ABHE 2020
The Art and Science of Writing a Compelling Case Statement
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1. How do you develop a compelling case?
   a. Donors only support what they understand.
   b. Your vision should come from God.
   c. Frame your case statement from your strategic plan.

2. Case Statement Key Components
   a. Clarity
      i. Your case for support helps you to be clearer, more targeted, and more inspiring.
      ii. “A mist in the pulpit is a fog in the pews,” Howard Hendricks
      iii. “The surest way to arouse and hold the readers’ attention is by being specific, definite, and concrete.” The Elements of Style by Strunk and White
   b. Mission – What you Do
      i. You must answer the question: What would happen if we ceased to exist?
         1. How would your board members answer that question?
         2. How would your donors answer that question?
         3. How would you answer that question?
      ii. Your mission is your ongoing ministry story.
   c. Values – How You Do What You Do
      i. A value proposition is your argument of how you’re different.
      ii. Your values will be a reason that might persuade someone to support you as opposed another ministry.
   d. Vision – Your Dream
      i. Vision is an image of our desired future, a picture of the future you seek to create. Peter Senge, The Fifth Discipline

3. Case Statement Checklist
   a. Who you are
   b. What you do
   c. Why you’re doing it
   d. Why you’re different than others doing the same thing
   e. Why it matters
   f. How you’re doing it
   g. What you need to accomplish the thing you’re trying to do
   h. The impact that donors can make

4. What is Compelling?
   a. Convincing
   b. Persuasive
   c. Absorbing
   d. Powerful
   e. Urgent
5. How do we accomplish compelling?
   a. Emotions. People give because they have empathy, and most fundraising is emotionally driven.
   b. A Compelling Case is both Emotional and Rational
      i. Heart-stirring stories that frame your impact in personal testimonies and individual anecdotes
      ii. A compilation of statistics that prove your ministry is making a difference

6. Your Message Must be On Point!
   a. Why this?
   b. Why now?
   c. How much?
   d. Why me?

7. A Sense of Urgency
   a. Your campaign must solve urgent problems and answer pertinent questions.
      i. What ministries won’t happen if you don’t move forward with your plans?
      ii. What essential programs won’t be accomplished without this campaign?
      iii. Why should a donor make a significant gift to your campaign?
   b. Include Personnel, Program and Property
   c. Major Donors require three components: head, heart and a call to action.

8. Storytelling
   a. The Most Effective Tool. Storytelling was Jesus’ favorite technique when speaking to the crowd: “Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable.” Matthew 13:34
   b. Keep it interesting and simple.
   c. A good story never loses its power!
      i. Stories hold our attention.
      ii. Stories stir our emotions.
      iii. Stories help us remember.
   d. Matthew 13:11-13 MSG “You’ve been given insight into God’s kingdom. You know how it works. Not everybody has this gift, this insight; it hasn’t been given to them. Whenever someone has a ready heart for this, the insights and understandings flow freely. But if there is no readiness, any trace of receptivity soon disappears. That’s why I tell stories: to create readiness, to nudge the people toward receptive insight”
   e. Storytelling nudges people toward generosity!

9. What’s Your Story?
   a. Stories connect more than statistics, and specifics mean more than explaining the entire scope of a program.
   b. Your Case is a Living, Breathing, Working Document

10. Presenting Your Case
    a. Active Listening. The best donor meetings are a conversation, not a presentation.
    b. Your case statement’s ultimate goal – To answer your donor’s question: “Why should I support you instead of another ministry, and why now?”

Listen to the Spirit to help you write your compelling case. Then trust him to accomplish it!