



Ask | Thank | Report | Repeat

MAJOR DONOR STORYTELLING FOR ACTION - ACTION CHECKLIST

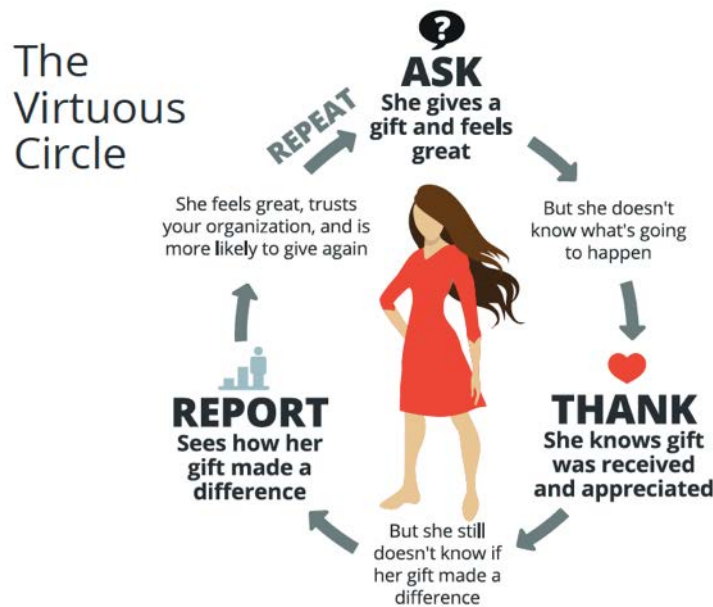
Thank you for joining the 'Major Donor Storytelling for Action' session at the conference.

As we discussed during the session, **your donors are one of the primary characters in the stories you share with them.** It's your job to highlight their role and how they helped your beneficiaries or fueled the outcomes your mission accomplishes. Telling stories about how the donor made the world a better place by giving generously to your cause is the key to increasing major donor giving and retention.

I shared 3 big ideas during our time together. Here they are:

1. Your donor should have a role and see herself in every single story you tell.
2. How you tell a story is less important than what story you tell and when you tell it.
3. Your donor is needed and her gift makes a real difference.

I also shared with you a simple but important fundraising system to use when working with your major donors. It's the **Ask, Thank, Report, Repeat system.** Here is a simple illustration of that system:



over, please...

As you write or tell your stories to your major donors, you'll want to follow the main principles outlined above and understand where you are in the Ask, Thank, Report, Repeat cycle. Here's a set of checklists to help you craft the best story you can for each part of the proven fundraising cycle!

When asking for support:

- Tell a story of need.
- Be specific about the problem.
- Use emotion!
- Tell the donor what the solution is.
- Tell the donor that their gift will provide the solution and ask the donor to provide the solution today.
- Don't tell the donor that their gift will help your organization provide the solution.
- Don't tell the donor that their gift will support your organization.
- Ask the donor to send in a gift today.

When reporting back to donors:

- Tell the completed story, including both the "need" and the "triumph."
- Summarize the story in the first couple of paragraphs.
- Be specific about what the problem was.
- Be specific about the end outcome; how things are after the problem was solved.
- Tell the donor that their gift helped provide the solution and cause the transformation.
- Thank the donor.

Long-Term Storytelling Checklist:

Present the Problem: Be comfortable talking about the problem your organization is working on, and describe it with urgency, emotion and vulnerability.

"You": Focus more on your donor's role than on your organization's role. Use the word "you" a lot.

The Need/Triumph Mix: Be comfortable sharing needs in some communications and triumphs in others. Most successful fundraising organizations have a really good mix of appeals (sharing needs) and newsletters (sharing triumphs).

Don't Complicate It! Know that this will seem simple and repetitive to you. But your donors, who are not as familiar with the story as you are, will love you for it.