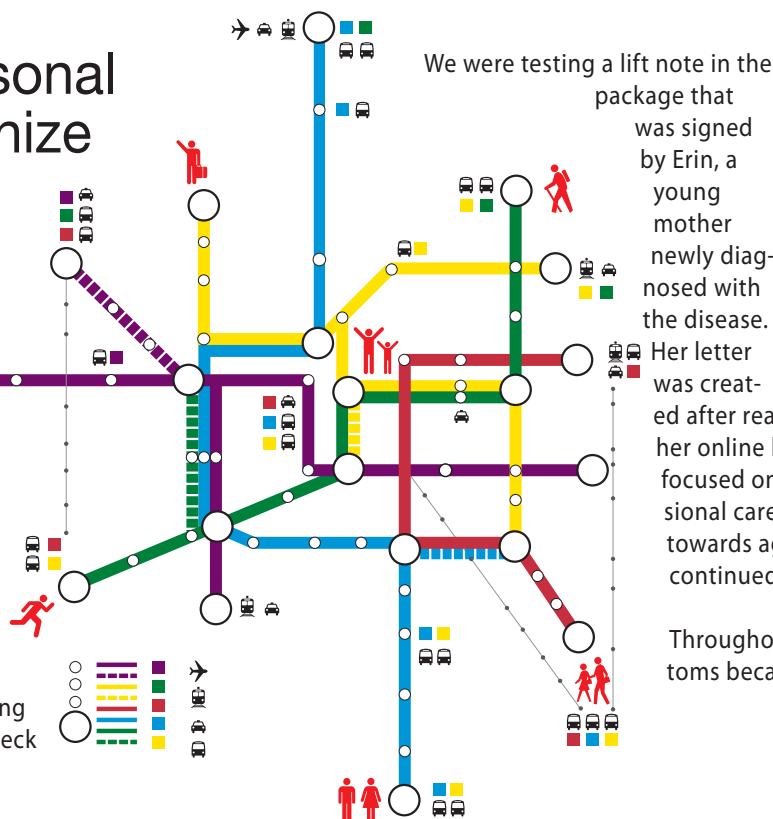


Storytelling: Personal Stories to Humanize Your Mission

BY JOHN MINI

"I really had no intention of making a contribution.... Every day 2-6 envelopes arrive in the mail asking for contributions, mostly for organizations and sometimes diseases I've never heard of. No one can respond to so many pleas. Reading [Erin's lift note] changed my mind to making a contribution. The disease is unbelievably horrible."

In response to its fall 2014 acquisition package, a charity seeking a cure for lupus received a \$50 check along with the above note.



We were testing a lift note in the package that was signed by Erin, a young mother newly diagnosed with the disease. Her letter was created after reading through years of her online blog posts, which first focused on her family and professional career, but then turned towards agonizing pains that continued to go undiagnosed.



Throughout her posts, the symptoms became worse.

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Why Your Organization Needs A Case for Support Like Sheet Music for a Symphony

BY KATHY SWAYZE



I'm often asked, "Why do we need a case statement? Everyone on staff knows our story."

The truth is that everyone in your organization knows his or her version of the story, but each may be quite different from others. Like a conductor of a symphony, you want everyone on the same song sheet ... playing your organization's very best notes.

In today's multi-channel world, having a common song sheet is more critical than ever. That's why a fundraising case for support is no longer a

"nice to have." It's an essential tool for any nonprofit organization that needs to raise funds.

A case statement is a reflection of where your organization is today—and what it hopes to become. It can help you answer foundational questions:

- What is the core problem your organization is trying to solve? Who is suffering?
- Why should your organization be trusted to solve the problem?
- How will the world be better when you succeed?
- Why is more money needed right now?

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What's New

▲ Self Quantification
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When You Think Like TED



I'm sure you have all heard about TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design). TED believes passionately in the power of ideas to change attitudes, lives

and, ultimately, the world. While our industry may not be the next hot topic at a TEDx forum, we can all take a page from the TED mission, which is "ideas worth spreading."

