

## 2. Designing the argument: Approach, rationale & strategy

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Now that you've gathered all of your data and analyzed your situation, you're ready to pull it together to construct a convincing argument for your project. This chapter will help you design the right approach, rationale, and strategy that will create support for your initiative.

We define a business case as a well-reasoned argument that attempts to convince an audience of the benefits of justice integration while educating them about the changes, costs, and risks that will be part of the effort. The goal of your business case is to inform key players about your justice integration initiative and convince them to support it in some specific ways.

### Elements of a business case

This chapter outlines the essential components that should be included in any business case, with comments and references to sources where further information can be found. This design phase, like the previous analysis phase, is comprehensive. The presentation phase, which follows, selects from these comprehensive elements to construct presentations about your initiative that are well-suited to particular circumstances. A strong business case includes all of the following elements:

#### **Essential Elements of a Business Case**

Problem statement A mission statement or vision of the future Specific objectives for the current initiative Preferred approach Alternatives considered Expected benefits Performance measures Risks and how they will be addressed A basic plan of work, timeline, and key milestones Project management and human resource implications Cost estimates and sources of funding Opposing arguments and responses

#### **Problem statement**

A problem statement clearly defines the problem, need, or opportunity. When developing a problem statement for your business case, the key is to state the problem in terms of public safety. You want to explain how the public is impacted by the inability of justice agencies to easily share information. Find several true stories in your area that illustrate the problem and its consequences for real people. Draw on the process maps from your analysis to show how and why the problem occurs.

#### **Sample Problem Statements**

##### **Michigan**

<http://www.search.org/integration/Michigan/MIStrategicPlan.pdf> Information is the backbone of every aspect of the public safety process. Justice cannot be fairly and properly administered without complete and accurate information. In today's public safety processes, many inadequacies exist in the collection, storage, and dissemination of information needed to make justice administration decisions, deploy resources, improve operational effectiveness and most importantly, protect citizens.

A detailed examination of justice and public safety processes reveals a complex series of iterative steps and organizational interactions that occur from the time a person enters the system until he/she exits the system. Each step or process requires the collection and dissemination of increasing amounts of information. Although there is a great deal of information stored electronically in Michigan, very little of it is available quickly across agency boundaries. Integration of public safety information is confounded by a combination of problems related to both information quality and information sharing.

##### **Colorado**

[http://www.state.co.us/gov\\_dir/cicjis/intro.htm#what](http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/cicjis/intro.htm#what) A review of the current business information flow highlights numerous problems and inefficiencies with the entire system: (1) redundant data collection by all agencies and departments; (2) systems which are too dependent on paper flow rather than transferring information electronically to help minimize staff time, mail costs, and the price of paper; (3) systems that are too dependent on phone conversations or on-site visits to gather data which could be electronically shared; (4) failure to use a unique common identifier creates problems in tracking cases through all of the relevant departments and agencies; (5) an inability to get a current status of defendants in the system without querying each of the existing department databases independently; and (6) some incomplete, invalid and unreliable data that resides on some systems because of an inability to double check the quality of electronic information.

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### A mission statement or vision of the future

Just as an architect has a mental picture of the building she wants to create long before she begins drawing, you must have a vision of how your project will impact the future. This vision of the future can be described by answering the question, "How will things be different here when this problem is solved?" Illustrate how community safety and security will be improved once the problem you currently face no longer exists. Again, make sure to discuss your vision in terms of public safety, not just technology.

#### Sample Mission/Vision Statements

##### Alaska

<http://www.search.org/integration/Alaska/AKStrategicPlan.pdf> Make criminal justice more effective by simplifying procedures to create, access, and exchange complete, accurate, and timely information.

**Future Vision** Nobody gets hurt for lack of complete, accurate, timely criminal justice information.

##### Montana

<http://www.search.org/integration/> Develop and maintain criminal justice information services that promote cost effective information sharing with timely and appropriate access, avoiding unnecessary duplication, while maintaining information security and the privacy rights of citizens. Promote partnerships among federal, state, local criminal justice and other agencies, while recognizing the independence of each. ( **DRAFT** )

##### Pennsylvania

[http://www.state.pa.us/Technology\\_Initiatives/jnet/home.htm](http://www.state.pa.us/Technology_Initiatives/jnet/home.htm) To enhance public safety through the integration of criminal justice information throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by adopting business practices which promote cost-effectiveness, information sharing, and timely and appropriate access to information while recognizing the independence of each agency.

### Specific objectives

Once you've described your vision of the future, you must define the project objectives that will help you realize that future. While "improved public safety" is an admirable goal, it's too general. You need to express your project goals in specific terms that people will understand. Using the results of your detailed analysis, identify the key aims of your proposed project. State your goals briefly and in plain language, and then elaborate as needed to fully explain them.

