

Your Capital Campaign Needs a Brand

8 Steps for Creating Irresistible Donor Campaigns

INTRODUCTION

You've worked with a top-notch fundraising consultant. Your feasibility study showed your donors open and interested in your capital campaign plans. You're ready to launch the quiet phase of your campaign with your most important major donors. But when you do, your case for support falls flat—and no one is sure why.

At Mission Minded, we fervently believe in the power of brand to help nonprofits make a unique promise to their audiences—a promise that helps differentiate their organization from others and helps them stand out as a compelling, vibrant choice.

Successful capital campaigns have a brand—a big organizing principle that lives within every single aspect of the campaign. And while your school, fine arts organization, or social services agency already has a brand, or reputation, the capital campaign brand helps you define how you want your campaign to be known. We call this the brand promise. This campaign will be inextricably linked to the institution for a defined but intense period of time. So your next capital campaign needs to be clear and focused in what it promises.



Using "Dream With Us" as the campaign theme, Mission Minded helped L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center develop fundraising materials that conveyed the emotion, urgency, and rationale of the campaign.

Here are the eight steps you must take to ensure the brand is delivered in every touch point of the campaign:

1 Know your assets.

A tagline that's easy to remember will help people connect with your mission. Make it bold and brief; it should pack an emotional punch.

2 Fall in love with your donors.

Create a character to represent each of your most important audiences. What makes this person tick? What will make them fervently support the idea of giving to this campaign? Get to know them so you can create a brand, messages, and case for support that will be irresistible to them.

3 Answer the question "Why?"

Why must this campaign succeed, and what positive outcomes will be the result? Don't fall into the trap of listing what your organization will get, build, or create. Instead, think big picture. Does the new library mean scholarly thinking that will set scholars and the world on the course of new discoveries for mankind? This is the nucleus of the big idea. And people invest in ideas and benefits, not buildings.

4 Make your promise.

What's the single big idea your donors get to be a part of? This is the brand promise that will become the heart and soul of your campaign. Remember what makes your donor tick and create the promise from their point of view, not your own. Is it "a world class symphony for a world-class city?" That's quite different than a new music hall, isn't it?

“We are very grateful for the message platform you provided for the [capital campaign] case. We appreciate the amount of work you put into all that you did. Mission Minded engaged this [KQED] board, and brought them closer to a common perception of where we are headed.”

Kay Sprinkel-Grace
Consultant to KQED

5 Find your theme.

Now that you’ve articulated your brand promise, you’re ready to create the theme of your campaign and to turn that theme into a headline for the case. The theme turns the brand promise into an idea to share with donors. The theme drives the writing of the case headline. Perhaps the theme is “Strength in Numbers.” Everything from the case brochure headline “Together We’re Stronger” to the case content to the photography and design would bring this theme to life.

6 Talk the Talk.

Next, you’ll create the talking points for the campaign. What’s the elevator pitch? How do you succinctly share the WHY of the campaign? What stories can you tell to help a donor imagine the possibilities? You can only effectively create short, sweet messages that are easy to say and that pack a punch when you have the brand promise to guide you.

7 Keep Your Promise.

Once you’ve clarified your brand promise it will also inform your design. For Crystal Springs Uplands School, Mission Minded used the promise “Building Brilliance” to design materials that reflected the idea visually, which complemented the writing.

8 Ready, Set, Go!

Now that you have your brand promise, campaign theme, brochure headline, and a set of strong talking points, you can begin writing your case. And the best part is, having gone through the first six steps, you’ll know exactly what your donors need to hear.

Learn More

Mission Minded is a branding firm that works exclusively with nonprofit organizations.

We believe that a brand that sets you apart is essential to a nonprofit’s success. Every day we guide nonprofits to uncover the big, bold idea that will attract more people to their work. Because in today’s world, a worthy mission is not enough. You’ve got to communicate what makes you unique at every opportunity.

Our clients successfully raise more money and attract the support they need to achieve their goals. To find out how Mission Minded can help your organization, call us today at 415-990-9360.