**Elements of a Case Statement (Case for Support)**

Case statements are foundational. Your organization needs one. A case statement is not a regurgitation of the mission statement. It is a story, sometimes called a “case for support,” that illustrates **why** you chose your mission and why you do this work.

A case for support is a clarion call to the world that we must work together to solve a particular problem, a problem your organization has chosen to tackle. Case Statements, unsurprisingly, follow a very simple format and one that is VERY similar to “pitches” made for venture capital funding. The formula is:

1. Frame the societal problem. *“Since time immemorial, bullying has been seen as a rite of passage. But now we know that it can leave deep scars…sometimes for life. Bullying is a public health issue and for some, a civil rights violation.”* Make it emotional. If it isn’t, keep working on the language. Show, don’t tell. Show your audience the problem, instead of telling them.
2. Give context and depth to that problem through story, narrative, or examples to bring your audience in. *“Bullying is a universally despised behavior, yet it is nearly universally tolerated and 100% preventable.”*
3. Then state clearly that the problem is solvable. People need to know that solutions exist, and we are capable of achieving them. Be aspirational, not gloomy and doomy! We cannot solve death or taxes, but we can solve some things.

* Your organization has unlocked a key strategy to address the problem (your theory of change). Back this up with reasons why you know this. List a few things (goals) to make your effort concrete. Donors start seeing the grand goal as achievable in pieces. You are giving them a roadmap. Don’t hesitate to include some testimonials or “proof of concept.” Consider using the [Unique Value Proposition](https://offer.nonprofitfixer.com/optin31683773) exercise to better frame your organization’s value to the community.

1. Explain why your team is uniquely suited to address the problem (tools, talent, data, strategy). Discuss your past impact, if possible.
2. You will need a call to action (CTA). In a case statement this is usually a request for financial support. Discuss what it will cost to make this “dent in the universe.” Then invite them to help pitch in toward that goal. Make a concrete pitch. “We must raise $50K this year to serve young people facing bullying in Detroit schools.”

Additional tips:

* A case for support is donor-facing, not board or staff facing. Put yourself in the shoes of a donor reading the document.
* You may include your board list and financials, but they are not needed. You want this document to be brief unless you are a very large organization, in which case it may be over 10 pages and professionally designed to almost look like an annual report. Don’t be afraid to use links so people can find less important content elsewhere on your site or on the internet.
* It can be 2 pages typed, but I prefer something more [visual](https://mission-minded.com/your-case-for-support-good-design-will-make-it-stronger/).

* You may decide to list your programs and services but be careful about lists. Lists aren’t storytelling. It is one of the great failures of candidates and organizations that they list things instead of telling a story. Stories stick. Lists are forgotten.
* The mission, vision, and history of the organization may appear in your case. You need to decide if it is at the top or somewhere else. If you have a powerful and compelling story, lead with that. Make the mission statement a supporting role in the problem you are trying to solve. The mission should appear in the document.

* Focus on the donor/audience and less on your own organization. Some of the most powerful case statements are talking directly to the donor about how they make a difference, and less about what you are doing. Focus on benefits you provide, not just the features of the organization or programs.
* Some people have described the case for support as answering these questions: 1) why us, 2) why now, 3) why you should care.
* Resist the temptation to spend energy educating the donor. Donors reading the case statement likely know why you do what you do. Instead focus on emotion, motivation, and their own transformational journey. Make the person reading this document feel like they are the key to your success. Take them on your journey.

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