



# CRAFTING A COMPELLING BUSINESS CASE

Empowering Legal Teams &  
Influencing Stakeholders



Welcome to 'Crafting A Compelling Business Case: Empowering Legal Teams & Influencing Stakeholders,' a guide tailored for you, a senior in-house legal professional seeking to master the art of creating impactful business cases for your projects. This guide begins by acknowledging the challenges you face in bringing about organisational change and emphasises the pivotal role business cases play in ensuring the success of your project endeavours.

You'll learn what a business case is, focusing on how it can help you align your projects with your organisation's goals, gain the support of key stakeholders, justify investments, and define clear project parameters and performance metrics.

Within these pages, you'll discover 10 fundamental principles for crafting a compelling business case. Each principle is equipped with practical insights and illustrative examples. You'll delve into essential areas, such as seeking a 360-degree perspective through internal and external collaboration, understanding investment criteria and cycles, identifying influential stakeholders, linking your project to your organisation's strategic vision, pinpointing project costs, and showcasing financial and non-financial benefits. You'll also explore the business case format, leveraging content from providers and consultants, crafting a compelling narrative with a strong focus on risk management, and anticipating and addressing frequently asked questions tailored to each stakeholder.

This guide provides a practical roadmap to mastering the art of creating persuasive business cases. By following these principles and using the handy checklist, you'll enhance your ability to secure the necessary support and resources for your projects, ultimately making a substantial contribution to your organisation's success.

We hope you find this helpful and relevant.



Mo Zain Ajaz  
Principal  
LEX360



Sacha Kirk  
CMO & Co-Founder  
Lawcadia

## Introduction

*"If you want to make enemies, try to change something,"  
Woodrow T. Wilson*

Enacting change within an organisation is challenging, so it may not be surprising to hear that there is substantial evidence to assert that "more than 70% of all organisational change initiatives fail"<sup>1</sup>.

This alarming statistic also aligns with The Standish Group's 2020 CHAOS report, which estimates that only 29% of software projects are considered successful.

Fortunately, there is a plethora of research and case studies that support best practices for successful project outcomes and point to goal-setting and stakeholder buy-in as crucial. Notably, these can be achieved with the preparation of a well-drafted business case.

So, if your legal department wants to succeed with an initiative, whether that be a strategic project, sourcing technology you desperately need, garnering additional resources, or seeking investment for a panel review, then a compelling and robust business case will be required.

If you are overwhelmed by the idea of a business case and having to 'pitch' for what you need, then this guide is for you. We will provide tips, steps and practical examples of how to design and deliver a strong and persuasive business case and successfully engage with your stakeholders.



<sup>1</sup> Higgs and Rowland (2005), p. 121

## What is a business case?

A business case is a formal document that outlines the business problem being addressed and explains the rationale and benefits of the proposed project, as well as the costs, risks, and alternatives. A business case is typically submitted for executive review and approval.

A business case can have a significant impact on the success of a project, as it can help to:

- Ensure alignment with the strategic goals of the organisation
- Gain the approval and support of senior management and other stakeholders
- Justify the investment and allocate the necessary budget and resources
- Define the scope, objectives, and deliverables of the project
- Measure the performance and outcomes of the project
- Be a tool to measure the success of the project against

It is important to create a business case that is realistic, evidence-based, and persuasive.



## Do I really need one?

Let's be clear, not all projects and initiatives will require a business case, but if your project is strategic, requires significant resources, or introduces new technologies, then a business case is appropriate. Essentially, any substantial initiative that will impact the business can benefit from or may require a concise and compelling business case. Examples of legal department initiatives that may require a business case include:

- Technology projects, both longer-term and short-term
- Obtaining a consultant resource to assist with a project or deliver an outcome
- Requesting additional budget or headcount
- A new strategy or direction, such as re-structuring the function
- A law firm panel review
- Transferring assets from one part of a business to another

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A well-written business case can increase the chances of project success by providing a clear and compelling argument for why the project is needed, what value it will deliver, and how it will be executed. Therefore, it is important to create a business case that is realistic, evidence-based, and persuasive.



## Are there risks to be aware of?

There are also risks that should serve as a caution for pushing a key project through without a business case.

