



Educating Constituencies: Making the Case for Your Foundation

Has this ever happened to you?

- A board member asks, “How do I explain what the foundation *does* – what is our ‘elevator speech’?”
- An attorney says, “I already gave on the dues check-off – why should I give more?”
- You would like to publish an article in your bar journal that will inspire attorneys to action on behalf of the foundation.
- You’ve been asked to speak on behalf of the foundation at a bar luncheon.

For many bar foundations, the responses to the scenarios above are haphazard, and the message conveyed during each opportunity is different. The solution? A strong case for the foundation.

Why develop a case for the foundation?

A strong case crystallizes the foundation’s message and focuses constituencies on the organization’s core ideology and strategic priorities. Current and past board members, staff of the foundation and bar, volunteers, members of the bar, and others will have a better and more consistent understanding of the value of the foundation. As a result, constituents will have a personal investment in the foundation’s success.

To learn more about educating your board and your bar members, join us in August at the NCBF [Annual Meeting](#).

Making the case – a quick overview

Making the case for the foundation begins with the foundation’s mission and vision, and the unique value the foundation adds to the legal and philanthropic environment.

The case explains how the mission, vision, and value of the foundation relate to the foundation’s strategic priorities. This part of the case changes frequently, shifting to include the most up-to-date key initiatives and urgent needs of the organization.

A clear explanation of the foundation’s needs helps make the case for philanthropy – why the foundation requires funding from the legal community to make the impact it envisions. When constituents see how their foundation makes a real difference to a cause that truly matters to them, they are more likely to give and more likely to become ambassadors for the foundation’s work.

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