nonprofit Works

Development Writing Tips

1. **Be clear and transparent. Why are you communicating with or writing to the person or audience**? What's the purpose or your request (e.g., requesting support, seeking a meeting, stewardship and reporting)?

2. **What is your organization offering the person or audience in exchange for their financial support, or how are they motivated to contribute? Examples include**:
   - Helping someone who is struggling or less fortunate.
   - Contributing to a cause that matters to the person or audience.
   - Changing or saving lives. Relieving pain. Righting a wrong. Ending an injustice.
   - Adding to the world. Giving back. Feeling good, useful, and / or important.
   - Protecting the environment.

3. **What key message** will encourage the person or audience to take action to advance your organization's goal? (Impact, benefit, results, outcome, change, etc.)

4. Specific **language** to consider using that helps paint a picture (i.e., words, phrases, imagery, figures)

5. **Consider using a simple story** to outline the situation and the opportunity for the person or audience to "make something better" by supporting the cause.

   Situation at large → problem or challenge → solution to problem → proposed or actual outcome(s)

6. **Write in a voice that emphasizes the audience** — **You, Your, Yours** versus **I, We, Ours**

7. **Emphasize and speak more in terms of benefits** to the audience or community (impact, results, outcomes) than in terms of your organization's **features** (what we or our programs do)

8. If appropriate, consider including a **quote or testimonial** or **sample of past results and impact**.

9. **Call to action or next step**(s) — what do you want the person or audience to do as a result of reading and digesting your communication?

10. **Test your draft** on people <u>outside</u> of your organization — what do they think, how do they react?