These could include:

**Misaligned goals:** Without a clear business case, there may be no clearly defined and agreed-upon goals for the investment. This could potentially result in the project stalling, selecting a vendor that isn't suitable, or not achieving the desired outcome.

**Limited buy-in:** Getting the support of stakeholders across the business may be challenging to obtain without sharing a robust case for doing so. It's also possible that opposition to the investment could arise months after project initiation or implementation when stakeholders challenge you to justify the ongoing costs. This will be hard to do without an existing business case that includes a measure of the success and impact of the initiative.



**Information security:** Technology purchased but not effectively utilised by the team, resulting in abandonment — commonly known as "zombie-tech" — represents a notable information security risk. Similarly, non-technology projects proceeding without a comprehensive business case and proper processes may overlook the potential implications for privacy and information security.

## 10 Principles for a Compelling Business Case

Drawing on LEX360's and Lawcadia's extensive experience, we have prepared 10 principles to help you - a busy senior person in the in-house legal department - to craft a succinct and compelling business case for your project.

If you follow these principles, you are assured of covering most of the pertinent issues and requirements and will be well-prepared to navigate your way to an approved project.



## 1. Establish the need with a 360° view

Arguably the most critical part of a business case is understanding the problem and demonstrating the need for the legal project. Obtaining a 360° perspective is important and this involves seeking internal contributions, peer thoughts, and external input.

Start by having conversations within your organisations, such as your team and the broader business and seek to gain diverse perspectives and identify concerns and benefits. By having informal discussions, you will hear valuable stories about how your project will influence or impact what they do and how they work. You may identify concerns ranging from inefficiencies in existing processes to worries about how the project might affect their day-to-day operations. When you include these concerns in your business case, you demonstrate that you've taken into account the real-world implications of the project and have a plan to address them. Moreover, you can also gather additional ideas and benefits.

💡 For example, individuals in other business units who stand to benefit from the project may offer insights into how it can best meet their needs. Using quotes from team members and colleagues adds credibility and a human touch to your business case, making it more relatable to decision-makers.

External perspectives from third-party organisations and peers who have experience with similar technology or consultants can provide an invaluable 360-degree view of the project. They can offer insights into the technology's limitations, potential use cases, and real-world organisational impact.

💡 For instance, if you're considering implementing a legal technology solution, talking to other organisations that have used the same solution can help you understand how it performs in practice, what challenges they encountered, and how they overcame them.

Including third-party and peer insights in your business case adds credibility. It shows you've conducted thorough research and due diligence, tapping into a network of experienced professionals and organisations. Decision-makers are more likely to trust and support a project when they see that you've gone beyond internal perspectives and have sought out a wider range of voices to inform your proposal.



## 2. Understand the investment criteria and cycle

In a 'more for less' environment, there are likely to be limitations on the availability of budgets for investment, so it is wise to understand any investment criteria or budget cycles sooner rather than later.

Understanding your organisation's investment criteria and cycle will help to ensure that your business case is realistic and aligns with the financial constraints of your company.

💡 For instance, let's consider a scenario where your organisation has limited resources for the upcoming fiscal year. By speaking with the Finance Director, you can learn that funding requests must be submitted at least 6 months in advance to secure budget allocations for the following year. Armed with this knowledge, you can time your proposal appropriately to have a better chance of securing the necessary resources.

Further, by engaging with the Finance Director during your stakeholder mapping process, you gain insights into the decision-making process and criteria used to approve investments.

💡 Suppose your legal department requires additional staff for a compliance initiative. During your conversations, you discover that the Finance Director prioritises projects that directly contribute to cost reduction and risk mitigation. Armed with this information, you can tailor your business case to highlight how the compliance initiative meets legal requirements and aligns with the organisation's financial objectives.



Without a clear understanding of the investment criteria and cycle, you risk submitting a business case that doesn't align with the company's financial planning, leading to frustration and potential delays in project execution.

💡 Imagine proposing a technology upgrade for your legal team only to discover that the budget for such projects is typically approved in the third quarter of each year. By coordinating with the Finance Director and General Counsel, you can ensure that your request is timed appropriately, reducing the likelihood of unnecessary delays and ensuring your project can proceed smoothly once approved.

