
And Justice for All:

Designing Your Business Case for Integrating Justice Information

**An Executive Briefing for Leaders
of Justice Organizations**



**Center for Technology in Government
University at Albany / SUNY**

Providing Strong Leadership

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 for the integration project that persuades many different players to participate and collaborate.

Building the case for justice information is more than an analytical task. It takes sustained leadership to formulate the vision, assure a broad perspective, and communicate the message.

As a leader of this effort, you need to:

- ◆ Maintain a strong focus on the goals of integration
- ◆ Provide enough time, resources, and staff to do the job well
- ◆ Stay in touch with trends and issues in your larger environment
- ◆ Establish and maintain relationships with other leaders in the justice community
- ◆ Know what response you want from each audience
- ◆ Become an articulate advocate for the effort and its objectives

As you encourage and guide your organization's contribution to the case-building effort, keep these things in mind:

- ◆ **The case must reflect the time and the place in which it is prepared.** There is no one-size-fits-all business case. Build the case that is relevant and persuasive for your community and its current concerns.
- ◆ **A case for integration, by definition, is a collective effort.** The most comprehensive and acceptable case is one prepared by representatives of all who will be affected by the integration initiative—not by one organization acting on its own.
- ◆ **There are several audiences for the case—tailor presentations to the specific concerns of each one.** Likely audiences include not only elected officials, but their policy advisors and appointees, all kinds of justice professionals, a wide variety of community groups, and the print and broadcast media.

Doing Your Homework

Much like an architect designs a building, you need to draw a blueprint for your business case. But you've got some homework to do first. You need to figure out where you are now, where you're going, the market for your ideas, and what you're asking your audience to do. An honest, unbiased look at your organization's processes, infrastructure, goals, and resources will allow you to draw an accurate blueprint you can use to gain support for your project.

Know where you are now

Paint an unvarnished picture of today's reality so stakeholders will understand the need for change—and the consequences of doing nothing. Map and analyze existing business processes. This will help you pinpoint key problems and opportunities for improvement, raise awareness about the dependencies among agencies, and encourage agreement about needed changes. An infrastructure analysis is also needed to assess the current technological capabilities and compatibilities among all the organizations that are likely to participate in your initiative. In addition, learn about other projects that are related to your efforts. Tell decision makers what is lacking in your current system, the benefits they'll see from the new one, and why past investments weren't enough to solve the problems you face today.

Know where you are going

The analysis of your current business processes, infrastructure, and recent history will point out opportunities for change in your jurisdiction. Review each one for its potential to improve operations or achieve other important public safety benefits. It's unlikely that all of them can be addressed by a single initiative. Select the ones that seem most valuable for the near future and set specific goals. Describe the project's benefits in layman's terms by emphasizing how it will affect people in your community. Consider what it will cost to achieve these benefits and who will pay for it. Choose key milestones that will show regular progress toward larger goals.

Know the market for your ideas

The success of your business case depends in large part on its adaptability and appeal to different audiences. Each group has its own questions about your initiative and its effects. A stakeholder analysis will help you identify the issues of concern to the groups and individuals who will be impacted by your project, and how to address them. Understanding stakeholders will help you know the risks associated with your initiative and suggest ways to mitigate them. Consider some alternative approaches and be prepared to explain why you believe your selection is the best choice for all involved.

Know what you are asking your audience to do

You want your case presentation to generate specific responses from your audiences. These are among the most important actions you should ask them to take:

- ◆ Understand public safety as a complex and interconnected business process
- ◆ Advocate for the initiative
- ◆ Agree to engage in formal coordination
- ◆ Provide funding and other resources
- ◆ Display broad participation, buy-in, and trust
- ◆ Adopt and abide by standards
- ◆ Practice patience for a long range effort

Designing the Basic Case

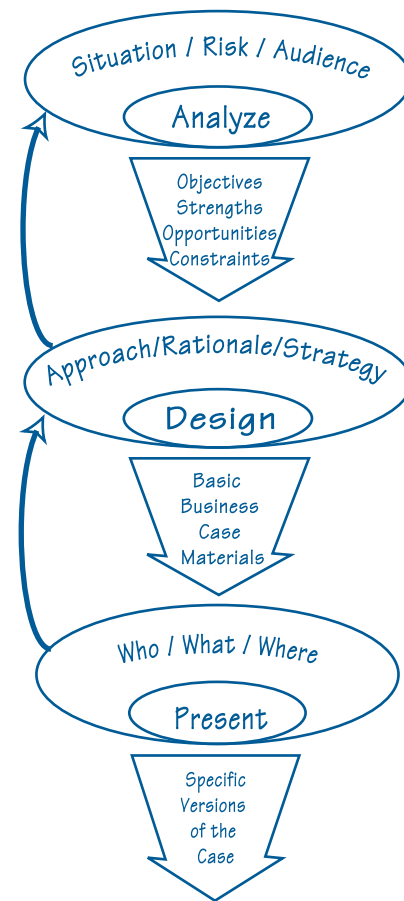
You've done your homework, now you need to apply business case basics. *And Justice for All: Designing Your Business Case for Integrating Justice Information* is a comprehensive guidebook that leads you through the process of analyzing current problems, envisioning an integrated future, organizing a comprehensive set of business case components, and then tailoring a series of presentations that address the likely concerns of key audiences.

The Guide's approach to business case design and development is presented in three phases, shown at right, each of which can be adapted to a wide range of particular circumstances. The relationship among the phases is iterative. The result of work in one phase feeds into the next, but information gained in later stages can also "loop back" to refine and improve the overall effort.

Analyze—Identify the *objectives, opportunities, strengths, risks, resources, and constraints* guiding the integration initiative. This analysis will provide increased understanding of the situation, environment, and the demand for integration.

