STRATEGIC STORYTELLING: A SURE PATH TO MAJOR AND PLANNED GIFTS

PG CALC WEBINAR

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Presented by:

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Inspired, Joyful, Generous Investments

As we approach this topic, we need to keep our goals in mind. We are not selling planned giving vehicles, giving or naming opportunities. We are inspiring joyful and generous investments of time, talent, expertise, networks and treasure. Back in the day, we engaged older folks less because it was what they desired. But today, they seek engagement. We know they give more when engaged.

In an Indiana University study, the average age of the participants was 64 years old. Participants had $1,000,000 in assets not counting their primary homes, and earned $250,000 or more a year.

When engaged, on average, they gave $124,000 a year versus $35,000 when not engaged.
That jumped to $158,000 if the organization tapped into their professional expertise.
When their children were involved with their philanthropy the average soared to $244,000.

As we think about our strategic storytelling, engagement and inspired, joyful giving have to be our goals.

Compelling and Strategic Storytelling Starts with Your "Why"

In today's philanthropic marketplace, donors are looking for impact and outcomes. Research shows us that "Matures" (21% of all giving) and "Baby Boomers," (43% of all giving) care about impact, outcomes and transparency. In fact, they report they would give more if we only told them what difference their giving would have on the mission and work of the organization.

Other helpful facts about "Matures" and "Boomers."* *Chuck Longfield, Blackbaud

<u>Matures</u>

- 88% of this generation gives an average of $1,367/year across 6.2 charities
- Well-rounded givers – traditional methods as well as non-monetary gifts such as volunteerism & goods. They are also very loyal to the organizations and institutions in which they invest.

  - **42% volunteer**
  - **52% give in response to direct mail**
  - **72% donate goods to charity**
  - **80% are on email**

<u>Boomers</u>

They grew up and questioned everything – the role of women, marriage, government, and most significantly, for fundraising, they questioned the role of institutions. They were and are concerned about **outcomes and transparency**. They are not okay with just writing the check; they want to see what you did with their money.

- 72% of generation give an average of $1,212/year across 4.5 charities
- Major givers! Multi-channel
  - 21% give monthly (higher retention rates through this method)
  - 84% still have land line (inferring from 16% use mobile as only phone)
  - 72% do banking online
  - 52% gave to local social service organizations
  - Represents the biggest % of philanthropy
  - Big source of major and planned giving
  - Still responsive to traditional channels but open to new ones (multi-channel)
  - Increasingly concerned with outcomes and transparency

Older Gen Xers are coming into their own financially and gift planning could easily be a component of their major gifts. Transparency, impact and outcomes matters to them as well.

Your "why" story has to come before what you do and how you do it. What societal problems are you solving? What impact have past investments made? What do you envision going forward?

Click here for Simon Sinek's TED talk on why start with why.
http://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action

What Do We Promise Our Donors?

Legacy donors have to believe we (the gift officers), and the organization's leadership are trustworthy. They have to trust that the people who will follow us will be trustworthy. So our storytelling has to include our organization's values and commitment to keeping our promises.

They also have to believe that, fiscally, our leaders manage the organization well. Our storytelling needs to include our fiscal story.

We promise our donors transparency, integrity, adherence to our values, impact, communications and fiscal prudence. Our storytelling should speak to these important elements.

Enroll and Engage

The purpose of compelling and strategic storytelling is conversations. We are not in the pitch business or the elevator speech business. We are in the strategic conversation business. Our conversations should include:

1. Discovery visits where we are uncovering the potential donor's **Philanthropic Profile**
   a. Capacity
   b. Philanthropic inclinations and affinity
   c. Readiness to give a joyful, inspired, generous yes
   d. Giving motivations and values
   e. Giving interests
   f. World view
   g. Decision-makers and process

   h. Involved others
   i. Potential obstacles to a yes
   j. Natural partners who can help with relationship building
   k. Engagement and stewardship preferences

2. Visits that advance the relationship using strategic steps or "moves"

3. Stewardship visits reporting on the impact of past giving

4. Solicitation and closing visits

5. Clear, measurable goals for each visit

6. Written donor strategies

7. Be sure to include annual and major gifts in donor strategy planning

For our visits to be successful, asking strategic questions and listening for intent are essential. Below are some questions that are particularly helpful for gift planning. If you would like a complete set of strategic donor visit questions for your type of institution or organization, contact me at karen@theosbonegroup.com and I will send them to you.

