

Added Value

More than Money

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Explain Yourself! Why Do You Need Money? Crafting Strong Need in Your Case Statement

Few people will ask you to explain yourself or why you need money directly. This question however summarizes their thinking. To answer it, develop a case statement. A case shares the best logical, emotional, social, spiritual and financial reasons to fund your cause. Use your case whenever you explain your work. Although chiefly thought of as a written document, you often use it in conversations.

A case statement includes a number of components. One describes the need for your work. A clear need description focuses on others, points to your solutions, educates and creates urgency. This issue expands on these ideas, offers an example and teaches, The Pyramid, a tool to help you draft a strong description.

Never Begin With We

Initially, you will think about your needs in terms of “we” or from the organization’s perspective. You state, “Our space is so small and poorly configured we can’t add staff or work efficiently.” Translate your needs to a “they” perspective. Instead, thinking of your customers, you write in your need description, “With additional space the organization will serve our waiting list and current customers effectively and

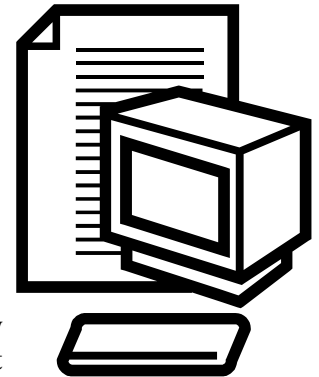
efficiently.” Craft your need and your case to improve something “out there.”

Point to Your Solution

Start the need portion of your case by describing a current situation or problem you seek to fix, improve or avoid. Describe the need to match the solution you present. Think of the solution as the bulls-eye on your dartboard. The need you describe helps your reader focus on the dartboard.

For example, hunger has many human causes and solutions; your local solution offers Perfect Paul’s Complete Vegetable Soup for Families. Working with a local shelter you employ the homeless to make soup and distribute it on Thursdays as a take-home item at low-income childcare centers. This bulls-eye (solution) provides jobs for the homeless, employs an unused lunch kitchen in the afternoon and offers quick nutritious meals (reheat the soup) for families late in the week at a reasonable cost.

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Do you want to achieve more of your mission by turning your promising ideas into funded ventures? This firm has helped hundreds of groups do exactly that—and secure millions of dollars, improve services and build stronger organizations. Contact the *More than Money Consultant* for financial success and results with facilitation, planning and grants.

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Your need description provides data on hunger in single family households across the nation, local poverty numbers and facts on the impact of poor nutrition on children and employees. You mention the needs and number of the homeless. But because it doesn't point to your dashboard, you limit your discussion on hunger related distribution

challenges and politics even though you are tempted because of your passion to educate others on world hunger.

Educate

Since the need confronts you daily its easy to forget others don't understand. To help teach them, find facts that demonstrate your experience. To help others "get the picture" provide

concrete third party proof. First, describe the need of all the groups your solutions will impact. Does your solution help, change or improve direct recipients? How does it impact indirectly, i.e., family members, classmates or employers? What impact does it have on the community or region? Will it impact other areas if you adjust it? (Yes, use your case statement to examine the impact of your work in new ways.)

In the earlier example, Perfect Paul's directly impacts families who purchase the food and the homeless it employs. Indirectly, it supports pre-schools, schools and employers. It improves the community by reducing hunger and employing the homeless.

Secondly, consider if your solution addresses more than one need of the people you serve. One after-school arts program helps children by offering:

- Safety. It prevents latchkey situations
- Creativity with artistic activities
- Academics with homework help
- Volunteerism with volunteer opportunities and
- Parents education, via meetings and take-home articles

Describing multiple needs and opportunities of those you directly serve creates an informative needs section and encourages more people with different interests to get involved.

Now or Never

Urgency moves your needs from someday to now. Your case statement makes a tentative "contract" with your readers. You promise, "If you act now, you will help this need soon." To create urgency provide information about need. Answer questions like:

- Why does your situation need action now?
- What are the

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Example: Need Discussion For A Homeless Service Agency

Homelessness is a personal, community, economic and social challenge masked by misinformation. If asked, many people will describe a homeless person as a hobo, a man who made a lifestyle choice. In fact, the national average age of a homeless person is nine years or younger. Research reveals that the homeless experience greater family disruptions and get caught in low-income jobs. Homeless children suffer from low self-esteem and face educational disruptions that hinder school progress. Locally, the average homeless person, according to a regional survey is 26 years old.