Grasping the investment criteria and cycle through conversations with key stakeholders is crucial in the business case development process. This knowledge helps you align your proposal with the organisation's financial constraints, enhances decision-making by tailoring your case to meet specific criteria, and minimises potential delays and frustration. Moreover, proactively engaging with finance and legal leadership positions your business case for greater success and smoother implementation.



### 3. Identify stakeholders with influence

A key principle of preparing a business case is to understand the macro environment of the project and identify the project stakeholders.

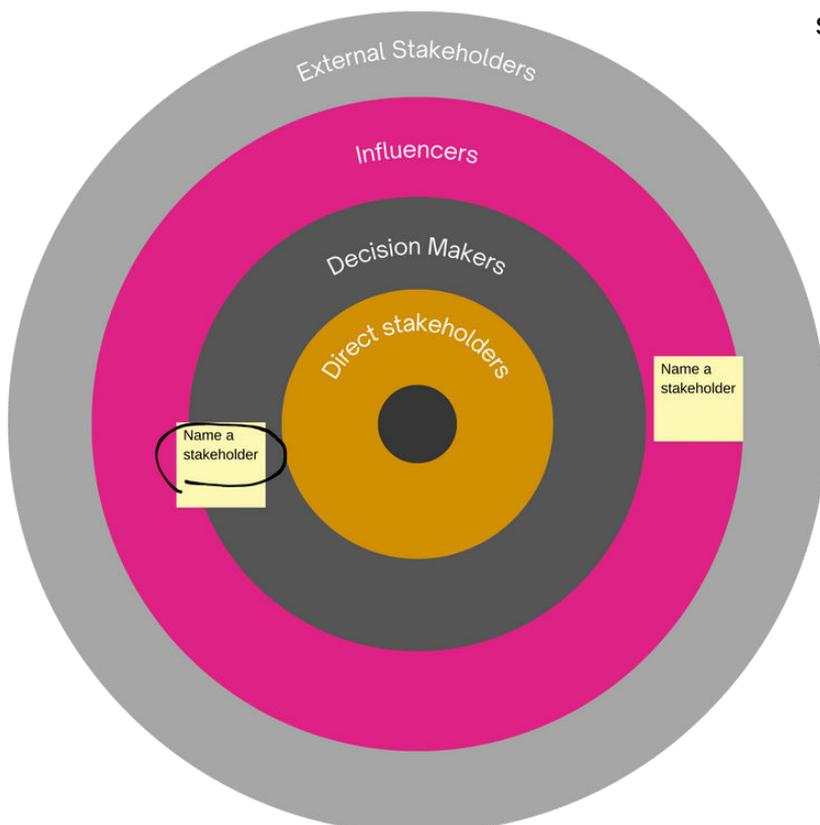
As a good starting point, we recommend preparing a stakeholder map, such as the example provided.

Be sure to consider those who are:

- **Direct stakeholders** – such as the users of new software or the teams that will be restructured
- **Decision makers** – such as the board, the General Counsel, innovation/tech committee, finance or procurement

- **Influencers** – this includes those that may want to have input or influence over the outcome, such as procurement, the IT Director or Finance Director
- **External stakeholders** – this includes any organisations or regulators that may be impacted or be influential on the project, such as law firms, consultants, or regulatory bodies

While you don't necessarily need to include these stakeholders explicitly in your business case, understanding who they are and determining whether they need consultation or engagement will be key to a successful project. So, where possible, prepare a plan for addressing the needs each stakeholder.



#### Stakeholder Circle

State the stakeholders name, how they influence the success of the project and determine how they need to be managed and communicated to.