#### Sample Integration Objectives

##### Kansas

<http://www.kbi.state.ks.us/> Develop and maintain the systems necessary to ensure an accurate, timely, and comprehensive collection of criminal history information that meets local, state, and federal standards for data quality and timeliness.

Increase utilization of the system by providing on-line access to the appropriate information for the system's primary and secondary customers.

Increase cost effectiveness of the system by reducing the manpower associated with the inputs and outputs of the system at both the state and local level.

##### Ohio

<http://www.ocjs.state.oh.us/CJIS/cjisweb1.htm> Maintain a cooperative CJIS community and representative governance structure that supports an information technology environment that meets the evolving needs of criminal justice practitioners.

Develop recommended policies, procedures, and statutes that enhance the exchange of information within the criminal justice community.

##### Texas

<http://www.search.org/integration/> Gain support of local agencies so that they provide data in a timely, accurate manner, thereby ensuring that the best possible information is available to the justice community

### Preferred approach to the problem

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The next step is to decide how you're going to solve your problem and achieve your vision. Write a brief statement that describes the approach you plan to take.

A complete statement of approach includes the:

- problem to be solved and the desired end state
- participants and their roles
- customers or beneficiaries and how they will be affected
- methods and strategies to be used
- innovations and other changes needed to solve the problem

### Sample Summary Statements of Approach

#### New Mexico

<http://www.unm.edu/~isrnet/cjimt/plan.html> The project is a statewide, multi-departmental effort to facilitate the sharing of key justice information under the direction of the [interagency] Criminal Justice Information Management Team (CJIMT). In September 1997, the CJIMT was funded for the first year of a three-year project, to develop, design and implement a secured Intranet data sharing solution that will allow for multi-agency data sharing. The project was begun with the hiring of a manager in May 1998, and named the Justice Information Sharing Project. The initial focus is on felony criminal activity for both youthful and adult offenders.

#### Virginia

<http://www.dcjs.state.va.us/icjis/> The integrated criminal justice information system (ICJIS) will provide access to data at several criminal justice agencies. Authorized criminal justice users should be able to quickly locate and obtain information from any system through a common gateway terminal that would replace several terminals in public safety agencies. Primary users will include criminal justice professionals at both the state and local level. Users will be able to access records at both the individual record level and an aggregate level. Access to individual records would include requests for a specific individual, case, or event, or for a group of events that pertain to a single individual or case. In addition to accessing records at the individual level, users should also be able to access entire record sets for purposes of statistical analysis, which is an important tool for guiding policy.

#### Harris County, Texas

<http://www.co.harris.tx.us/jims/> JIMS is the product of a continuing cooperative effort among Harris County justice agencies and elected officials. The automated systems are designed to provide one-time entry of data and efficient access to justice information to all agencies that require it through shared files and system resources, while restricting access to certain criminal history and other sensitive information according to local, state and federal regulations, laws and guidelines. Projects and priorities are established by the participating user agencies.

Your statement should begin with a sentence or two that conveys the essential elements of your approach. It then addresses those elements in more detail. You need to describe how your project will be managed and the main principles that support the approach.

For example, your statements about the management of the project may focus on the key methods of coordination and decision making. This approach often includes the formation of a coordinating body that represents the many interests involved, helps shape the project, and guides it through the complex world of power, politics, and bureaucracy. Several states have successfully used coordinating bodies to shepherd their projects—North Carolina has a governance board, Washington employs a justice information committee, and Colorado uses an executive policy board. Some states also use a second layer of coordination to deal with the technical issues. Colorado has two such bodies—a technical work group that deals with technical issues and a tactical business work group that tests applications and determines that solutions "work" for users.

- When defining your approach, describe the key factors that underlie your choice. For example, you may need to address the following questions:
- will existing systems be retained or replaced?
- will different organizations use the same database or retain and coordinate separate ones?
- will the project start with a prototype or pilot test?
- will all participants fund their own efforts or will a central pool of funds be created?

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### Alternatives considered

Even though you've created the best possible way to solve your problem, there may be some audiences that just won't back your approach. It's important to protect your business case from lackluster support. Detail any acceptable alternative approaches that will achieve your future vision. It is also helpful to describe your decisions about some potential approaches that were considered and discarded.

#### Sample Summary of Alternatives Considered

##### Indiana

<http://www.state.in.us/isp/safe-t/plan.html>

Alternative organizational structures are largely defined by the degree of involvement and how user agencies are represented in decision making. (Alternatives provided are followed by descriptive paragraphs that can be found in Indiana's strategic plan document.)

