the Guide as a tutorial, start at the beginning and work through the sections in order to get an overall picture of the various tasks to be completed for any particular business case situation. New architects could begin their business case development as they work through the sections, so that they have some of the work completed by the time they have finished the Guide. They could then use the examples and materials in the appendices to move the case closer to completion.

A second way to use the Guide, appropriate for more experienced architects, is as a reference tool, selecting material in whatever sequence is useful. These architects may come to the task of building a business case with a variety of experiences and skills in the Guide topics. For these more experienced users, the Guide can serve as a general reference tool or as a source of links to related materials and examples.

A third way to use the Guide applies to even more experienced architects who have no need for general guidance in building a business case. For them, the Guide can have a different use-as a source of links to examples, supporting material, and to other architects who are working on similar information integration agendas. Since we view integration as an ongoing process, one successful business case will likely lead to others. Experienced architects and builders will therefore have an ongoing need for new information and can benefit from examples and access to colleagues facing similar challenges. The Guide includes extensive examples and links to print and electronic sources, as well as to organizations that provide support and material for these kinds of objectives.

TABLE 1 HELPFUL ANALYTICAL CASE-BUILDING TOOLS

Helpful case-building tools

Type of Analysis	Tools
To know where you are today: assessing your current situation and comparing it to others	Environmental Scanning Self-Assessment Current/Best Practices Research Benchmarking News Analysis
To know where you want to go: articulating a vision and choosing specific objectives	Hopes & Fears Exercise Visioning Strategic Framework Consensus Building, Collaboration, & Decision Making
To know the market for your ideas: identifying and understanding your audience	Positioning Charts Stakeholder Analysis Partisan Analysis
To know how to get from here to there: identifying and evaluating options	MAU Models SWOT Analysis Cost-Benefit/Cost-Performance Analysis Risk Analysis
To know how to organize your argument: prioritizing and planning	Prioritizing Methods Strategic Planning Methods
These tools are adapted from the Center for Technology in Government's Making Smart IT Choices .	

1 These tools are adapted from The Center for Technology in Government's **Making Smart IT Choices** which can be accessed on the Internet at [www.ctg.albany.edu/ resources/smartit.pdf](http://www.ctg.albany.edu/resources/smartit.pdf).