

3. Presenting your business case: Audience, focus & method

The analysis is complete. You have all your facts and your core message. The business case basics are prepared. Now you need to get ready to deliver it to key audiences. Just as different audiences have different concerns or areas of emphasis, they also have different ways of interacting with others. This chapter offers advice about ways to approach these key audiences, get on their agendas, and take advantage of opportunities to make your case. These recommendations complete the three-phase architecture of your case. You are now ready to customize your basic message by focusing on selected elements of the case that you know interest or concern specific stakeholders, and by deciding what medium and venue will best enhance the delivery and reception of your message.

Your aim now is to get integration on the agenda of all your audiences-public officials, justice professionals, community organizations, the media, and the public. Right now, many of these groups don't have a concrete understanding about what justice integration means. By presenting your business case, you will educate key members of your community about your integration initiative and how it will improve public safety. This is your opportunity to turn your business case into support-in the form of funding, staffing, advocacy, and energy-from various segments of your community. Be cautious, though, not to over promise-nothing will short-circuit your project faster than not being able to deliver on public commitments.

Understanding the political culture of your community is important here. Your audience analysis should have shown how political decisions are made, who is likely to make or influence them, and how to get access to the decision process. If the prevailing political culture puts a premium on public meetings, then a "knock-out" public presentation may be in order. If a crucial decision maker establishes a position on an issue by studying it herself, then you need time to talk with her. If she relies on staff to gather and assess information, then you need to find the person who plays this role and sell him on the issue.

Remember that your good idea is competing with other good ideas that come from constituencies, elected officials, and decision makers from all political parties. That's why it is important to brief representatives from all political parties to ensure the project gets early bi-partisan support. If certain members of your partnership have more credibility with certain decision makers, then have them carry the message. Word of mouth is an under-appreciated, but often powerful, marketing tool. Encourage your audiences to talk about the integration initiative in the community. That's how a grassroots movement gets started. The informal networks among many justice professionals and community leaders provide fertile ground for building support for integration.

But first, here are a number of tips that will help you get the message out there so it can grow.

Getting on the calendar

Lessons from kindergarten apply here. It is important to build good relationships with people you are working with. A pleasant, professional demeanor and good interpersonal skills will boost your attempts to get your presentation on the calendar. Here are some practical tips that will help you schedule your presentation with different stakeholders.

Elected officials and policy staff

The schedule keeper is your key resource for setting up a meeting with an elected official or key policy advisor. Call to schedule a meeting a week or two in advance. Be prepared for questions about what you would like to talk about, the group you represent, and who would be attending the meeting with you. Once your meeting is set up, you may want to fax or e-mail a brief fact sheet and a list of people who will be attending.

While most constituents want to meet personally with the elected official, it's often just as important to meet with the policy advisor or budget staff member who works in a particular issue area, like criminal justice. These individuals have the expertise in your area of concern and the necessary access to advise the elected official on the best course of action. Often the appointed staff forms a policy maker's opinion on any given matter. Thus, your ability to shape the staff's views on a subject may matter much more than a brief meeting with the elected official.

Justice professionals

The support of justice professionals is imperative to the success of your integration efforts. After all, they are the ones who will be asked to adapt their way of thinking and working for the new system. Change is difficult. If they aren't sold on the idea of sharing information among their various agencies, then the project will be a long and

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hard uphill battle.

One good way to formally present your case to justice professionals is at professional organization or union meetings. This is where your champion from the justice system will be particularly beneficial. Ask your champion to approach the association or union leadership with the idea of integration and suggest having the business case presented at an upcoming meeting.

Justice professionals also receive publications from the various organizations to which they belong and these may be good outlets for presenting your case. For example, judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys belong to the State and American Bar Associations. Police and correctional officers may belong to unions and be part of the National Association of Police Organizations or the American Correctional Association.