This is a tall order. We get locked into a familiar way of looking at things. Whether it's in direct mail, a job in another industry, a personal task, or helping our kids with extracurricular stuff, we call upon creativity all the time.

Direct mail tests our ability to pinpoint any idea that might outperform an

existing package. We see the same envelope styles over and over again, thinking they really can't be changed much. The same can be said for envelope gimmicks. I've seen everything from the coin trick designed to make mailers more useful, to the twist of placing the address on the back of the envelope. Let's face it: the exciting, over-the-top world of envelopes just isn't that exciting. Or is it?

As the industry has progressed, a very inflexible world has gotten more flexible, opening the path to creative ideas. Flexo printing has come a long way. Simplified platemaking, motion control, finer screens, tighter registrations and improved inks—all are benefits, of enhanced flexo. These fast-drying, cost effective, full-tinted envelopes were unheard of 10 to 12 years ago.

Window tooling used to be cost prohibitive. Now, with the use of flex dies, you can afford to get what you want, where you want it. Processes are more accommodating. With the exception of machine capability issues, we are more willing to entertain a fresh idea with a window.

We also are seeing more creative use of compelling color that allows us to tell a story with visuals and copy. From one to 10 colors...it doesn't really matter—whatever it takes to get your envelope opened and the inserts read.

We are all looking at things in a new way, challenging our creativity, examining trends and projections. We're considering what consumers want and what our clients are buying. We're gazing into the crystal ball, trying to plan wise equipment purchases to help us for years to come. No matter what side of the desk you sit on, I challenge you to think like TED and share these ideas with your staff and vendors. We are in this together and we should challenge ourselves to help change the (direct mail) world. Through that, who knows? Perhaps we can even change the world.

Dennis Ashcraft is a sales representative for Colortree Group, which strives to be the best litho provider in the direct mail industry. He is proud to serve on the DMAW board of directors as well as the Exhibitor Advisory Committee for the 2015 Bridge Conference. Reach Dennis at dashcraft@colortree.com or 800-222-2962.

Like Sheet Music for a Symphony continued from page 1 (bottom)

In the process of answering these questions, you get to the fundamental reasons why any person or institution should part with their money to support your organization.

Many times, organizations think if they have a strategic plan, they don't need a case. Yes, a strategic plan is a fundamental starting point. But the case moves beyond the strategic plan to paint the more aspirational vision of what the world will look like when you succeed in your plan. It inspires others outside the organization to sign on to help move your plan forward.

When the AARP Foundation completed its strategic planning in 2011, the result was four defined focus areas for the organization's work for vulnerable

Americans over age 50: hunger, housing, income, and isolation. But top fundraiser at AARP Foundation, David Whitehead, called to say, "I have a plan, but I need to craft the story. I need your help."

Impact met with key members of the team and helped them develop a storyline about why the work mattered and why investment was needed. Once finalized, the case for support became a useful tool to share with key donors. But even more importantly, it was a starting point for messaging across the organization's many departments and many marketing channels. Cutting and pasting was highly encouraged!

To return to the symphony analogy, the staff all read from the same song sheet to create their riffs and to achieve more consistent and effective messaging across the board. It was a beautiful sound. Now we're

back at AARP, updating the case materials based on their latest 2015 strategic plan.

Just like AARP Foundation, your organization's sweetest sounds (and strongest fundraising) will come when everyone in the organization is playing from the same song sheet. If you don't have an up-to-date case for giving, you may be off key.

Kathy Swayze, CFRE, serves as president and creative director of Impact Communications, Inc., and is nationally recognized for her ability to bring the stories of nonprofit organizations to life. This year she launched a planned giving division at Impact, expanding their fundraising communications products with the addition of Meg Roberts, CFRE. During Kathy's career she has contributed to the fundraising success of more than 200 organizations, including the AARP Foundation, Greenpeace, Johns Hopkins University, Human Rights Watch, the Washington National Cathedral, and many others. Ms. Swayze holds the CFRE (Certified Fundraising Executive), is a Past President of the Washington, DC Metro Area Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and was named Washington DC's 2012 Outstanding Professional Fundraiser.