1. We so appreciate you including us in your estate plans. What aspects of our program inspired that decision?
2. As you think about the future of (the people and communities your serve), what are some of your worries? What are your hopes? What role do you see our organization playing in addressing those concerns (aspiration)?
3. Many of our donors, especially those who have been with us over the years, would like their children and grandchildren to be part of our philanthropic family. To what extent is that important to you?
4. How do you involve your children (grandchildren) in your philanthropic interests?
5. How might we help you engage your children (grandchildren) in our mission, vision, and work?
6. Are there others with whom we should meet, perhaps a financial planner or other members of your family who help you with your charitable giving? Who might they be? How might we do that?
7. May I ask, what roles do your children (grandchildren) (financial planner) (lawyer) play in your philanthropic decision-making?
8. What issues do you weigh (did you weigh) when you are making decisions about your estate plans?
9. Some people believe it is important to leave respected and beloved charities in their will. What are your feelings?

10. How does your family feel about that?
11. Thank you for your inquiry about bequests (annuities), what inspired your query? Why now? Why us?
12. As you think about all your financial and philanthropic aspirations for yourself, your family members, and the causes you care most about, which are the most important for you?
13. What are some of your challenges or worries?
14. Do you have a trusted advisor to help you think through your goals and challenges? When you feel it might be helpful, we would welcome an introduction so that we are all helping you achieve your personal goals.
15. Are others involved? Who? How might we engage them in our mission, vision, and work?
16. I was reading an article about Warren Buffett. He was talking about the importance, for him, to give while he is alive and can enjoy his gifts. Clearly, he also believes in leaving money in his will. What is your take? Is that true for (other decision makers mentioned)?
17. Have you ever made an estate or deferred gift to a charity? How did that come about? How is it working out?
18. Under what circumstances might you consider including our organization in your estate plans? How could we move that forward?

Storytelling Best Practices

People don’t remember what we said. In fact, 10 minutes after we finish speaking they forgot 50% of what we said. We can better those odds with sticky messaging, and compelling storytelling, but only by so much. Two days after a conversation, they only remember one-third of what we said.

They remember, however, 78% of what they said.

Our goal is to get them talking about what we want them to remember!

The purpose of our storytelling is to engage in a strategic conversation. Not just a building rapport conversation or a conversation led by the donor. We have an important job to do and our questions help us do it.

- Start with impact first and get a response to impact. Have an issues conversation about the problems you are solving, the good you are achieving. Seek their input, reactions, ideas.
- Ask lots of strategic questions about your mission vision and work:

    1. What are your impressions of our vision for the future?
    2. Do you believe we have a strong case for support? If so why? If not, why not?
    3. To what extent do you believe (the mission we have, issues we’re solving) are serious problems for our (community, state, region, country, or world)?

4. In what ways has your life been affected by these issues (people you know, the community you care about)?
5. How have the issues we address impacted you, your family, your neighbors, your beliefs, your values?
6. As you (read, heard, viewed) our vision for the future, in what ways to do see our organization effectively addressing these issues?
7. Are there other ways we could help solve this problem (these problems)?
8. In what ways might you help us address these issues?
9. What impact do you believe achieving our vision will have on (the people we serve, our community, our state, the nation, global society)?
10. What do you believe our (staff) (program staff) (Board) (closest friends) should do to help make this vision (these ideas) (this plan) a reality?
11. As you consider the people and institutions who (that) support us, how might we position our (vision) (plan) (ideas) so they would see the importance of their roles as stakeholders?
12. Are there any questions about our vision, mission, work, priorities that we’ve not answered?

And remember, listening is a critical component. You won’t know how to tell your story if you haven’t first listened to the donor, how he or she “hears” or receives information. Shape your story conversation so that it meets her pace, listening style, comfort levels.