Design—Use the information collected in the analysis phase to articulate the *details and rationale* of your overall *approach*. In this phase all of your basic case building materials will be compiled and organized according to a *strategy* for reaching your audiences.

Present—Produce the *message, materials, and methods* needed to customize and deliver the case to different audiences in order to secure their commitment and ongoing support.



Drawing Your Blueprint

After completing the analysis phase, you and your staff and colleagues will lay out a complete blueprint and begin to assemble the building blocks of your business case. These are the essential elements of any business case for justice integration.

A brief, compelling, public safety-oriented problem statement

Explain how the public is impacted by justice agencies' inability to easily share information. Find true stories in your area that illustrate the problem and its consequences for real people.

A mission statement or vision of the future that addresses the problem

Illustrate how community safety and security will be improved once the problem you currently face no longer exists. Discuss your vision in terms of public safety, not just technology.

A description of the specific objectives of your integration project

Express your project goals in specific terms that people will understand. Identify the key aims of your proposed project, state them briefly in plain language, and elaborate as needed.

A description and rationale for your preferred approach

Write a brief statement that describes how you're going to solve your problem. Include the problem, solution, participants, effect on customers, strategies, and necessary changes.

A set of alternative approaches considered and how they would or would not work

Detail any acceptable alternative approaches that will move you toward your future vision. Describe your decisions about some potential approaches that were considered and discarded.

A statement of benefits that address concerns of relevant stakeholders

Identify and discuss the benefits of change so people will understand how your project will help them in their businesses and their community.

Measures that will demonstrate improved performance or progress toward objectives

Give your stakeholders a concrete way to assess how the project is doing and identify where improvements are needed. Performance measures can include customer satisfaction, cost-efficiency, time savings, dollar savings, improved conviction rates, or quicker case dispositions.

A statement of the likely risks of your initiative and how they will be addressed

Show your audience that you know the risks, and how to lessen them. Explain how the approach you have chosen reduces the risks or at least takes them into account.

A basic plan of work with a timeline and key milestones

Present a plan of action that takes into account your goals and the existing infrastructure, funds, staff, and time constraints. Describe how different streams of work will be coordinated and include timelines with important milestones to show how progress will be measured.

A project management plan and names and roles of key managers

Carefully describe the qualifications and responsibilities of the project director and other key managers who will be responsible for the project, manage the activities, and direct the staff.

Cost estimates and potential sources of funding

Explain how much your project will cost and where you will get the money to pay for it. Your case should include all one-time and ongoing project costs. Assemble a mix of funding sources to help ensure the initiative's long term viability.

Opposing arguments and responses to them

Anticipate your audiences' reactions and respond to them in as positive a way as possible. Have solid data to back up your position and be willing to hear new ideas that might improve your plan.

Presenting Your Case

You've designed your case, now you're ready to customize your basic message and decide what medium and venue will work best for each audience. The aim is to get integration on the agenda of all your audiences—elected and appointed public officials and their staff, justice professionals, community organizations and professional associations, business organizations, the media, and the public. This is the opportunity to use your business case to educate these key members of your community and win their support—in the form of funding, staffing, advocacy, and energy.

No matter who your audience is, if you can answer the following questions, then you know you're prepared:

- ◆ 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?

- ◆ How much time will I have and what type of presentation should I prepare?
- ◆ What logistical arrangements need to be made for this meeting or presentation?
- ◆ Who should I invite to the presentation or meeting?
- ◆ What role will each person play?
- ◆ What materials do I need to provide?
- ◆ How, when, and with whom should I follow up?

Just as there are a variety of audiences for your case, there are many ways to deliver your message. Choose the method, or combination of methods, that best suits your target audience.

- √ **Meetings** with elected officials and staff, agency heads, department directors, key staff and program managers, corporate officers, foundation presidents or grants officers.
- √ **Briefing papers** that summarize issues and options.
- √ **Presentations** before legislative committees or other groups of elected officials; at regularly-scheduled meetings of community groups, professional associations, foundation boards, business groups, and unions.
- √ **Press conferences** that create newsworthy events for your business case and integration initiative.
- √ **Press releases** announcing newsworthy events.
- √ **Op / Ed articles** by community leaders that appeal for public support for justice integration.
- √ **Letters to the editor** that highlight key points of the business case.
- √ **Editorial board meetings** with newspapers to present and discuss your business case for integration.
- √ **Radio talk shows** take advantage of one of the most popular vehicles for delivering news, community, and current events.
- √ **Public service announcements** by licensed media outlets, which are required to run a certain number of advertisements publicizing nonprofit community groups and public issues.
- √ **Videos** can be used to supplement your presentation and meetings, and they can be sent to audiences you don't have the opportunity to visit in person.

- √ **A Web site** will help you put your business case before more people.
- √ **Information packets** containing a summary of main points and contact information can be left behind after an event or meeting, or sent later.

In building a business case for your integration initiative, you've completed a thorough analysis of your business processes, infrastructure, goals, resources, and needs. Share that knowledge with those who will be affected by the initiative. Let your enthusiasm for the project shine through when you present your business case. Your knowledge and commitment will help you win the support you need to succeed.

Taking the Lead

Any integration initiative will involve many people and organizations representing an array of knowledge, interests, and talents. As a leader of this effort, your special mission is to find common interests, provide resources and support, and maintain a steady focus on the larger goals. When your team is ready to do the job, keep General George S. Patton's advice in mind. "Tell them what you want them to achieve and they will surprise you with their ingenuity."

**This document and the complete guide are available on the
CTG Web site as downloadable documents.
<http://www.ctg.albany.edu/projects/doj/dojmn.html>**

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