



RAISE THE WORK

Metro Toronto Convention Centre
NOVEMBER 25-27, 2019

A New Narrative For Professional Fundraisers

AFP Congress 2019

Jennifer Johnstone & Ian MacQuillin

Introductions

Please introduce yourself and tell us what you do?

(Without using your job title)

Attitudes Toward Fundraising

What do you think are some of the main ideas that people hold about fundraising and charities?

What are some of the common objections that you hear about fundraising?

What is an Ideology?

- A system of beliefs, ideas and ideals through which individuals or groups construct an understanding of the world and act on that understanding

Fundraising ideology?

- What do you think people's ideological arguments against fundraising could be?
- What (if anything) do you think an 'ideology' about charity might look like; what ideas (or "non-negotiable assumptions") might it contain?

Exercise – Recognizing Ideological Arguments

Heart-stroke charity builds huge war chest

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario has a whopping \$130 million war chest of donor dollars saved up over many years.

This is by far the largest build-up of savings by a Canadian charity that raises money in the name of a disease, and the charity continues to aggressively ask for more.

Heart and Stroke donors were dismayed to learn this news.

https://www.thestar.com/news/ontario/2007/11/29/heartstroke_charity_builds_huge_war_chest.html

Exercise – Recognizing Ideological Arguments

Heart-stroke charity builds huge war chest

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario has a whopping \$130 million war chest of donor dollars saved up over many years.

This is by far the largest build-up of savings by a Canadian charity that raises money in the name of a disease, and the charity continues to aggressively ask for more.

Heart and Stroke donors were dismayed to learn this news.

‘Voluntarism’ (an ideology)

- Small and local is better than big and national
- Run according to a voluntary, self-sacrificial ethos
 - No excessive salaries
- Not too professional or ‘business’-like or big
 - Don’t waste money on overheads
 - Don’t use third party fundraising agencies
- It’s your decision to donate, and yours alone
 - You don’t need to be ‘guilted’ or pressured by professional fundraisers in order to donate
 - Even being asked to give is perceived as ‘distasteful’.

‘Voluntarism’ (an ideology)

- Low admin/fundraising costs = **good**; high admin/fundraising costs = **bad**.
- Dropping coins in a collecting box or adding a donation to your restaurant bill (‘your decision’) = **good**; being accosted or hassled for a Direct Debit (‘not your decision’) = **bad**.
- Warm glow after ‘choosing’ to give = **good**; feeling guilty about being forced into having to decline to make a donation = **bad**
- Giving directly to the charity = **good**; giving via a ‘middleman’ agency = **bad**
- Volunteers = **good**; paid fundraisers = **bad**.

The necessary evil (also ideological)

“I cannot help but feel that the professionalization, even commercialization, of seeking donations from alumni is somehow unpleasant, and not what universities should be about. It seems to be against the values and morals of higher education to be asking for money so openly.”

Peter Knight, vice-chancellor,
University of Central England (speaking in 2005)



Ideology

- If people have ideological arguments against fundraising, then our counter-arguments also need to be ideological.
- You can't out argue someone with facts who is not interested in facts

The Solution

- A new Narrative for Canadian fundraising
 1. Change the narrative both within and outside our community ...
 2. ... through the use of clear messaging derived from this new Narrative that can be deployed to minimize negative stereotypes while building a collaborative dialogue with key stakeholders

The Narrative

The Professionalist Ideology

- Our role is to effect the greatest change in Canada and the world
- Non-profits need to be professional, 'business'-like; utilising the best practices to effect change, rewarding staff fairly and proportionately
- Provided change *is* effected, a non-profit can be big or small, local or national, campaigning or helping, fundraising or non-fundraising
- There is no one, preferred, 'ideal' way for us to change the world, provided the world is changed

The Narrative

The Professionalist Ideology

Canadian charities cannot change the world unless they have the money to do it, so they have a right – in fact a duty, because research shows most people only give to charity if they're asked to do so – to ask people for support. If we're not going to waste your money on ineffective and inefficient fundraising, we must adopt professionalised methods to raise that money.

The Narrative

Fundraising is also professional when it is ethical – Rights Balancing Ethics

- Fundraising is ethical when it balances the duty of fundraisers to ask for support on behalf of their beneficiaries with the relevant rights of the donor such that a mutually optimal outcome is achieved and neither stakeholder is significantly disadvantaged.

The Narrative

A. The Professionalist Ideology

Key messages

- **A1** Fundraising enables charities to help their beneficiaries
- **A2** To help their beneficiaries, fundraisers need to be as efficient and effective as they can, so they can provide the most help and don't waste the money donors give them

The Narrative

B. Rights Balancing Fundraising Ethics

Key messages

- **B1** Fundraisers have a duty to ask for donations on behalf of their beneficiaries
- **B2** Through ethics and regulation, we aim to balance our duty to ask for support with our other duties to our donors, particularly to not subject them to undue pressure to donate

The Narrative

Donor-centred language

- Talk about the donor/praise donors

Extra facts and information

- What relevant extra facts can you present

Exercise – Ideological Arguments (Small Group Exercise)

Negative Statements

- A statement expressing negative attitudes to fundraising
- Quickly respond with the key message of the Narrative that best responds to it
- Prepare your own response that highlights your organization and paraphrases the key message of the Narrative

Exercise – Ideological Argument #1

If you genuinely cared about charities, you'd all be volunteers.

Ideological Argument #1- Components

- **Key Message A2** To help their beneficiaries, fundraisers need to be as efficient and effective as they can, so they provide most help and don't waste the money donors give them.
- **Professionalist ideology Aii** To bring about that change, Canadian non-profits need to be professional (and possibly 'business'-like), utilising the best talent and staff to effect change, and rewarding staff fairly and proportionately for the contribution they make.