Alternative #1: Consortium

Alternative #2: Governor's Council

Alternative #3: Shared Management

### Expected benefits

The benefits of solving your problem are an integral part of your business case. People want to know how your project will help them in their business and their community. You should identify and discuss the benefits of change. In the 1999 workshop on **Building a Business Case for Integration of Criminal Justice Information**, participants identified some of the benefits of integrated justice information systems as: reduced costs due to less effort wasted on redundant tasks such as data entry, better decision making at each step of the judicial process due to more accurate and timely information, improved efficiency of case processing, and overall improvement in public safety. While many benefits can be realized collectively, it is also critical to identify benefits that are specific to each of your stakeholders.

#### Sample Summaries of Benefits

##### McLean County, Illinois

[http://www.mclean.gov/sheriff/ejs\\_page1.html](http://www.mclean.gov/sheriff/ejs_page1.html) We will be one fiteamfl instead of many disparate entities that duplicate much of each others" efforts. We will provide much better service for our citizens while maximizing efficiency throughout the justice system with a cost-effective solution to these problems.

##### Colorado

[http://www.state.co.us/gov\\_dir/cicjis/intro.htm#benefits](http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/cicjis/intro.htm#benefits) CICJIS will improve public safety by making more timely, accurate, and complete information concerning offenders available statewide to all justice agencies and to individual decision-makers in the system including police officers, judges, and corrections officers.

Decision-making by increasing the availability of statistical measures for evaluating public policy.

Productivity of existing staff by reducing redundant data collection and input efforts among the agencies and by reducing or eliminating paper- based processing.

Access to timely, accurate, and complete information by both justice agency staff and the public.

##### Berrien County, Michigan

<http://www.search.org/integration/> Daily updates to the on-line court calendar eliminated the weekly printing of 50 hard copies of the court calendar.

Case information collapsed into synopsis form or detailed, as needed.

Data entry carried to associated screens automatically.

### Performance measures

If people are going to give you their support, they will want to know that you are delivering on your promises. Performance measures give your stakeholders a concrete way to assess how the project is doing relative to their expectations and identify where improvements are needed. Examples of performance measures include indicators of customer satisfaction, cost-efficiency, time savings, dollar savings, improved conviction rates, and quicker case dispositions. Integrated justice systems certainly have the potential to save money, but they are also expensive, especially in the initial phases. So, it is also important to capture the intangible benefits-such as increased public confidence-as thoroughly as possible. In order to retain support and funding beyond the initial

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approvals, you should give progress reports against the performance measures established in your business case.

### Sample Performance Measures

#### Colorado

[http://www.state.co.us/gov\\_dir/cicjis/strategic/BENCH.html](http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/cicjis/strategic/BENCH.html) Explanations and measures of each item are provided at the Web site.

Single point statewide inquiries Minimize redundant data collection efforts Reduce resources required for queries Reduce costs of handling paper Improve user response time Reduce user time spent responding to phone queries

### Risks and how they will be addressed

As you discovered in the last chapter, risks are an inherent part of the implementation of any project. And showing your audience that you know the risks, and how to lessen them, is an important part of your business case. State the risks you are likely to encounter on this project, based on your risk analysis, and identify methods for mitigating each one. Explain how the approach you have chosen reduces the risk or at least takes it into account. Anticipate the kinds of questions people will ask about risks and have answers ready based on your analysis.

### Examples of Risks and How They Will be Addressed

#### Washington

<http://www.wa.gov/dis/jin/JINfeasibility.pdf>

Project Management Risk: Since this project covers more than one agency, no project manager has been assigned.

Mitigation: A permanent project manager should be selected to work with DIS on the implementation.

Customer Acceptance Risk: The agencies involved in the project implementation recommendation must work closely with the county organizations involved. This acceptance will be necessary to implement the network successfully.

Mitigation: The project manager and lead agencies must communicate clearly with the local jurisdictions.

### A basic plan of work, timeline, and key milestones

Like a blueprint that guides construction, a well-conceived plan of work is a critical component of your business case. The plan of work must take into account the existing infrastructure, funds, staff, time constraints, and other changes required to make your vision of the future a reality. The statement about your plan of work should also include a section on efforts to coordinate resources with other information initiatives in the area. Information included in plans of work for many states and counties can be accessed through <http://www.search.org/integration/>.

Timelines are an easy way to show how long it will take to complete each step of the project. Fill your timeline with important project milestones, which serve as attainable short-term goals, and evaluation points that keep the project heading in the right direction and on schedule. These milestones also help keep people's interest in your project, since it is likely to span several years.

Examples of milestones used in justice information integration projects include: establishing a point of connectivity between agencies, creating a read-only information sharing system and testing it, putting together data standards, testing a new technology in pilot studies, and performing interagency transactions. Think about how you will demonstrate the achievement of each milestone as it occurs and let people see all that you have accomplished with their support.