Community groups and organizations

As discussed in chapter 2, there are several groups in your community that meet regularly to discuss quality of life issues and current events. Some groups, like Neighborhood Watch, Crime Stoppers, and D.A.R.E., are natural audiences for justice initiatives like integration, and they often invite guest speakers to their meetings.

Contact the president or one of the leaders of the community organizations you wish to speak to, give them a brief overview of what your business case is all about, and tell them you'd like to speak at one of their meetings. These groups can help you market your business case in the community by participating in events and building the grassroots network. Give them an opportunity to be involved in the process, and they will be much more likely to invite you to address their membership. It's important to involve these groups on an ongoing basis-their support and encouragement will be needed throughout the project.

The news media

The most effective way to deliver your message to the widest possible public audience is through the news media. There are many ways to try to get your integration initiative into the press, including press advisories, press releases, letters to the editor, and press conferences.

Before you reach out to a local editor or news manager, there is one thing you should know about public relations. When you bring the news media into your project, there is no way to be sure that your publicity efforts will produce the message you're trying to get across to the public. There are ways, however, to improve your chances of success.

- **Cover your bases** . Reporters like to balance every story and some like to create tension, so they may go out to find a source that will contradict your business case. If you present integration as a win-win-win situation, then that leaves little room for opposition.
- **Provide a list of sources** . If a reporter is looking for a source with another perspective on integration, point them in the direction of a champion or respected community leader whom you know supports your initiative.
- **Anticipate opposition** . Reporters are accustomed to playing devil's advocate. Anticipate the questions and problems they will raise, like "Why aren't justice professionals already sharing this information?" or "With the projected budget deficit, where will the money come from?" Be ready to provide answers or solutions for each one.

Presenting your business case

It's an old Boy Scout saying, but particularly true here: be prepared. Once you get on the agenda, you need to do your homework. By doing some research on the Internet, in the public library, by looking through a legislative directory, or reading newspaper clippings, you can discover a number of things about your audience before you walk into a room to make your presentation. Your presentation should address the concerns that they may have with public safety in general and with your integration initiative in particular. Table 3 summarizes the kinds of presentations that are well suited to each kind of audience.

- If you are meeting with an elected official, you should know his political party, the committees he sits on, his occupation, and the justice governance structure in his district. If you are meeting with a specific justice agency, you should have a good understanding of its day-to-day operations and what its role would be in the

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integration project.

- If you are presenting to a community organization, ask what types of projects the group has sponsored in the community and request a list of recent speakers.
- If you are trying to get your story picked up by a media outlet, you should have a good understanding of how it covers stories in the justice system and how it feels about spending on government projects.

One good way to know that you are fully prepared is to ask yourself questions you think your audience will ask. Put yourself in their places and look for gaps, mistakes, confusion, past experiences, and points of view that could lead to questions about your idea and its feasibility.

Meetings

When planning the meeting be sure you know who will participate, who will speak, what they will say, what you want to accomplish, what specific actions or decisions you want from the official, and any other important issues. Create and send an agenda to all participants, and plan to arrive at the meeting place with enough time to set up and become familiar with the meeting room. Be sure to brief all those who are attending the meeting with you about their roles and what you expect them to do.

Assume you will only have a few minutes to present your case. It is important to give a brief overview of your case, highlighting the problems, solutions, and benefits associated with justice integration. The details of your case-the perceived risks and the nuts and bolts of your initiative-should be included in the printed materials you leave behind. Be prepared to answer those questions in case they come up during your presentation. Have someone in your group record the comments and questions raised, and the main points of the discussion.

Computer-enhanced presentations

Regardless of the technology you use, keep your presentation simple and direct. Again, you must know your audience and prepare your presentation around its concerns. It helps to have an outline from which to build your slides. One general rule to follow when creating your slides: less is more. Screens crowded with words or special effects are difficult to read. Stick with one typeface, or two at the most. Make your key points with simple, short bullets. Be sure to carefully test the computer and projection equipment at the presentation site if possible. Have backup equipment or media available, since technology glitches can occur at any time.