Ideological Argument #1

Narrative Response

‘We can’t help our beneficiaries if we can’t make a living for ourselves.’

Exercise – Ideological Argument #2

Most of the money you give to charity is wasted on big offices and staff salaries. Virtually none of it goes to the cause.

Ideological Argument #2 - Components

- **Professionalist ideology Aii** To bring about that change, Canadian non-profits need to be professional (and possibly 'business'-like), utilising the best talent and staff to effect change, and rewarding staff fairly and proportionately for the contribution they make.
- **Key Message A2** To help their beneficiaries, fundraisers need to be as efficient and effective as they can, so they provide the most help and don't waste the money donors give them.
- **Extra facts in information** – what information can you cite that shows this is not true?

Ideological Argument #2

Narrative Response

- ‘Actually most of it goes to helping our beneficiaries. People have a perception that admin costs are twice as high as they actually are.’
- ‘We have to have offices and we’re a big charity so we need big offices to fit us all in.’
- ‘Someone’s salary is only ‘wasted’ if they’re not good at their job. Most charities are really careful to recruit the people who are most able to improve the lives of their beneficiaries. That’s not really a ‘waste’.

Exercise – Ideological Argument #3

If I want to give to charity, I'll choose which charities to give to. I don't need a vast marketing machine guilt-tripping me into giving to charity.

Exercise – Ideological Arguments #3

- **Key Message B1** Fundraisers have a duty to ask for donations on behalf of our beneficiaries.
- **Key Message B2** Through our ethics and regulation, we aim to balance our duty to ask for support with our other duties to our donors, particularly to not subject them to undue pressure to donate.
- **Extra facts in information** – what information can you cite that most people give because someone asks them to give?

Ideological Argument #3

Narrative Response

- ‘Actually most people – and we mean most, about 80 odd per cent – give to charity because someone asked them to. It’s that old adage – don’t ask, don’t get.’
- ‘It’s great that you make this proactive decision to give but, honestly, most people don’t. That’s why we have to ask them.’
- ‘Guilt-tripping will only work once. If we guilt trip someone to giving once, they’ll tell us where to get off next time (or they’ll just ignore us). But we’re sorry if by the very act of asking that makes you feel guilty or uncomfortable. It’s sometimes difficult to get the balance right, but we’re continually trying.’

Exercise – Ideological Argument #4

Third-party agencies ‘pocket’ the generous donations meant for good causes.

Exercise – Ideological Argument #4

- **Professionalist ideology Aii** To bring about that change, Canadian non-profits need to be professional (and possibly ‘business’-like), utilising the best talent and staff to effect change, and rewarding staff fairly and proportionately for the contribution they make.
- **Professionalist ideology Aiii** What matters most for us, and our beneficiaries, is effecting change, and provided change *is* effected, a Canadian non-profit organization can be big or small, local or national, campaigning or helping, fundraising or non-fundraising. There is no one, preferred, ‘ideal’ way for us to change the world, provided the world is changed.
- **Key Message A2** To help their beneficiaries, fundraisers need to be as efficient and effective as they can, so they provide the most help and don’t waste the money donors give them.

Ideological Argument #4

Narrative Response

Third party agencies get paid for providing us with an excellent service. We pay the people who print our stationery and who deliver our broadband. No-one is suggesting that they are 'pocketing' donation.

Exercise – Ideological Argument #5

You should only give to small, local charities – they're the ones that can do most good because they are better connected to local communities.

Exercise – Ideological Argument #5

- **Professionalist ideology Aiii** What matters most for us, and our beneficiaries, is effecting change, and provided change *is* effected, a Canadian non-profit organization can be big or small, local or national, campaigning or helping, fundraising or non-fundraising. There is no one, preferred, ‘ideal’ way for us to change the world, provided the world is changed.

Ideological Argument #5

Narrative Response

‘All charities do good. Local charities are good for local issues. Bigger charities are good for the bigger issues.’

Exercise – Ideological Argument #6

When people give to charity, they don't want to see their money spent on the CEO's salary.

Exercise – Ideological Argument #6

- **Professionalist ideology Aiii** What matters most for us, and our beneficiaries, is effecting change, and provided change *is* effected, a Canadian non-profit organization can be big or small, local or national, campaigning or helping, fundraising or non-fundraising. There is no one, preferred, ‘ideal’ way for us to change the world, provided the world is changed.

Ideological Argument #6

Narrative Response

‘We think that when people give to charity it’s because they want to enable the charity to change the world and help its beneficiaries.’

- “Raising money for hospitals should be one of the easiest fundraising jobs. Do you really need to be paid that kind of money to shoot fish in a barrel?”
- Kate Bahen, managing director, Charity Intelligence Canada
- <https://www.macleans.ca/society/be-wary-of-charities-that-pay-their-staff-too-much-or-too-little/>



ROGARE
THE FUNDRAISING THINK TANK

“I’d like to see you try it.”

The Narrative

- Instead of asking:
 - *“What is it about charities that people don’t like and how can we get them to change their minds about that?”*
- The new Narrative asks:
 - *“What about fundraising do we value, and can we get other people to value those things too?”*

Further Information:

AFPcanada.org

Ian MacQuillin

- ianmacquillin@rogare.net
- www.rogare.net
- Twitter: @RogareFTT
- Facebook: Critical Fundraising Forum

Jennifer Johnstone

- jennifer.johnstone@centralcityfoundation.ca
- Twitter: @jenniferjstone