Name a stakeholder

Name a stakeholder

Name a stakeholder

## 4. Seek clarity on the format and process

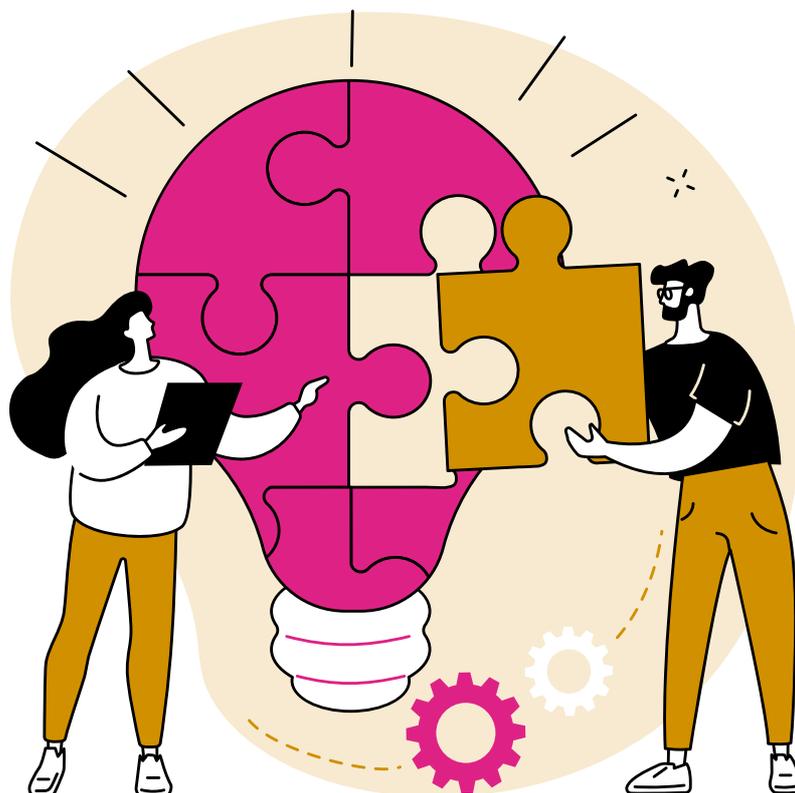
When you have finalised the return on investment numbers and clarified the pain points, it is important to find out the format and internal processes. Many organisations will have a particular template or format to be used for a business case, such as:

- Formal document in a set format
- Presentation with PowerPoint slides
- Short format 'one-pager'

If there is no set formal format available, then it is helpful to ask for examples of previous business cases that have been successful so that you know what the business is typically looking for. When in doubt, err on the side of caution and provide a succinct business document that is direct and to the point.

Also, seek clarity on the process of getting the business case approved and appreciate the internal hierarchies that may be involved.

💡 For example, the General Counsel may want to socialise the idea internally first and then get the formal business case in front of the Finance Director for feedback. Or it might need to go to a committee for review and approval. You want to understand the format and process, as you don't want to waste time or provide something the stakeholder doesn't want or need. If the format is tailored to the stakeholder's preferences, they are more likely to engage with the content, ask relevant questions, and make an informed decision.



## 5. Ask technology providers or consultants for content



Seeking content for your business case from the technology provider or consultant you seek to hire is valuable, as they can offer data and insights based on their expertise and past experiences. Tech providers and consultants often have access to valuable data and analytics that can support the financial justification of your project.

💡 For instance, if you're implementing a legal operations system, the technology provider may have statistics on how their solution has benefited other organisations.

Or they may have a ROI tool or ready reckoner to help you build out the financial benefits discussed in Principle 8. By leveraging this data, you can strengthen the economic argument in your business case.

Likewise, consultants can also estimate the potential savings or benefits your organisation can expect to achieve through the project.

💡 For instance, if you're considering a consultant to optimise legal operations and processes, they can draw from their experience to estimate how much time and cost savings similar projects have generated for other clients.

Obtaining content for your business case from tech providers and consultants is valuable because it adds a data-driven, real-world perspective to your proposal. It helps you provide concrete evidence of the potential benefits, return on investment, and even risk mitigation strategies, all of which can be compelling arguments for gaining approval and support for your legal project. This step ensures that your business case is grounded in practical insights and industry expertise, making it more persuasive and credible.

## 6. Link to organisational strategy

When preparing a business case, it's crucial to establish a direct link between your project and your organisation's strategy. This connection is essential as it underscores the project's relevance and demonstrates its alignment with your company's overarching goals and priorities. This strategic alignment is a guiding principle, ensuring that your legal team's initiatives contribute significantly to the organisation's success.

**First and foremost**, connecting your project to your organisation's strategy shows your deep understanding of the company's long-term vision and competitive environment.

