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**PERSONAL
FUNDRAISING
POWER**

OF
17

Influencing Donors



**Bright
Spot**

The Members Club

HOW TO INCREASE YOUR INFLUENCING FIREPOWER - STORIES



How to increase your influencing firepower - stories

'The fundraiser who collects, practices and knows more stories / examples will find it easier to influence when in conversation with potential supporters'

The Third Law from The Fundraiser Who Wanted More

A major challenge for corporate, major donor and trust fundraisers is that when you meet potential funders, the conversation is usually perfectly pleasant, but all too often it does not lead to any progress. The most common reason for this is that the donor did not feel what Oren Klaff would call a 'wanting', a strong conviction that they really want to help the beneficiaries of your charity.

A major reason for this is that the fundraiser speaks only in generic terms, so that the issues are too abstract to help them connect emotionally or be convinced logically. One important thing that the most persuasive fundraisers do differently is to include specific examples in the way they talk (and write) about the issues.

When I studied story telling at City Lit in London, the most powerful, deceptively simple model I was taught was the four elements of the 'story arc'. You will find this pattern recurs in nearly every novel and movie you experience, because getting these four points and making sure you get them in this order is the best way to convey the drama and progress (ie from what happened before and after your charity intervened). The four steps are as follows:

1. Who is it about?
2. Their problem
3. Action (usually by your charity)
4. Result (did it work?)

In particular, note that though most charities tend to talk mostly about what they do (Step 3 the action) this is in fact the least persuasive thing to go into too much detail about. The two things that are most likely to help donors care and want to help are Step 2 (what is so difficult for the beneficiary) and Step 4 (ie help them feel that your charity's solution works, that is their money would make a difference).

How to increase your influencing firepower - stories

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Think of an example of someone who has benefited from the work of your charity. Can you organise the narrative into this structure, and do you know something about each of these four elements. In particular, if you make sure you do justice to steps 2 and 4, you will find the story is most likely to hold people's interest and help them connect to the work of your charity:

Often, however, it is not easy or appropriate to tell these 'full version' stories. So sometimes it is instead more helpful to be able to tell what the author and business coach Tony Robbins calls a Big Fat Claim. These are single sentences which summarise the positive shift your charity made for a beneficiary. This enables you to very quickly share several pieces of evidence that your service works.

Another benefit is that it often intrigues the listener. They want to know more, and say as much. This makes it much easier for you to go into more depth, (ie the full, four step version) because the donor is clearly asking for this detail.

How to increase your influencing firepower - stories

One powerful way to find the heart of your story, so you can confidently tell the same story with more or less detail, depending on who you're talking to, is the following:

A) Write out your story in six or seven bullet points. This does not need to include flowery adjectives. It can even be just a phrase or two for each point, to remind you of the key info at that stage of the story.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

B) Now write out the same story in just three bullet points. Its ok to be able to leave out some information. Sometimes donors don't need to know as much detail as we thought.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



How to increase your influencing firepower - stories

C) Now write out the same story in just one sentence. Find the heart of the story. What is the key shift that happens for the beneficiary? Note, it is usually not possible or desirable to include all four of the elements from the 'full version' story (ie who, problem, action, result), in this single sentence.

Two kinds of story are needed for the Magic Formula for persuading donors.

1. Examples of the problem(s) your beneficiaries experience. These help you to evoke the problem that the donor cares about.
2. Examples of your charity solving this. These help you convey that your charity's solution works, it reduces suffering, it makes the difference it claims to make.

Most busy fundraisers do not have enough stories and specific examples because they have not been aware just how powerful these stories are, so they have not made a deliberate effort to find, keep and practise them.

In fact many fundraisers have heard / do know several good stories, but because they have no set place to store them, they struggle to remember, organise and learn these stories.

This can easily be solved within five minutes by finding a hard copy folder (or notebook) for keeping the stories and specific examples you find. Of course an electronic version is also useful, but I have found that having something physical as well makes it more likely you will keep stories top of mind.

Create your own story bank and deposit at least one story today.

You've been working on:

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