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Writing a Case of Support for your Non-Profit



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What is a Case for Support?

A Case of Support is a document designed to inform donors about your organization, its future goals and aspirations, accomplishments, and the compelling reasons why a donor should invest in your program. It serves as a narrative that introduces prospective donors to your organization, outlining the funding needs and the specific problems you aim to address with their support. Essentially, a nonprofit case for support is the foundational set of reasons that persuades donors to back a particular campaign, project, or the overall mission of an organization. It acts as a critical fundraising framework or concept upon which you can construct your campaigns. This document is one of the most important tools that would attract donors to support your organization.

What Makes a Case of Support Different

Many Non-Profits use the terms Case of Support, Case Statement or Business Plan interchangeably. It may not be a problem for some – but it is clear from the level of uncertainty of many old and newer non profits is based in their failure to develop a case of support. The benefit of distinguishing between the two is not so much rooted in what is included as in the audience

- A case for support is often an internal document that serves as the foundation for creating various other public-facing documents. A Case of Support serves as a depot for your key messages, a dynamic document that is in a constant state of evolution. This comprehensive document encapsulates all the essential information about our organization, which we utilize when crafting individual case statements.
- Among these, a case statement stands out as a particularly important type of public-facing document. It is particularly common in fundraising efforts, including those focused on capital and major gift campaigns. A case statement serves as your compelling request for support. It's an external document shared with donors, detailing the specifics of your fundraising initiative. You extract the key points from your case statement to bolster your case and craft them into a narrative for the specific appeal you aim to present.

What should be included in both is mostly the same – however if you start with a case of support you focus on the content and don't get bogged down in how it will present externally. If you have developed a case of support – your case statement is half done.

What Should be Included



Value

- Vision and Mission
- Purpose
- Objectives [not project objectives – organisational objectives

History

Your case for support should have a paragraph on the history of your organization. Clearly state reasons that led you to establish the organization and how it has been working towards creating a positive change since inception

- If you've been successfully implementing programs to tackle the issues you're addressing, don't hesitate to share this accomplishment, regardless of how long your organization has been around.
- That's perfectly fine if you're a new organization. This section is the perfect place to discuss the reasons behind the establishment of your non-profit, along with providing some insights into the individuals who are part of the founding board or team. In either case, including a brief history of your organization will help foster trust among donors and potential supporters.

Achievements

Achievements: Explain the ways in which your organization has contributed to the community over time, including the number of individuals assisted, accolades won, etc. This part further enhances the credibility of your organization's efforts and fortifies your argument.

Problem Statement

- Description of the Problem the Organization Seeks to Address and Why Solving It is So Critical to Society
- Use of Accurate Data and Facts
- Research your subject focus
- The Problem Causes and background
- Where it is the problem occurring
- The timeframe over which it has been occurring



- The size and magnitude of the problem.
- The People Affected by the Problem
- What has been done and has not worked and why
- The Social Cause you need assistance for: You should explain the urgency of the situation and the need for addressing it
- Include narrative and impact on how the problem started, how it is affecting people.
- Scope and Significance
- What other organisations are there addressing these problems and their impact

Present Programs and Services

- Description of Current Programs and How They Relate to the Problem the Organization Addresses. Include the programs you are currently running, as well as those that you would like to run in the near future
- Impact: -Proof/Evidence that Organization's Programs Are Effective. Your case for support should show proof that what you are doing is not only working but is worthwhile as well. Indicate how you measured impact in the past and will do in future. Include indicators and outcomes

Financial

- Budgets – organisational and Project
- Governance Policies etc.
- What are your present funding sources.

Resources and Assets

- Organization's Team/Talent and Other Assets/Capabilities. Skills, talents etc.
- Community Support
- Partnerships

Forward Looking

- Forward-Looking Organizational Goals – you have already stated your goals which might have been



impeded by lack of funding. State where you want to go if you had the funds

- What are the Financial Needs to achieve above
- What is your fundraising strategy to obtain funds – i.e. funding diversification, income generation etc.

What Makes your Non-Profit Different

- There are many of other nonprofits committed to addressing the same problem. How are you different? When developing your case statement, be sure to focus on this section to help your organization stand out to the donor.
- How Donations are Used
- Why should people trust your organization
- Your Stories
- Highlights and Achievement

Process of Writing Your Case of Support

Gather your Team

Allocate Tasks and functions according to skills and staff. Remember this is an internal document – if you have staff with good writing skills – allocate final writing to them. If not – it is more important that your content is comprehensive and include all sections. The Technical aspects can be addressed then you move onto a case statement for external parties.

Gather your Information

- Your nonprofit's strategic plan
- Annual Reports
- Present Projects and Project Plans
- Use Institutional Memory [previous staff, board etc]
- Get information the institutional, financial and governance mechanisms of your organization
- Talk to the board members and trustees to capture their ideas about the organization



- Business Plans
- Specific program or project plans
- Budgets, financial projections, and spending plans
- Impact stories and testimonials
- Statistics about the problem you're addressing
- Statistics about your nonprofit's past impact
- Take time to gather visual materials

Formalize the Document

- The first draft will need several revisions and editions, so don't waste too much time in formatting. Just make sure that the case has all the relevant information.
- Write as many drafts as required – but be sure to provide all drafts to as many persons as possible to receive continuous input. And buy in.
- This is a living document – plan for regular revisions, adaptations etc.

What to do if your NPO does not have these Documents or Information

If your Non-Profit does not have the information or documents as mentioned – use your case statement to start the process. You can still develop the document – it will just be significantly more work – but it can be done, so do it. If you don't have the documents, it is so much more important that you write your case of support before you even think about writing a case statement for a donor.

From Case of Support to Case Statement for Funder

- You should select one project/area of work which needs immediate
- Extract your information from your Case of Support
- Let your passion come through. Your case must not just elicit logical thinking instead of an emotional response. Have an emotional Hook [can come from your stories]
- Your case statement should inspire your donor



- Identify Your Audience
 - Have Some Idea of who you will be approaching before you start writing you Statement. It will ensure that your project is a fit for the donor and that following steps if relevant to the specific funder.
 - Align your objectives with those of the donor: Your case should provide the donor with compelling reasons to invest in your program. This can be achieved by aligning some of your objectives with those of the donor and by ensuring consistency with the donor's portfolio.
 - Donors are eager to understand how partnering with you will benefit them. This can be effectively communicated by crafting a paragraph outlining the advantages they would gain by supporting your cause.
 - Donors will be eager to learn about the different ways they can support your organization. It's important to clearly outline the various avenues for support, including financial contributions, volunteer efforts, in-kind donations, and sponsorship opportunities.