💡 For example, if your company's strategic focus centres on enhancing customer experiences through digital transformation, you can directly tie in a legal project related to data privacy compliance.

💡 Or, if the organisation's strategy is focused on bringing in revenue, then buying a new system that significantly improves speed-to-contract will help demonstrate the project's importance.

By highlighting this alignment, you're conveying that your project isn't a standalone effort but a pivotal component that helps realise the company's strategic aspirations.



For an informative guide on what makes an excellent legal strategy check out LEX360's helpful blog post: [Five Steps Towards A More Strategic In-House Legal Team.](#)

**Secondly**, this alignment will help to facilitate resource allocation and prioritisation.

💡 Suppose your organisation's strategy emphasises cost reduction and operational efficiency. In that case, you can make a compelling case for investing in a legal process automation project.

This clearly demonstrates how the legal department adapts to the strategic direction and plays a vital role in achieving cost-saving objectives. This, in turn, helps senior leaders make informed decisions about allocating resources where they'll have the most substantial impact on the organisation's success.

**Lastly**, when you connect your project to your organisation's strategy, you increase its chances of obtaining the necessary approvals and resources. Senior leaders are more likely to support projects with a clear connection to strategic goals. It becomes more compelling if your business case highlights that your legal project directly contributes to strengthening the organisation's market position or ensuring regulatory compliance in an evolving legal landscape. This alignment instils confidence that your project is necessary and strategically advantageous, making it easier to garner support and resources.

### Venn Diagram of Strategic Alignment

Identify the different organisational goals and strategies with which the project aligns.



## 7. Identify the costs to achieve the outcome

In order to write the business case, you need to determine the costs to achieve the outcome or project success. Identifying all costs associated with your project is crucial to ensure that your business case is built on a foundation of accurate financial planning.

When the project is related to purchasing technology, it is important to identify the total cost of ownership or TCO. This is a common term used to refer to an estimate of all the direct and indirect costs involved in acquiring and operating a product or system over its lifetime – usually three to five years. The total cost of ownership includes direct costs like subscriptions and implementation fees and any indirect or hidden expenses.

💡 For example, beyond the software costs, there may be ongoing hidden costs such as employee training, time spent on data migration, and potential penalties for early termination of existing contracts. By comprehensively identifying both the apparent and concealed expenses, you provide decision-makers with a realistic financial picture, reducing the risk of budget overruns.

A thorough understanding of total project costs allows you to allocate resources more effectively.

💡 For instance, if your project involves engaging a consultant to set up a new law firm panel, identifying hidden costs like employee time involved and the need for a project coordinator can help you allocate the right resources at the right time. By recognising these indirect costs upfront, you can proactively manage them and ensure that your project stays on track, preventing disruptions that could impede progress and trigger frustration.

When it comes to your business case, by appropriately identifying project costs and addressing them upfront, you demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the project's financial implications and emphasise the importance of proactive risk management. This not only bolsters the credibility of your proposal and increases the likelihood of project success but also minimises the risk of unexpected financial obstacles.



## 8. Demonstrate the financial and non-financial benefits

Determining the financial benefits, such as the return on investment (ROI) for legal projects, is necessary for informed decision-making. These are the metrics that you will need to be able to demonstrate in the business case:

- The total costs of ownership
- The complete financial benefits of the project (usually the savings or profit generated)
- The net savings or net profit (the total benefits minus the total costs)
- The return on investment (usually reported as an investment multiplier, e.g. 4.2x ROI)
- The payback period – the amount of time it takes to recover the investment (expressed in months or years)



Calculating the financial benefits can be tricky but incredibly valuable, so spend time getting this right. Contact the chosen vendor or consultant to assist you with this, as they have tools and “ready reckoners” available.

Possible cost savings could include the following:

- Time savings – valued at an equivalent cost of internal resource (e.g. salary) or the external equivalent if the legal work had to be briefed out to a law firm
- Reduced external spend
- A future savings benefit of hiring an internal resource compared to the equivalent of using outside counsel

💡 For example, if introducing a document automation tool could save 2 hours per contract, and there are 200 applicable contracts per year, then a total of 400 hours is saved. If the internal equivalent value is £200 per hour, then the total cost saved annually is £80,000.

