

Case study

Tell your story and make your case heard

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Deeply rooted ideas about identity drive all aspects of an organisation, from its internal culture to its external communications and brand. Storytelling is at the heart of successful fundraising, as it helps you to effectively make your case. It is therefore essential that organisations refine their 'story' so they remain identifiable, attractive, and unmissable propositions for both philanthropic and corporate giving.

Objectives

- To draw out 'intrinsic value' across the organisation to strengthen and support major fundraising approaches.
- To draw out existing activity and develop it into an elevated and coherent proposition.
- To enable the organisation to access more substantial and structural gifts.

By establishing the identity of an organisation, it will become more apparent which target groups are most suitable to target and how best to reach them.

Process

Money – especially through major gifts and sponsorships – follows ambitious, confident and competent organisations that are cognisant of the added value they bring and the impact they make. Particularly appealing are those that have defined a long-term vision and are perceived to be 'going somewhere'. A clear identity is essential – for the organisation, for audiences old and new, and for donors and sponsors to fully engage with you.

To get to the heart of the organisation's identity, it is essential to create an identity and brand platform with key words and phrases on the organisations offer, values, vision, personality, positioning and idea. This should always be developed through a dialogue between staff, board, trustees and existing donors, to ensure it truly matches the vision of all of those closest related to the organisation.

The next step is to ask some fundamental questions about the organisation's achievements, assets and ambitions. The answers should become fully integrated into the marketing and communications strategy and form the starting point for the **Case for Support**.

A compelling Case for Support is maximum one page long, should avoid the use of jargon and is written in a clear way so that everyone in the organisation is able to dream it and communicate it to the outside world.

It should be answering the following questions:

1. What is it that you are seeking support for?
2. Why are you unique as an organisation?
3. What is the urgency of the need?
4. What would the support allow you to do?
5. What benefit is there to supporter?

Outcomes

- A solid brand and identity platform and a clear Case for Support that everyone within the organisation is able to communicate confidently.
- The ability to create a distinct corporate offer focused on the organisation's brand, and around the character and values that are outlined in the brand platform.
- A stronger engagement with both private and corporate parties that results in more substantial and structural gifts.

Key points for effective practice

- You need to make people care about you, to assert your importance and significance in meaningful ways.
- On every piece of print and external communication you must inform your audiences and interested parties that you need support – from friends, sponsors and so on. This should become consistent as a strap line.
- To align the internal view is essential! If you can't get your story right between those closest to the organisation then you will struggle to get your message heard externally.
- Everyone within the organisation should understand your story, the Case for Support and be comfortable with communicating it.
- Everyone within your organisation should have an awareness of your financial and artistic goals, and feel united around these.

Conclusions and recommendations

Money follows good ideas and those who know how to communicate them. This requires a clearly agreed identity and brand platform that is reinforced across all aspects of the company. A compelling Case for Support has proven to be a successful communication tool in expressing the organisations need.