Crafting the Case

DCCAH Workshop
July 10, 2017

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WHAT IS A CASE FOR SUPPORT?

1. Compelling story
2. Tool to connect to your donors
3. Call to action
REAL  EMPOWERING
PERSUASIVE
BOLD  CLEAR
ASSERTIVE  MOBILIZING
TELLING  TIGHT
CONCISE
WHAT’S THE SCOPE?

• Annual Giving or Campaign?

• How will you use your case for support?
  ➢ Internal communications plan for staff, board + volunteers
  ➢ Donor cultivation
  ➢ Major gifts fundraising tool
ELEMENTS OF A STRONG CASE

- The Problem to Address
- Your Solution + Vision
- Qualifications + Track Record
- Plans, Impact + Urgency
- Call to Action
- Thank You
WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?

• Describe your organization’s *purpose*
• Define the problem/need as simply as possible
• Identify beneficiaries + impact
• Focus on the *key elements* that will resonate
If I were given one hour to save the planet, I would spend 59 minutes defining the problem and one minute resolving it.  

— Albert Einstein
THINK BIG PICTURE.

How will the world be better when you achieve your goals?

Why is your organization worthy of your donor’s $$$?
Alaskans are living inside one of the biggest, most complex stories of our time. The world is watching.

Arctic sea ice — to name just one iconic feature of that story — is melting with unprecedented speed, described by scientists as a “steeply negative trend.”

And what comes in its wake? Shipping, for one.

By 2016, luxury cruise ships will traverse the formerly “unconquerable” Northwest Passage for the first time. They will carry guests in pampered comfort over “a mystical Pacific-Atlantic sea route far beyond the Arctic Circle that for centuries captured the imaginations of kings, explorers and adventurers” — as the sales catalog serenades.

For so many reasons, people now see the Arctic as a harbinger — a “canary in a coal mine,” so to speak ... revealing new truths about the planet and humanity’s future.

And who will tell that big, unfolding story to the world?

Who will tell the real story, the twisting story, the unexpected story, the many-faceted story ... a story that weaves together social, political, cultural, scientific, historic and artistic threads ...?

Guess who.

1 Skeptical Science: Getting skeptical about global warming skepticism, August 2010
WHO WILL HELP TELL YOUR STORY?

- Who are the critical thinkers?
- Who are your visionary storytellers?
- Who has unique insight?
- Who are your stakeholders?
TALK TO PEOPLE

• Board, volunteers, staff, donors
• Members
• Peer organizations
• Community leaders
• Founder(s)
• Veteran board members or volunteers
• Beneficiaries
ASK QUESTIONS . . .

. . . and Listen.
PROCESS WHAT YOU’VE HEARD

• Identify the common threads in your notes
  ➢ How do these relate back to your organization’s goals?
  ➢ Organize your information to define the key elements of focus
• Collect relevant quotes + anecdotes
… the arts provide a safe haven in a world that is sometimes harsh and unwelcoming …

Through the arts, [students] learn focus, determination and dedication.

…they learn they can soar … and demand change in the world …
MAKE THE CASE

• What’s your organization’s role in solving The Problem?

• How do you include your reader in The Solution?
WHY YOU?

What differentiates your organization?

• Track record + experience?
• New or innovative approach?
• Access to critical resources or leaders?
WHY NOW?

Why are you embarking upon your campaign at this time?

➢ Is there an opportunity driven by timing?
  ○ Leveraging a major donor’s gift
  ○ Unique chance to purchase property
  ○ Organization’s anniversary or founder retirement

➢ Are there major challenges on the horizon you are trying to address?
  ○ Big shifts in government agency support
What action is your organization taking to effect change?
ADDRESS CHALLENGES

• Internal struggles (e.g. leadership transition)
• External factors (e.g. world events, political climate)
• Common questions (e.g. mission-related activities?)
WHO IS YOUR STORY ABOUT?

The donor.

(Every. Single. Time.)
THE DONOR’S ROLE IN YOUR STORY

• What role does the donor play in the Solution?

• Does your language appeal to the donor’s sense of self?

CHAMPIONS or CHANGE-MAKERS?
PHILANTHROPISTS or ACTIVISTS?
Because of you, we will save the world.
We support a charity . . . because it gives us a chance to love something about ourselves.

— Seth Godin, Renowned Marketing Guru
WHAT FEELINGS DOES YOUR STORY EVOKE?

PRIDE?
COMPASSION?
EMPOWERMENT?
... every time someone donates to a good cause, they're buying a story, a story that's worth more than the amount they donated.

It might be the story of doing the right thing, or fitting in, or pleasing a friend or honoring a memory, but the story has value. For many, it's the story of what it means to be part of a community.

— Seth Godin, Renowned Marketing Guru

Source: AFP Presentation by Tom Ahern, 2017
GLOBAL LEADERSHIP FOR A SAFER WORLD
Forward-Thinking Philanthropists Protecting Humanity
Who will save them?

You will, through your campaign investment in NPCA.

Proposed uranium mine will start digging right about here.  

Threat stopped by National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) and its ardent supporters... for now.
Unplanned teen pregnancy is a “winnable battle,” says the CDC.

Will you make it your fight?

Southern New England is headed in the right direction. But that “last mile” is the hardest, toughest part of the fight ... 

The number of teen births here and across the U.S. fell by more than half between 1991 and 2013. 

Good news.

In just the past two decades, the number of unplanned teen pregnancies has fallen to an all-time low. And yet, 30% of girls who drop out of high school still cite pregnancy as the reason.

There's important work still to do ... especially in our cities.

“In some of Connecticut's poorest cities,” the New Haven Register reported in 2014, “the number of children born to teenage mothers is more than twice the state average, according to recent data gathered by the University of Connecticut and the State Department of Education.”

And, of course, it's not just about teens.

These days, an unplanned pregnancy is preventable. Education and easy access to birth control are key factors.

Zero unplanned pregnancies (or as close as humanly possible)?

Of course, it can be done ... if we have your help.

Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) has a master plan for expansion ... our pilot programs are working exceptionally well. Now we need your help to roll these programs out across Connecticut and Rhode Island.

Investors sought. Serious world-changers only.
What does the donor need to know to take the next step?

• What is the financial goal?
• Is there a clear timeline?
• So I want to make a gift, now what?
Here’s our promise: the Anchorage Museum will tell the world’s biggest, most balanced story of the changing North.

Thanks to you: our true believers.

Thanks to you: who want the Arctic’s story accurately recorded and deeply told. The Anchorage Museum will convey the many voices of the North, both historical and contemporary, offering a range of programs for families, travelers, locals and online.

Thanks to you: proud Alaskans.

Thanks to you: the Anchorage Museum’s caring, long-standing and visionary supporter family. You’ve made every other big advance over the years possible! (Just saying...)
LOOKS MATTER.

• What look + feel are you going for?
• Does the piece reflect your brand?
• Is your copy “skim-able?”
USE YOUR CASE AS A TOOL

• Test your draft with donors + stakeholders
• Refine the concept
• Share the final product
• Incorporate the copy into other communication vehicles
Break Out Sessions

GROUP 1: Defining the Problem/Need
GROUP 2: Defining Solution + Demonstrating Impact
GROUP 3: Defining Your Call to Action
THANK YOU!

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