Presentation methods for different target audiences

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Presentation methods for different target audiences		
Audiences	Preferred delivery method	Sample strategies
Elected officials and policy advisors	Presentations	you may have the opportunity to address a legislative committee or a group of elected officials
	Meetings	elected officials and/or their staff members may prefer to meet in their office or a conference room; the meeting is likely to be short
Justice professionals	Presentations	at regularly scheduled meetings of professional organizations, associations, unions, and groups of justice representatives
	Informal networks	actively encourage justice professionals to talk about integration to their friends and colleagues
Community groups	Presentations	at their regularly scheduled membership meetings
	Informal networks	actively encourage community group members to talk to family, friends, and community residents about the benefits of integration
Private sector interests	Presentations	you may have the opportunity to present your business case to a foundation board or a group of executives
	Meetings	corporation or foundation presidents may prefer to meet in their office or a conference room
Local and regional news media and the public	Press conferences	creating newsworthy events for your business case and integration initiative
	Press releases	announcing newsworthy events
	Op/Ed (opinion/editorial) articles	enlisting community leaders to write articles that appeal for public support for integration
	Letters to the editor	writing clear and brief letters highlighting key points of the business case
	Editorial board meetings	meeting with newspaper editorial boards to present and discuss your business case for integration
	Radio talk shows	one of the most popular vehicles for delivering news, community issues, and current events
	Video	can be used to supplement your presentations and meetings, and they can be sent to audiences you don't have the opportunity to personally visit
	Web site	the anytime, anywhere character of the Internet will help you put your business case before more people
Advertising media	Public service announcements	licensed media outlets are required to print or run a certain number of advertisements publicizing nonprofit community groups and public issues

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Public transportation billboards	billboards and poster advertisements on subways and buses often give good return for your advertising investment
Print ads	in newspapers, magazines, and community newsletters may help you leverage news stories for your initiative

Be yourself and be enthusiastic about integration. Think of your delivery as a communication with your audience, rather than a presentation to the audience. Make eye contact with the members of the audience instead of looking at the overheads. Speak clearly and at a pace somewhat slower than normal conversation. Let your confidence, conviction, and support for integration show through—it will be contagious.

Press conferences

A good press conference takes a lot of effort, but if it is done well the dividends are worth every minute of planning. The first thing you will want to do is pick an optimum location for your event. Strong visuals play a vital role in whether or not your story gets covered on television, and how much time and attention it will receive. For example, you may want to consider the front of a courthouse with police cars on either side of your podium to highlight the public safety and justice aspects of your initiative. But be careful to make sure your vision is practical. If the courthouse is on a very busy street and there is no way to get police cars near your podium, then rethink your plan. There are other visuals that will be just as effective. You will also want to hold your press conference on a day and time that will allow the most reporters to attend. Conventional wisdom indicates that press conferences to trumpet initiatives are best scheduled earlier in the week and during morning hours. Stay away from weekends and avoid times when other public or newsworthy events are already scheduled. Check with your press office or some other local public relations professional to find out more about the media climate in your area, so you can make an informed choice about when to hold your press conference.

Next, line up a number of key supporters or champions to stand with you as you present your case. If they plan to say a few words during the event, now is the time to plan the order of the speakers and identify what they will say.

A day or two before the press conference, fax a one-paragraph press advisory to the news media. Your advisory should give the time and place for the event, and a brief sampling of what will be covered. It is important to give enough information to make an editor or reporter want to cover the event. You may want to highlight the supporters who will be at the press conference if it will help attract media. Also be sure to provide a contact name and telephone number for reporters to call if they have questions. Before you fax the advisory, make sure your fax records are up-to-date so that all the right people are notified.

On the day of your press conference make sure your podium is set up properly. Decide where you want the press to sit or stand. If you are using a sound system or microphone, make sure it works. If you are not, make sure all attendees will be able to hear you. Provide information packets with your printed remarks and all the supporting material so the reporters will have something to work from when they develop the news story later in the day.

