Harvest Development Group

feed your roots

Case Statement Inquiry

A case statement is an essential and central component to any successful fundraising effort. As part of the strategic plan of the organization, the case statement is a living document that reflects the visual inspiration of the outcomes generated by the work of your nonprofit.

A well-crafted case statement includes four parts:
> An introduction that sets the stage for the rest of the message
> Justification on the need for your nonprofits work
> Inspiring and engaging outcomes from your work
> A call to action

Case statements need not be long, in fact the shorter the better, which is what makes them very hard to write. Tightly comprised sentences, delivering maximum impact, in a visually appealing way.

Case statements can make use of other media as well- video, slideshows, audio- but the most valuable piece is the narrative.

Case statements are not written by marketing experts or advertising copywriters. They come from the heart, passion, and soul of your organization and those closest to you.

Case statements are outwardly focused, intended to speak to the observer, participant, community, funders, community leaders, beneficiaries' perspective. Anyone but internal staff.

This document is intended to help you articulate the meat of your case statement in a way that can be refined. Please take your time in answering these questions and be as thorough and as comprehensive/complete as possible. When you think you have fully answered a question, push yourself to dig deeper and provide a little more. Explore your networks experience with your organization as well, send a few out by email for feedback, post some online for response.

We will work with you on additional exploration of themes, subject matter, or issues that we glean from your responses. We will then begin to condense what has been deemed valuable into a one, or at most two, page document.

It is always important to test the case once designed. This helps to uncover donor's interests, reaction to the need and proposed solution, as well as the inspiring nature of your narrative. We can test this for you or you can share with a few trusted advisors for authentic and candid response.

Answer in complete paragraphs the following questions.

Introduction:
What is your community?
Why is this your community?
Are there other communities not known to you?
Who is your community?
How did you define your community?
What evidence exists that this community exists?
Who are you (organization)?
Why do you (organization) exist?
Why did you choose this type of structure (501c3)?
What makes the organization special?
Name another organization that is doing what you are doing?
What experience and benefits best describe the organization?

Justification:
Why is this project important to your community?
What makes that the reason?
What role is the organization playing in this initiative?
How did you determine this role?
What makes this unique?
What makes this a new approach?
Why is this project so important?
What makes the organization best equipped to address the need?
If you didn't exist, what else could fill this need?
Why is no one else doing this?
Why will this fail?
How will this fail?
Why will this succeed?
How will this succeed?
What does success look like to others?

What you do/outcomes:
What immediate action(s) is the organization taking in response to the need expressed?
Why did you choose those actions?
What difference will a successful project outcome make to the community?
How will they see the success?
How will you judge the success?
Why is that way of judging success the best way?
How will this project impact people?
How will they know it is impacting them?
Are there other partners involved in the project ?

Why those partners?
How will the organization work with partners?
How can volunteers and individuals participate?
Are volunteers and individuals important to your success?
What will they bring to the project?
How will this project change lives?
Whose lives will this change?
What will the impact be on the community and on those who live there if the project doesn't go ahead?
What is the current stage of the project?
Why have you made progress?
Why have you not gone further?
How could you move forward with no resources?
Why are partners and collaborators required and what role(s) will they play?

Call to action:
What specifically do you need to succeed?
Why do you need this?
Why now?
If this is a unique or new approach, why is it important to get involved in a project of this nature and at this time?