

## B&F BOOK REVIEW

*Edited by Hal Kirkwood and Rita Ormsby*

De Stricker, Ulla. *Business Cases for Info Pros—Here's Why, Here's How*. Information Today, Inc. Medford, NJ. 2008. ISBN: 978-1-57387-335-2. 107p. \$39.50.

If Ulla De Stricker has left anything out of this excellent “how to” book on the development of business cases for information professionals, I can’t think of what it might be. Regardless of the type of organization you work in, there is something useful here for you. And the good news is that you won’t need to spend a lot of money or a lot of time to capitalize on the value that this comprehensive little guide offers.

There is no question, as Ken Haycock notes in his cover endorsement, [that] “too many good ideas are not funded because a compelling case is not made for them.” *Business Cases for Info Pros* aims to provide you the wherewithal to make your business cases more compelling and, therefore, more likely to succeed. Whether you are a novice manager or someone with years of experience, everyone today is facing sea changes in the provision of information services to their parent organization and needs to be able to respond to these changes in both a strategic and operational way. Developing a cogent business case in order to get support for implementing the changes we believe are critical is something we all struggle with.

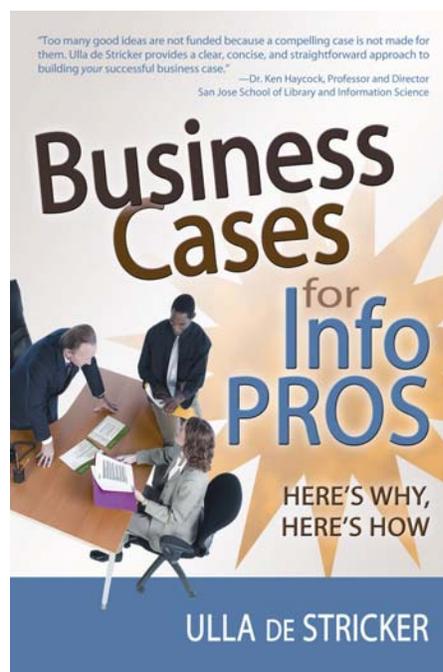
What Ms. De Stricker has done is nothing less than provided us with the equivalent of Garmin’s or Tom Tom’s or Magellan’s (pick your preferred GPS)

directions on how to get “from here to there”, where “here” is your service’s current state of operation and “there” is where you ideally want to be. Her signposts (chapters 1–4 covering The Decision Making Context, Thinking About Money, The Business Case Approach, and The Business Case Framework) are elegantly and very readably set out, and her recommended short cuts (chapters 5–8, The Business Case Memorandum, Case Studies, Presenting the Message in Person, and Appearance Matters) provide a road map that even the most directionally challenged can follow. And

in case you have to “double back” should you take a wrong turn, she also provides a Final Checklist to remind you of the important turns you might have missed. She’s even taken into consideration encountering a “Dead End” by playing the Devil’s advocate and suggesting anticipated questions and challenges your case may face from upper management so that you’ll be prepared to confirm where you are headed or come up with alternative routes.

There are two particular things I liked most about *Business Cases for Info Pros*. First is the general theme that permeates the book which is the necessity for any IS business plan to have at its core an obvious alignment with the parent organization’s

mission and a clear statement of how the object of the plan will directly benefit that mission. Whether discussing “why we bother to prepare a business plan” or how to characterize the “PNO” (problem, need, or opportunity) the reader is encouraged to do so from the vantage point of the decision makers rather than with their IS hat on. Keeping in mind upper management’s “WIIF” (what’s in it for me?) mindset is one of De Stricker’s frequently reinforced guideposts and one you ignore at your peril.



Second is that everything in this book is extremely pragmatic. You can literally take her frameworks, and her language and incorporate them directly into any plan you prepare. While her caveats in setting the context for each case study and how you must consider your own organizational context when you prepare your plan are wise, I found myself reading some sentences and saying “yes, those are the words I’ve been searching for to describe my point.” Her language is articulate and succinct and in the context of cautioning the reader against using “library speak,” provides a multitude of suggested phrases that can be incorporated into one’s own plan.

Who today has as much time as they would like to interrupt doing their day-to-day job to learn how to prepare a successful business plan? Of course we all have the best intentions but we never quite seem to be able to free up the time needed, even if we knew how to best use that time. And how often have you read articles or monographs or sat through a CE class and not been able to take away anything that you could put into practice immediately? Any IS manager worth their salt always has a variety of projects on their wish list awaiting approval and/or funding. Take a couple of hours (literally that’s all it will take) to read this book and I’d be surprised if you didn’t immediately see a plan developing before your eyes on how to push forward one of those projects.

Regardless of the type of information service you work in I heartily recommend *Business Cases for Info Pros* as a must read for any manager who wants to be able to put forward a business plan that has the strongest possible chance of succeeding. – Toby Pearlstein, Bain & Co., Retired

Hal Kirkwood	Purdue University
<a href="mailto:Kirkwood@purdue.edu">Kirkwood@purdue.edu</a>	765/494-2921
Rita Ormsby	
Baruch College, The City University of New York	
<a href="mailto:rita.ormsby@baruch.cuny.edu">rita.ormsby@baruch.cuny.edu</a>	646/312-1608

## MOVING IN WITH YOUR CLIENTS

*Sonia Solomon*

As space becomes an increasingly precious resource to administrators, librarians are challenged to find new ways to adjust. This brief account of Merrill Lynch Canada’s Corporate Library’s experience moving in with their clients shows how change can be a good and challenging experience.

For my entire career, I considered myself a traditional librarian in a corporate setting. I’ve always had a separate defined space which housed our collection of company files and business publications. This is typical for most corporate libraries. My co-worker Gail and I had worked together in our current space since the beginning of 1999, when my company, Midland Walwyn, was acquired by Merrill Lynch. Our staff and resources were combined with those of Merrill Lynch Canada’s library.

At that time we had a very extensive collection of company files, annual reports, prospectuses, business magazines and books. In the late 1990’s, many business information resources were starting to make information available electronically. The shift from print to online formats was gradual. First, we decreased our retention periods for magazines and newspapers as it was easy and inexpensive to access necessary information online. Canadian public company financial information became available online in 1997. In 2002, when our Canadian operation divested its retail operations our staff went from 4 to 2 and the focus of our operation became the wholesale side of the business. Online formats were much easier and faster for our clients. We stopped maintaining our company information and decreased the amount of printed information that we ordered. From 2002 until our