Editorial board meetings

If there is enough interest in the media and your efforts are building momentum in the community, you may want to set up a meeting with a newspaper editorial board. This meeting will provide you with the opportunity to thoroughly present your case to a captivated press audience and has the potential to create news stories, editorials, and an overall increased awareness of your integration initiative.

Ride-alongs

Having a reporter ride-along or shadow a justice professional can provide a great opportunity to highlight information sharing problems in a real time, real life way for the public to see. But before you ask a reporter to do a ride along with a law enforcement officer or to accompany an assistant district attorney to the courthouse, make sure all the necessary supervisors, managers, and decision makers have given their approval. As with your press conference, a ride-along has to be well planned so unexpected events don't undermine your message.

Opinion/editorial (op/ed) articles

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Local newspapers often provide space for community leaders to voice their opinions on topics. An op/ed piece provides an avenue to clearly present an argument for integration and back it up with the facts. An op/ed piece will be most effective coming from a recognized leader in the community. Therefore, you may want to ask your champion to write, or lend her name to, the article. A published op/ed piece is a good addition to the press packets and printed materials you use as you continue to market your business case.

Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor can help increase awareness of integration and keep it fresh in readers' minds. Letters to the editor should be brief, and they should cover the main themes of your message that need to be repeated often to take hold with the public.

Press releases

Newsrooms receive dozens of press releases every day, so they should be reserved for newsworthy events. A press release can be used to announce key milestones in your integration effort, such as the support of a new champion, the introduction of legislation, the receipt of funding, or the implementation of the project. Press releases should include the details-the who, what, where, when, why, and how-of your story and a contact name and number for reporters to call if they have questions. Press releases should be kept to one or two pages.

Articles for specialty publications

Professional publications like union newsletters or association magazines provide a captive audience for your business case. These publications look for articles on current events affecting their members, and integration fits that category.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Experienced justice professionals, elected officials, and public policy leaders say you can expect any of the following questions when you present your business case. Can you answer them?

- What is integration?
- Why is it important?
- What are the risks?
- What are the benefits?
- How will this improve the justice system?
- What exactly is the problem? How can it be resolved?
- What are the long-term vision and goals?
- What is the time frame for completing the project?
- How long will it take to see results?
- Can you define the scope of the project?
- What are your milestones for showing progress?
- Who will manage this initiative and how?
- Who else supports this initiative and why?
- Who is against it and why?
- Are all the participants on board?
- Where has justice information integration been successful?
- Does legislation need to be written to accomplish integration?
- Can you specify the policy hurdles?
- What levels of government will it affect and how?
- In view of data privacy laws and issues, how much and what kind of information should/can be shared?
- What does the Mayor think about this initiative?
- Where does integration fit in with the Governor's crime-fighting agenda?
- Have you been to see the City Council yet?
- Does the County Executive know this is going on?
- What role will the Attorney General play in this initiative?
- Is the Chief of Police on board? How about the Sheriff?
- Has the Senator promised to support integration?
- Has the Chief Judge made a statement?

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- Are the judges on board?
- How do the officers on the street feel about this?
- How much will it cost and where will the money come from?
- Didn't we [your audience] fund this already?
- Isn't a bureaucratic empire being built by this initiative?
- What about the millions of dollars we've already invested in justice in the past several years?
- What other funding is available? How are you pursuing it?
- What is the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)? (building, maintaining, training, etc.)
- What will be the Return on Investment (ROI)?
- What are the true total costs?
- Is there a way to share the costs?
- What do you want me (your audience) to do?
- How will this project help achieve other policy goals that I (your audience) care about?

What to leave behind or send later

Information packet

Whenever and wherever you present your business case, leave behind an information packet so the audience has something to hold on to and refer to long after the meeting. It should contain a brief summary of your main points along with more comprehensive information for further reference.