On any day an average of 1,264 homeless persons live in this area.. Sixty-eight percent are male, 32 percent female. Thirty percent are children under 18; 63 percent are adults between 18 and 60 and 7 percent are elderly. Sixty-two percent are Caucasian, 27 percent Black and the rest other "races." Only 11 percent served in the military. Half have medical problems and another 8 percent have HIV or AIDS. Just over one in five have drug or alcohol problems. Fifty-seven percent have been homeless over one year.

How did these people become homeless? Twenty-two percent lack income and 17 percent lost jobs. Twenty-six percent cited family difficulties and 12 percent medical or other disabilities. Finally, the remaining 11 percent became homeless because of housing challenges. Seventy-two percent of those surveyed report they were born and raised here or have local family and friends.

How accurate are these numbers? They are based on a physical headcount conducted each year by over 100 volunteers and local agency's staff. This survey is conducted over three days. It is refined and improved each year. Still one group might be significantly undercounted. These are homeless school children. The School Board estimates that on any given day there are 3,200 homeless school-age children. Accordingly, the number of local homeless may be near 4,000 and the average age of the local homeless person may be closer to the younger age reflected in national statistic.

(The final draft contains full citations to the survey and other information.)

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- consequences of waiting?
- Why is this the time?
- What benefits accrue if you act now?

The Great Need Description

A successful case statement builds hope. Your need description presents a solvable problem with information to demonstrate the need and some of its logical, emotional, social, spiritual and financial aspects. The clear need section educates, focuses on others, points to solutions and creates urgency.

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- local authority, i.e., “Wisconsin’s data shows that about 75 percent of the ponds are home to the big spotted frog. Julie Smith, with the Madison Audubon Club confirms that local ponds fit this pattern.”
- Increase your credibility. Cite recognizable sources, i.e., universities, Census and staff from name brand agencies
- Use different perspectives to build your argument, i.e., quote from consumers, volunteers and other agency leaders

Newsroom

2006 Workshops and Opportunities

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The Pyramid: A Tool To Help You Write

Do you want to write a description of a need but are unsure how to start? Use an inverted pyramid as illustrated on the right. With the pyramid tool, you open your discussion with global or national statistics, work your way through regional and state information and conclude with local data. The inverted pyramid helps you organize your thinking, even if in later drafts you disregard it.

Five Pyramid Benefits

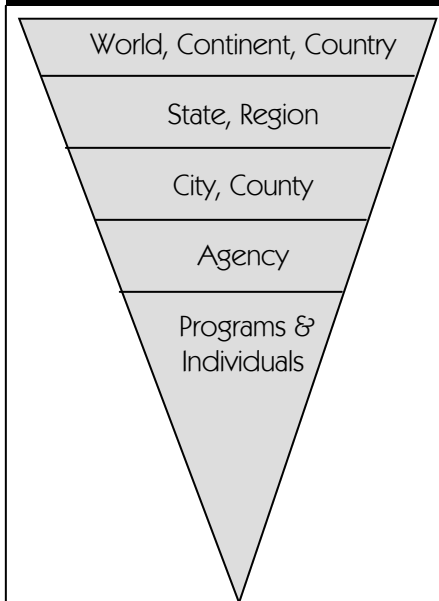
1. It provides a roadmap
2. You cover a lot of material quickly
3. It lends itself logically to different sources
4. You establish early recognition, i.e. you cite the Census before a local traffic study
5. Starting big helps readers understand the need in a global context. It suggests your idea has duplication potential.

To use the Pyramid remember:

- The top represents the larger world, not more information
- Use two or three points per level. It is helpful, but not critical to offer information for each
- As you move toward the point use several anecdotes. Stories provide emotional appeal and reach beyond the rational. They fuel urgency.
- If you lack local facts, wrap larger area ones with

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The Need Pyramid



The *More than Money Consultant* presents

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Teleconference, September 15, 12 noon, E.S.T.

New ideas are important, but if you don't use them wisely even the best fall short of their potential.

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