For a practical guide on how to calculate ROI for legal technology solutions check out Lawcadia’s helpful blog post: [How To Calculate ROI For Legal Technology](#)

If there are substantial non-financial benefits or there will never be a return on the investment, it is essential to be clear on that. For example, if the investment is for risk mitigation or governance, there are no obvious costs to be saved. However, it is still an important project to remain competitive, protect reputation, reduce legal exposure and meet corporate governance or regulatory obligations.

In situations where a direct return on investment will not be achieved, seeking out and demonstrating value for money will be important. This could include conducting a market scan, RFI (request for information) or thorough RFP (request for proposal) process involving the corporate procurement function. This process will seek to balance the costs versus the quality of the solution and ensure the best fit with the agreed criteria.

Finally, use visual elements like charts to illustrate the financial benefits or ROI calculations where possible. Visual representations can make complex data more accessible and engaging.



## 9. Prepare the business case

You are now at the crux of the process – preparing the business case! Dive into the detail, interrogate the information and data, pull out the insights, capture key assumptions and, most importantly, tell a compelling story.

The business case will serve as the primary document that stakeholders, such as the General Counsel (GC), Finance Director (FD), or committees, will review to make decisions. It's your opportunity to clearly convey the project's objectives, benefits, and alignment with organisational goals.

To engage and persuade decision-makers, frame the project in a way that makes it relatable and resonates with stakeholders.

💡 For example, you can include real-life scenarios that illustrate the challenges the organisation faces and how the proposed project offers solutions. This storytelling aspect humanises the project and makes it more compelling.

Be sure to address potential risks and outline strategies for mitigating them.

💡 For instance, if there are concerns about the project's impact on day-to-day operations, detail how you plan to minimise disruptions through careful planning and phased implementation. This demonstrates a proactive approach to risk management and reassures decision-makers.

Finally, once you've written the business case, ask trusted team members and colleagues to read the business case, ask questions and provide feedback.



## 10. Predict FAQs that may be relevant to each stakeholder

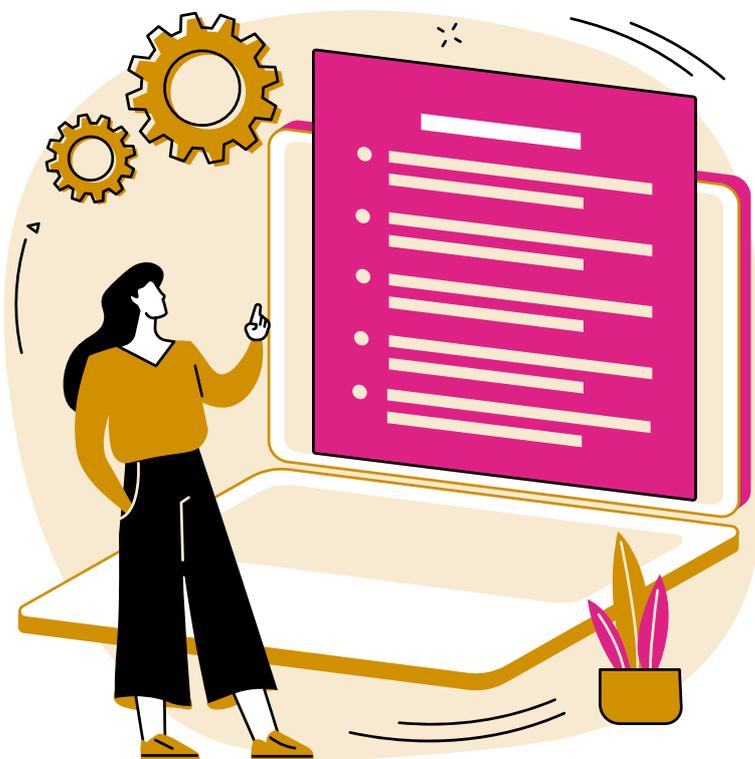
Predicting frequently asked questions (FAQs) that may be relevant to each stakeholder and preparing responses is a crucial step in ensuring the success of your business case.

