In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King stood in front of millions of people and said “I have a dream.”

He did not say, “I have an interim strategic plan and a couple of overheads.” He had a vision of what he would like the world to be and declared it boldly.

Think of this when developing your Case for Support. The strength of a Case for Support is directly proportional to its ability to relate to the personal concerns and interests of the reader. It should motivate the reader and convince them that their contribution will be as rewarding for them as it is for you.

A convincing, documented Case is not a shopping list of needs. It is an articulation of opportunities to improve or expand programs and solve problems. A quality and effective Case has simplicity, good taste and a logical order.

**Effective Case for Support**
The prime purposes of an effective Case is to:

- Provide leadership agreement on the projects scope, relevance and priority
- Enlist influential volunteer leadership to the team
- Serve as the basis for all printed materials related to the campaign
- Furnish a conversation piece for effective cultivation and solicitation

**Characteristics of a Convincing Case for Support**
As the Case is being crafted, keep in mind the reader’s concerns and questions, because the ultimate goal is to engage and involve the reader. Common questions that readers will have, and should be addressed in the Case, are:

- What are the dimensions of the problem to be solved by your organization?
- What is being done about the problem?
- What still needs to be done?

- What does your institution propose to do about the problem – now and in the future?
- Why is your institution the best one to solve this problem?
- What will it cost?
- What action should the reader take?

Other important characteristics of a convincing Case for Support are:

**It is bigger than the organization**
There must be value to society rather than just a benefit to your organization. How will quality of life be improved long term rather than short term? Stress opportunities more than needs. Emphasize the ability of your organization to address a pressing problem in the world today.

**It conveys a sense of urgency**
Emphasize the necessity of taking positive action now.

**It has broad appeal**
Your readers may be varied and diverse but can be united on the issues presented. Remember, you are addressing a societal need, not your organization’s. The program presented is what the organization must have in order to address that larger community (or constituency) need.
It is supportable
You must provide evidence that your organization is capable of carrying out the program and that the people involved are capable of achieving the objectives.

It is centered on matters of current interest
Focus on the future rather than celebrating the past. Focus on what must be done now to meet tomorrow’s requirements, rather than what was done yesterday to meet today’s needs.

It is both rational and emotional
It should be written logically to satisfy the mind as well as emotionally to evoke a sympathetic response in the reader – heart and head work together. The reader should feel pride in the organization, high hopes for the future and a sense of moral purpose leading to a desire to become part of a personally fulfilling enterprise.

It is brief
Can you do this in 10 pages? Write it simply and clearly.

It has an optimistic tone
Express confidence in your ability to accomplish your goals and objectives, “We will be successful – this is too important.” Philanthropy and altruism flourish in an atmosphere of optimism and universality. Do not give in to “We will fail if you do not help.” Instead use, “With your support we will be able to achieve these worthy objectives.”

Your goal is to convince your readers that their gift, at this time, will bring them the rewards they desire by helping to further an outstanding cause.

Effective fundraisers do not talk about hospitals, emergency rooms or out-patient clinics, they talk about health. They do not talk about schools, colleges, endowment, science buildings and chairs, but excellence in education and the search for truth. They do not talk about galleries, theatres, books, symphony halls or hangings, but a fuller enrichment of life.

It is imperative to create an effective and convincing Case for Support to be successful in meeting your organizational goals. What your organization does contributes to the improvement of the quality of life. Express that. Because of what you do, the world is a better place.

About The Compass Group
The Compass Group (www.therightdirection.com), headquartered in Washington, D.C., provides strategy, education and coaching to organizations that must be successful in fundraising. In a working partnership with your staff, volunteers and board, Compass will help you to enhance and develop the philanthropic culture of your nonprofit organization in order to achieve fundraising success. Our specialty areas include Arts & Culture, Environmental, Health Care, Higher Education, Human Services and Independent Schools.

About Frank Pisch
Frank S. Pisch is a senior fundraising executive and nonprofit leader with more than 30 years of successful experience. His strengths include campaign design and management, board and staff development, effective utilization of volunteers and all other aspects of fundraising, including creation of effective fundraising teams. Pisch has consulted on capital campaigns and major gift fundraising and strategic planning for a wide spectrum of nonprofit organizations, private and four-year colleges, public universities, community colleges, university foundation boards, independent schools, hospitals and medical centers, human service and environmental agencies, youth groups, arts organizations, and trade associations.

Pisch has raised more than $3 billion for his clients, and as a major gifts specialist, he has been involved in the successful solicitation of more than 150 gifts of $1 million or more.

Corporate Headquarters
1425 K Street, NW, Suite 350 | Washington, DC 20005
Visit us online: www.therightdirection.com, or call: 800.809.3170