

6 ELEMENTS

Your Donors Want to See in Your Donor Stories

A TRUSTWORTHY NARRATOR

The reader's feelings about the storyteller influence their reaction to the story.

"Earn my trust with authentic, consistent communication. Don't try to impress me. Talk to me like one normal person to another."

SETTING

When your reader can see, feel, smell, hear the place and time of the story, they engage more deeply.

"Help me smell the autumn leaves on campus, hear the sound of squeaky shoes on the gymnasium floor, feel the garden soil under my fingernails. Transport me to a certain place and time, and I'm hooked!"

SIMPLICITY

Effective stories are simple stories

"Please don't tell me everything about the donor's gift decision or give me a resume of their life. Capture my attention with the most relevant and interesting parts. We can get into the details later if and when I decide to make a gift."



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DRAMA

Something has to happen in order for it to be a story.

"I'm not interested in a biographical list of some other donor's life accomplishments. I'm interested in something happening."

EMOTION

Effective stories don't tell the reader how to feel, but they always result in the reader feeling something.

"Show me why this person gave to you. I don't care so much about what they gave or specifically how they gave. I'll work that out for myself. The why is what's going to touch my heart."

RELATABLE CHARACTERS

The more your reader can identify with the characters in your story, the more likely they are to be influenced.

"If I'm a middle class retiree, don't tell me stories about the big-wig corporate CEO who got his company to write a check. Tell me stories about people like me."