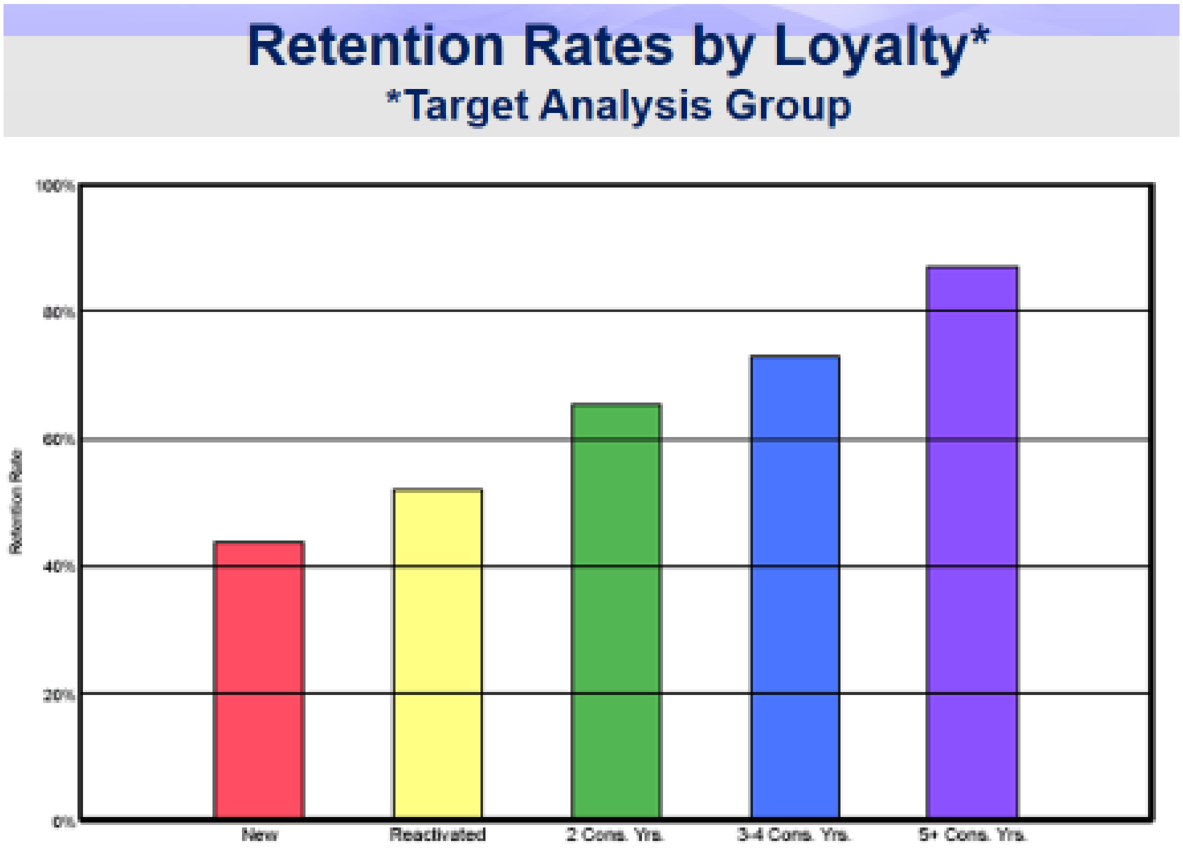
Verbal and written stories are only two tools in your storytelling toolkit. Include under two-minute videos, photographs, and info graphics. And most important, include experiences that tell your story.

And be sure to include all decision-makers in these conversations.

Always Include the Stewardship Story

Everyone wants to know that he or she made a difference. We start with the “promise” and have to sprinkle throughout relationship-building proof of the promise.

Because giving longevity is critical to planned giving, the annual giving program has to focus on donor retention. Retention numbers worldwide are abysmal and going down. AFP reports that in the last seven years average retention rates went from 50% to 39%. Target Analysis shows us that we are most vulnerable with new donors.



Providing outstanding stewardship to annual fund donors of all giving levels has a direct impact on retention and donor satisfaction. Therefore, it has a direct impact on the bottom line and on **future planned giving numbers**.

Partner with your annual giving, major gift and donor relations colleagues. Ensure they are sharing the stewardship story – the return on investment story – for all of their donors. They are the feeders for your donor pool.

"Retention is the new acquisition and customer service is the new marketing." Joe Connelly, Wall Street Journal.