When putting together the printed materials you plan to leave behind, keep in mind that most people in your audience are deluged with information every day. Your packet should be visually attractive, easy to read, include only relevant facts in a clear and concise manner, and be free of any grammar and spelling mistakes that would detract from your message. You want to include information that will help the reader justify supporting integration, such as news stories and editorials, a cost-benefit analysis, and proposed legislation or memorandums of support.

Thank you

A simple thank you letter goes a long way toward building a good relationship with the person or group you've just addressed. It will also help to keep the issue of justice information integration in front of a key decision maker. In your thank you letter, be sure to briefly restate the issue and relate any progress that has been made since your meeting. Give a name and telephone number that the elected official or a member of her staff can call if they have any questions or need additional information.

Meeting notes

Soon after the meeting send all participants a copy of the meeting notes, including any next steps to be taken.

Other methods for marketing your case

The Internet

The Internet can help you present your business case to all of your audiences-the public, justice professionals, the media, and elected officials-24 hours a day. The anytime, anywhere character of the Internet allows your case to be available to more people all the time. You can include much more information on a Web site than would be feasible in a handout or information packet, so be sure to include your Web site address in all your letters and printed material.

Practically anything you need to know about using the WWW or developing Web services is readily available to you on the Web itself. You can easily find and take advantage of white papers, tutorials, style guides, discussion groups, software, indexes, search tools, and many other resources. Perhaps most valuable is the ability to find and explore applications that other organizations have developed to meet objectives similar to yours.

Like all other forms of human communication, a good Web site is a combination of art and science. Effective Web

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sites combine a clear purpose, thoughtful organization, substantive content, interesting graphics, good writing, and ease of navigation. Before you try to design a Web site for your organization, take a look at what other integration efforts are doing on their Web sites. One example is Colorado's Integrated Criminal Justice Information System at http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/cicjis/, another is Kansas' Criminal Justice Information System at <http://www.kbi.state.ks.us/>. There are several other examples listed on page 81. Check them out and decide how your Web site can best present your business case on the Internet.

Videos

Producing a top-quality video can be an expensive proposition, but if you have the resources it can be a helpful addition to your marketing efforts. Videos can be used in many ways: as part of your presentations, to be sent to audiences with whom you are unable to schedule meetings, and to be sent to local television stations as public service announcements or to supplement newscasts.

Using a video to promote your business case will provide viewers with strong visuals that show how integration will benefit the justice enterprise. Like a ride along, a video can provide a great opportunity to visually highlight how information sharing problems affect public safety. A video also personalizes the argument by presenting situations and people that viewers can connect to their own lives. And since you manage production of the video, you have much more control over the presentation of your message than with a TV story.

Next steps

This chapter provided you with a guide to creating your business case message and choosing when, how, and to whom it is presented. Your next step is to deliver your argument to the decision makers, leaders, and supporters you need to make your integration initiative successful. The following checklist will help you prepare your business case presentation for any audience.

For each audience prepare a separate presentation plan that answers all of the following questions:

Plan for presenting your business case	
Audience	
Date	
Location	
Time	
Question	Answer
What are the key public safety concerns of this audience?	
What public safety activities do they engage in today?	
Who should I call to set up a meeting or presentation?	
What logistical preparations are needed for this meeting or presentation?	
Who should I invite to the presentation/meeting?	
What materials do I need to provide?	
How, when, and with whom should I follow up?	

Conclusion

This Guide has provided you with tested strategies that can help you build and present an effective business case. The appendices that follow provide tools and references that will help you determine what's best for your situation.

In order for your integrated justice effort to succeed, you need the participation and support of a number of different people in your justice and political communities. An effective business case will help you build support and encourage participation. It will help you persuade lawmakers to fund your project, promote grassroots activity among justice professionals, and educate the public.

The business case you develop is an extension of your ideas, as well as those of the group that designed your initiative. The resources that go into your case—the time, the funding, the staff work, and the personal energy—reflect your dedication to a vision of integration. It's important to let that dedication show through every time you present the business case. If you believe in the vision and have done your homework, your audience will see your care, commitment, and enthusiasm, and be much more likely to understand and support your efforts.