### Project management and human resource implications

All the planning and support in the world won't make your project succeed unless you have a key person running the show and the right people working on the effort. A project director is necessary to take responsibility for the project, manage the activities, and direct the staff. Your project director must be capable of implementing the project effectively, and be acceptable to all parties involved in the effort. The qualifications and responsibilities of the project director must be carefully described in the business case.

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Pay special attention to the "people" components associated with your initiative. Explain how you will deal with the general shortage of IT professionals and the fierce competition for skilled people posed by the private sector. Describe how existing staff in every specialty will be prepared for changes by orientation, training, peer consulting, or other methods. Identify functions that are likely to be outsourced or handled by consultants and explain how they will be managed.

### **Project Management Examples**

#### **Washington**

<http://www.wa.gov/dis/jin> Web site contains agendas and meeting minutes from various committees working on the integration initiative.

#### **Kentucky**

<http://www.state.ky.us/agencies/ucjis> Web site gives an overview of the Kentucky project management and implementation activities.

#### **Pennsylvania**

[http://www.state.pa.us/Technology\\_Initiatives/jnet/summary.html](http://www.state.pa.us/Technology_Initiatives/jnet/summary.html) Web site describes the phased approach the state is using in establishing their system.

#### **New Mexico**

<http://www.unm.edu/~isrnet/cjimt/> Web site provides the following information: Project Plan and Charter.

### Cost estimates and sources of funding

Anyone evaluating your project proposal will have lots of questions about it, but the two questions you may hear most often are: "How much will this cost?" and "Where will the money come from?" An evaluation of costs and benefits is essential information to provide in your business case. Cost statistics can be obtained from historical data such as budgets or spending records, feasibility studies, an outside consultant, or other agencies that have attempted similar projects.

A cost-benefit analysis can be as simple as comparing costs and projected benefits. Or, you can use more detailed financial models. Whatever you choose, the results have to be convincing enough to persuade those evaluating the case to approve funding or lend their support to the initiative. Your cost estimates should cover all elements of the project: human resources, technology, consulting, training, physical plant changes, and so on. The analysis must also assess the impact of ongoing costs, such as training and maintenance, and related activities.

### **Samples of Summary Cost Estimates**

#### **Alaska**

<http://www.search.org/integration/Alaska/AKStrategicPlan.pdf> For each of these (CJIS) initiatives, a series of tactical projects have been identified by the participating agencies. These projects support each initiative in attaining the future vision and have been scheduled throughout 2003. The overall budget and year-by-year expenditures are outlined in Alaska's strategic plan, which can be found on the Internet.

#### **Kansas**

<http://www.kbi.state.ks.us/> A combination of federal, state, and local sources are funding the \$10.124 million CJIS Strategic Plan. These sources have currently been able to contribute approximately 80 percent of the total funding requirements. An additional \$708,100 is estimated to become available from future federal funding sources. This leaves the project with an estimated \$1.9 million funding shortfall as of August 1, 1997.

Securing funding for your project is likely to be a complex and creative process. While there are several state and federal sources of funds for justice information integration efforts, (including significant funds from the Office of Justice Programs <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/fundopps.htm> and its bureaus) you are unlikely to find one single source of funding for your project. A multiple source funding model will allow you to accomplish your goals. Making your case to several "funders" and assembling a mix of resources is probably your best road to success and may also help ensure the long-term viability of the project.

### Opposing arguments and responses

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In addition to all the questions you'll hear, you're likely to face some opposition to your project when you present your business case. Your earlier analysis that identified points of contention and alternative ways of looking at the issues will help you prepare to defend your decisions. Expect those issues and alternatives to be raised by one audience or another. Anticipate their reactions and be prepared to respond to them in as positive a way as possible. Have solid data to back up your position and show how the advice of recognized experts or the experience of other jurisdictions supports your project. You should also listen carefully to the concerns and be willing to hear new ideas that might improve your plan.

### Resulting business case materials

Now you know more about the essential elements of any business case, are armed with a set of tools and resources, and have put some thought into your own plan. It's time to set up the drafting table, put pencil to paper, and design a comprehensive business case for your project. The following checklist will help you verify that you have all the information you need to make your case to key audiences. The next chapter will build on your analysis and design and show you how to present your argument to a variety of possible audiences. The checklist will help assure that all the building blocks are prepared.

### Checklist of building blocks for your business case

Have you produced all of the following business case building blocks?

Check	Building Blocks
	A brief, compelling, public safety-oriented problem statement
	A mission statement or vision of the future that addresses the problem
	A description and rationale for your preferred approach
	Measures that will demonstrate improved performance or progress toward each objective
	A description and rationale for your preferred approach
	A set of alternative approaches that were considered and how they would or would not work
	A statement of the benefits of your initiative that addresses the concerns of all relevant stakeholders