

Building Your Organization's Case for Support

People will not give your organization money for the sake of a new building or even for the sake of the organization. They invest money in your leadership team's ability to manage the organization. Your supporters—especially those who give to your organization at the major, leadership, or transformational level—want to be in partnership with you. They want to know how you will hold yourself accountable to achieving success with their support.

Your organization's case for support is how you demonstrate to your supporters and prospective supporters that your leadership team is worth investing in.

The Three Giving Tiers

Supporters give to your organization at three general levels. Annual and lead annual supporters give up to \$10,000 annually, typically right out of their checkbooks. Major gift supporters give between \$30,000 and \$99,999 over three years. Often, these supporters consult with their tax professional or financial advisor before making a major gift.

EScale Tip: Money moves walls, money moves tuition, and money moves timelines. These are just a few reasons you need to build a strong case for support.

Leadership and transformational givers usually invest in your organization during a major life event, such as selling a home, selling a business, or as part of their estate plan. Leadership supporters give \$100,000 to \$1 million over three years, while transformational supporters give more than \$1 million over three years.

Building Your Case for Support

Your organization's case for support demonstrates to supporters and prospective supporters why your organization is a good investment, and why their investing in you is urgent. Building a case for support requires your team to deeply understand your organization's mission, vision, and long-term goals.

A comprehensive strategic plan that identifies your organization's mission and vision as well as your long-term and short-term goals is a powerful tool in building your case for support. Use it to help you uncover answers to the following clarifying questions as you build your case for support.

EScale Tip: Your case for support articulates your strategic plan to prospective supporters. If you don't have a strategic plan in place, focus your efforts there first.

Case for Support Question One: Why?



Why should supporters invest in your mission?

This is the first question you need to answer when building your case for support. To arrive at your answer, consider the following clarifying question.

What Is Our Vision?

In other words, if you're *here*, then where's your *there*? Articulating your vision allows a supporter to say, "If that's where you're headed, then I'm compelled to join you as a partner in accomplishing your vision."

Use your strategic plan to review your organization's mission and vision. Reflect on your 10-year vision to unlock the possibilities that will help you define your 3-year plan and your 1-year plan. Your specific goals and timeline can help you articulate your *Why?* and your *there*.

Case for Support Question Two: Why Us?



What do stand for, and who do we serve?

This is the second question you need to answer when building your case for support. To arrive at your answer, consider the following clarifying question.

What Are Our Core Values?

In other words, what do you stand for? Who do you serve? How do you serve them better than other organizations do? If a major, leadership, or transformational giver is trying to partner with you, they want to know what you stand for, and perhaps what you stand against.

They also want to know more about the community you serve and how you do it better than the private and even the public organization down the road. To answer these questions for them, describe the families you serve and share several recent success stories to make it clear how your organization lives its values and is different from its competitors.

Case for Support Question Three: Why Now?



Why is it urgent that you give to us?

This is the third question you need to answer when building your case for support. To arrive at your answer, consider the following clarifying question.

What Are We Attempting to Do?

Answering this question helps you gain clarity on your organization's direction.

People want to make sure their money will be spent wisely and successfully.

Escale Tip: Want more inspiration for your 10-year, 3-year, and 1-year plan? Check out Gino Wickman's *Traction*.

Specific, actionable plans give urgency to your organization's discussions with prospective supporters. Articulating and sharing your 3-year, 1-year, and quarterly plans and the action items

within them demonstrates why a supporter's gift is needed now. It also shows that you are serious about meeting your 10-year vision.

Case for Support Starter Questions

Once you have answered the three major questions of Why? Why Us? and Why Now?, your organization will be ready to move onto creating your case for support document. The following questions will help you tell your organization's story to prospective supporters.

When did we know we had something to solve?

What is the story of the journey from the time we realized we had something to solve until now?

What research, tracking, data, or other information do we need to clarify the challenge and confirm the details?

What will the planning process and timeline look like?

What will be the impact when we solve the challenge? If we don't solve it?

If we solve it, how will we be more efficient and effective?

Will solving this challenge save time, energy, and resources?

What will solving this challenge mean and to whom?

Will solving this challenge allow us to fulfill our mission for more people?

How will solving this challenge increase our resources?

Closing Thoughts

If you have invested time and effort into building a strategic plan for your organization, the case for support writes itself because you are clear on where you're headed and what you need to do to get there. Remember—with more money, you can accomplish your goals much more quickly. A



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compelling case for support will help you move from *here* to *there* more effectively and efficiently.