By anticipating the questions and concerns that stakeholders may have, you demonstrate proactive and thoughtful preparation. This proactive approach can help you address potential doubts and uncertainties before they arise and streamline the decision-making process.

These are some typical examples:

- Suppose the Finance Director (FD) is likely to inquire about the project's long-term financial impact. In that case, you can prepare a response that outlines a multi-year financial projection, demonstrating a commitment to long-term success.
- Perhaps the General Counsel (GC) is concerned about the project's alignment with the organisation's legal strategy. In that case, you can provide a clear response that outlines how the project supports the legal department's strategic goals.
- If a stakeholder is curious about how the proposed legal technology will integrate with existing systems, having a detailed integration plan as part of your responses ensures transparency in the project's execution.

As discussed in the previous Principle, sharing the business case with colleagues and seeking their input on the plan and anticipated questions is an excellent practice. Colleagues can provide valuable feedback on the clarity of your responses and offer insights into potential questions you may have missed. This collaborative approach allows you to refine the business case to make it more robust and comprehensive.



## Conclusion

In crafting a compelling business case for your legal project, you've embarked on a transformative journey that transcends mere paperwork. It's a strategic endeavour focused on aligning your initiative with your organisation's overarching goals, effectively demonstrating the need and value to key stakeholders, and ultimately paving the way for success. These 10 guiding principles serve as your roadmap to navigate the intricacies of project approval. They are carefully designed to assist you in constructing a business case that is not only data-driven but also human-centred — a narrative that not only outlines costs but also unveils potential benefits, and a proposal that both informs and persuades.

As you embark on this process, it's crucial to recognise that a compelling business case is more than just a document; it's a strategic tool that can elevate the legal department's role within your organisation.

The art of creating a compelling business case for a legal project lies in combining the quantitative with the qualitative, the strategic with the practical, and the financial with the human element.

By adhering to these principles, you'll be well-equipped to engage stakeholders, anticipate concerns, and effectively demonstrate the value your legal initiatives bring to the table. As you navigate the dynamic landscape of legal project management, adapt these principles to suit your specific needs and contexts, ensuring that your business case reflects not only the unique requirements of your organisation but also the potential of your legal department.

A well-crafted business case is more than a proposal; it's an advocacy tool for a transformative initiative that can positively impact the organisation's bottom line, strategic goals, and long-term success. Your journey commences with these principles, and its destination is the realisation of a legal project that makes a lasting difference in your organisation.



# BUSINESS CASE CHECKLIST



## 10 PRINCIPLES FOR A COMPELLING BUSINESS CASE

1. Establish the need with a 360° view
2. Understand the investment criteria & cycle
3. Identify stakeholders with influence
4. Seek clarity on the format and process
5. Ask tech providers or consultant for content
6. Link to organisational strategy
7. Identify the costs to achieve the outcome
8. Demonstrate the financial & non-financial benefits
9. Prepare the business case
10. Predict FAQs that may be relevant to each stakeholder



Lawcadia is an end-to-end legal operations platform for in-house legal teams and law firms. A unique two-sided platform with an intelligent automation engine, Lawcadia transforms the way in-house legal teams and law firms collaborate and solve business problems.

In-house legal teams benefit from structured intake and triage, streamlined workflows, accurate instructions, greater control of budgets and law firm engagements, as well as optimised document, email, and matter management. Plus, configurable metrics and dashboards clearly demonstrate the legal function's value within the organisation.

Law firms benefit from enhanced client relationships through client intake portals, improved project management and the creation of bespoke regulatory workflows supported by exceptional reporting analytics.

Established in 2015, Lawcadia is headquartered in Brisbane, Australia. In 2022, Lawcadia expanded its operations into the United Kingdom.

Learn more: [Lawcadia.co.uk](https://www.lawcadia.co.uk)



LEX360 is a boutique legal operations consultancy, led by former General Counsel and Head of Legal Operations, Mo Zain Ajaz. A specialist in legal process optimisation and lean methodology, the firm promotes process driven law, powered by continuous improvement and technology. To this end, LEX360's mission is to look at traditional law through a 360-degree lens for clients, offer solutions and equip them to achieve legal excellence.

Learn more: [LEX360.co.uk](https://www.lex360.co.uk)