

## Creating successful business cases – why we're different (and why you should care)



Rose Percival

We help position your business case for success by providing professional support across three key areas:

- the processes used within the organisation to develop the business case
- facilitating meaningful stakeholder engagement
- developing the business case.

### BUSINESS CASE PROCESSES ARE CRUCIAL, BUT NEED TO BE FLEXIBLE

When we talk about business cases, it can conjure up visions of weighty documents that provide information and options but don't tell the story about why the investment is a priority. Rose Percival, our Practice Lead for Investment Decision-Making, advises clients to focus first on the strategic case for change. This provides the foundation for developing a coherent and compelling outcome.

From time to time, organisations that develop a lot of business cases need to stand back and review their practice. An example of this was a review of a large national agency's business case processes in 2017.

Taking our preferred 'co-design' approach, what we found was that the parts of the organisation were unaware how to use the flexibility of the business case framework. By working through all the business case phases, they were sometimes doing three separate business cases when one (or two) would have been sufficient. We worked with them to identify a number of process improvements to simplify the overall model they had developed. The intention was to lift transparency of decision-making, and to simplify the process for low cost/low risk business cases.

### FACILITATING MEANINGFUL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IS FUNDAMENTAL FOR SUCCESS

We have learnt that stakeholder engagement is vital for developing a successful business case. Engaging stakeholders from a very early stage fulfils three key purposes.

1. It brings them in before decisions about changes are formed, meaning that they are part of, and have a very good understanding of the issues you are seeking to resolve.
2. It ensures you get the benefit of their experience, and that any solutions designed will take into account the needs of other parties.
3. It means that key relationships and understanding of respective roles are worked through early on in the business case development process.

We also offer an approach for managing complex governance arrangements where it is vital for the success of the case to have Board oversight. This approach engages governance at a strategic level and book-ends the development of any business case.

For example, we assisted Wellington Water Ltd to navigate complex governance arrangements across five asset-owning councils using this approach. This has ensured that the political level is kept in touch but does not get involved in the detail.

## BUSINESS CASE DEVELOPMENT – A COMPELLING STORY IS KEY, THE DOCUMENT IS JUST THE OUTPUT

Here at Tregaskis Brown we apply our intellectual capital to help you to develop business cases that tell the right story, in the right way, for the right audience.

We take a pragmatic approach to business case development – the purpose of a business case is to enable decision-makers to make sound decisions, supported by crucial information. At the same time, the business case must provide a robust picture of the risks and benefits to ensure the success (and transparency) of the initiative for all stakeholders.

We find that many teams get caught up in the actual writing of the business case, before doing enough of the critical thinking and analysis required to inform the writing. It is also vital to have the SRO/sponsor in the room for many of the early conversations. This helps frame the business case approach with the right focus.

Our experienced facilitators (who are also expert business case practitioners) lead 2-hour workshops with



key stakeholders, guiding them to have the conversations needed to generate the content for the business case. In terms of capability, we have three of the most experienced and accredited ILM facilitators in New Zealand, as well as a team of highly-skilled business case writers.

In addition to the standard workshops required for the strategic and economic cases, we can also help you to navigate through the remaining financial, commercial and management cases, using workshops to develop the content in a more streamlined way. Getting the key decision-maker in the room with the subject matter experts enables you to agree on the content and decisions that will be recorded in the business case. This minimises the amount of re-writing that typically goes on when business cases receive requests for change from multiple sources. This process will then allow you the flexibility to use the collateral generated from each workshop to write the business case yourself, or to use one of Tregaskis Brown's business case writers.



**Need help?** Our team includes three of the country's most experienced Investment Logic Mapping (ILM) facilitators, and many skilled business case writers. To discuss your organisation's needs contact: [rose.percival@tregaskisbrown.co.nz](mailto:rose.percival@tregaskisbrown.co.nz), 027 245 0575.



### About the Author

Rose Percival is the lead for the Investment Decision-Making practice at Tregaskis Brown. She is a trained Investment Logic Mapping (ILM) facilitator, a trained Gateway reviewer, and a member of the Institute of Directors.