

HBR GUIDE TO BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS CASE (HBR GUIDE SERIES) BY RAYMOND SHEEN



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HBR Guide to

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How to Give
a Killer
Presentation

Building Your Business Case

Tell a compelling story
Identify stakeholders
Analyze risk and return

By Raymond Sheen
with Amy Gallo



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About the Author

Raymond Sheen, PMP, is the president of Product & Process Innovation, a consulting firm specializing in project management, product development, and process improvement. Amy Gallo is a contributing editor at Harvard Business Review and is the author of the forthcoming HBR Guide to Managing Conflict at Work.

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Get your idea off the ground.

You've got a great idea that will increase revenue or boost productivity—but how do you get the buy-in you need to make it happen? By building a business case that clearly shows your idea's value. That's not always easy: Maybe you're not sure what kind of data your stakeholders will trust. Or perhaps you're intimidated by number crunching.

The HBR Guide to Building Your Business Case, written by project management expert Raymond Sheen, gives you the guidance and tools you need to make a strong case. You'll learn how to:

- Spell out the business need for your idea
 - Align your case with strategic goals
 - Build the right team to shape and test your idea
 - Calculate the return on investment
 - Analyze risks and opportunities
 - Present your case to stakeholders
-
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Raymond Sheen, PMP, is the president of Product & Process Innovation, a consulting firm specializing in project management, product development, and process improvement. Amy Gallo is a contributing editor at Harvard Business Review and is the author of the forthcoming HBR Guide to Managing Conflict at Work.

Most helpful customer reviews

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Traditional HBR High Quality

By Naomi B.

Being a fan of HBR's anything, I was eager to get my hands on this book for a review. Being in healthcare business development for over 15 years, this book sung out to me. This is an awesome basic book that lays out the Who, What, When and Why of a business case. In tradition HBR excellence, it took it a step above and I was able to pull things out that I could utilize as well. As usual, this will be an HBR guide that I purchase, use and refer to. I think I would have liked to have seen it go a tad bit deeper into tips that someone

in my position could utilize. At its core, this was still a book for novices to utilize and learn from.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Here is a five-step process to prepare and then deliver a “killer” presentation

By Robert Morris

Most of the volumes in the “HBR Guide to” series consists of anthologies of articles previously published in Harvard Business Review in which various contributors share their insights concerning a major business subject such as Better Business Writing, Getting the Right Work Done, and Project Management.

As is also true of volumes in other such series, notably HBR Essentials, HBR Must Reads, and HBR Management Tips, HBR Guides offer substantial value in cutting-edge thinking from 25-30 sources in a single volume at a price (each at about \$15-20 from Amazon in the bound version) for a fraction of what article reprints would cost.

What we have in this volume — on sale by Amazon US for only \$18.47 — is material created by Raymond Sheen with Amy Gallo. It is also noteworthy that Chris Anderson, TED’s Curator, contributed Appendix B, “How to Create a Killer Presentation.” Nancy Duarte supplements Anderson’s material with an explanation of how to “Find the perfect mix of data and narrative,” Figure B-1.

Formulation of a business case requires effective use of the four levels of discourse that Aristotle examines in his classic work, *Rhetoric*: Explain with information (exposition), make vivid with compelling details (description), tell a story for explain a sequence (narration), and convince with logic and/or evidence (argumentation). According to Sheen, “No matter where you work or what type of idea you’re pitching, you should follow the same basic process for any business case you develop.”

Here is the five-step process he recommends and explains:

1. “The story starts, as all good ones do, with a problem. This is the [begin] business need [end] you’re trying to solve.” (See section 1)
2. “Once you’ve pinpointed the problem or opportunity, it’s time to identify your story’s characters”
 - o Your stakeholders have the authority to approve or reject your business case.
 - o Beneficiaries are those who stand to gain from what you’re proposing.
 - o You’ll draw on subject-matter experts to help create the case.
3. “Then you’ll consider alternatives for meeting the business need — different ways your story might play out.” (See section 3)
4. “After making the best choice in light of what you know at that point, you’ll create a very high-level project plan to roughly gauge the amount of time and resources you’ll need and the value your solution will bring.”
5. “Finally. it’s time to tell your story. Package it in whatever format your company uses for business cases and present it to your stakeholders. If no templates exist, create your own logical format.” (See section 5)

With Gallo, Sheen explains HOW to complete each step.

If you need to prepare a “killer presentation” in one form or another, here are the first two of Anderson’s five

recommendations:

Frame Your Story: “When I think about compelling presentations, I think about taking an audience on a journey. A successful talk is a little miracle — people see the world differently afterward. If you frame the talk as a journey, the biggest decisions are figuring out where to start and where to end. To find the right place to start, consider what people in your audience already know about your subject — and how much they care about it...The most engaging speakers do a superb job of very quickly introducing the topic, explaining why they care so deeply about it, and convincing the audience members that they should, too.”

Plan Your Delivery: Once you’ve get the framing down, it’s time to focus on your delivery. There are three main ways to deliver a talk. You can read it directly off a script or teleprompter. You can develop a set of bullet points that map out what you’re going to say in each section rather than scripting the whole thing word for word. Or you can memorize your talk, which entails rehearsing ton the point where you internalize every word — verbatim...My advice: Don’t read it, and don’t use a teleprompter. It’s usually just too distancing — people will know your reading [rather than personally sharing what you really care about].”

Anderson also explains how to Develop Stage Presence, Plan the Multimedia, and Putting It All Together.

* * *

Those who need to formulate a business case — such as CEO preparing a “dog and pony show” for an IPO road show, a brand manager unveiling a new product, a team seeking additional resources for a project team, or a start-up putting to VCs — will find an abundance of information, insights, and counsel in the HBR Guide to Building Your Business Case.

Be sure to keep in mind, meanwhile, that the presentation must take into full account a question that is in the mind of every member of the given audience: "Why should I care?"

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Best Book I've Read That'll Get You Up to Speed on Building a Business Case

By J. Easmon

Hands down: this is the best book I've read about building a business case. It's full of practical tips to help even neophytes go through the process of presenting a sound business case to an executive review committee.

The authors--Amy Gallo and Raymond Sheen--bring a direct approach and walk you through the process of persuading higher ups to seriously consider your viable business solution.

Here's my synopsis of the book: First, identify the problem. Second, gather input from SMEs. Third, consider alternatives. Fourth, crunch numbers. This includes calculating the ROI, NPV, IRR, payback period, break-even point, and so forth. Fifth, consider the risks. And finally, present your business case to the appropriate execs.

I loved Amy and Raymond's insight. They also give steps for handling push-back and tips to improve your chances of getting buy-in. This book's worth the investment. It's a definitive guide. It's a practical guide. And I'm better prepared to recommend solutions because of the insights gleaned from this book.

Kudos HBR

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