



Strategies for Success

Smart fundraising ideas from Hartsook

The Case is a Salutation, not a Solicitation



A case statement is an important step in the campaign process, but it is a conversation starter, not an ask; and it is not a brochure. Too often, nonprofits get stuck in a case-making turnstile and lose valuable time getting where they need to be: in front of a cultivated donor making the ask.

Tips for understanding the difference between a case and a brochure:

A brochure has a long shelf life; a case does not

A case has a specific purpose to quantify and qualify the campaign goals. Eighteen months from now, those goals should be well underway and the next targets in sight. Print short runs of the case, because it will likely evolve as the campaign unfolds.

A brochure can be expensive; a case doesn't have to be

The case should look every bit as good as a brochure. You want donors to be proud of the case, but heavier paper with pop-up die cuts will not raise more money. Impress prospective donors with your professionalism and ability to articulate a compelling, urgent need—not your printing skills.

A brochure can cover a variety of subjects; a case should not

A case is not the place to share the organization's history in full or lay out its long-term vision. Donors who have been well identified should be able to catch a glimpse of the organization if they don't know you, scan the campaign goals first and get the big picture. A paragraph or two of history and a nod to the vision should do it. Be sure to answer these donor questions: "How much are you seeking to raise? How will you spend the money? Why?" Be as specific as possible.

Focus on campaign goals: delineating them, detailing them and quantifying them. A comma lost or found never raised a nickel. This picture or that will not be why a donor gave or did not. Great care should be taken to create an attractive and professional-looking case, but the case is not as important as getting out there, cultivating donor relationships and making the ask.

Denise Rhoades, Communications Director (Palm Coast, Fla.) drhoades@hartsookcompanies.com

