

# Successful Messaging + Design for Fundraising

Presented by:



## Successful Messaging and Design for Fundraising

Does your message stand out in the crowd? Do your donors really know who you are and care about you? Is your fundraising campaign eye-catching enough to stop and read?

A powerful message and design answers yes to these questions and compels donors to give. This session covers building your strongest message and branded design, the art of storytelling, tips for instant improvement and sets you up to win in your next campaign.





# Who is DRMTM?



Surale Phillips



Laura Bessinger-Morse



Cheryl Baldwin

arts + culture brands **reimagined.**





- We're here to help you understand what your brand should do for you, find out how loud and clear it is and give you ways to make it more relevant to the people that matter to you so you can raise more money in your traditional campaigns and online.
- Be sure to take notes!
- Branding is fun. But we understand what worries you when it comes to fundraising!!

We put this workshop together because we see 99.9% of our clients struggling with the same problems:

- Disconnection from mission and audiences – “do people know who we are or care about us?”
- Audience Assumption – “bad branding built on what we think about our audience, not what they think about us”
- Feeling pulled between funders and clients – “pressure to please both, but how?”
- Disconnection on the inside – “are we really on the same page about who we are?”
- Identity Crisis – “how do we stand out in the crowd?”
- Money Desperation – “this never-ending quest for cash is wearing us all down”



**Why does it matter?**

- Shows them that you care about what they think, showing dedication to their needs.
- Reminds them of your cause and impact.

**Begin with the end in mind: ask your intention behind a survey.**

- Why are we doing this and how will we use what we learn?
- Is this a survey to motivate giving?
- Is it to test donor satisfaction?
- Or is it to assess our stewardship?

**The Big Six**

- Set clear objectives
- Design your process
- Create Questions
- Collect Data
- Analyze Results
- Use what you learned

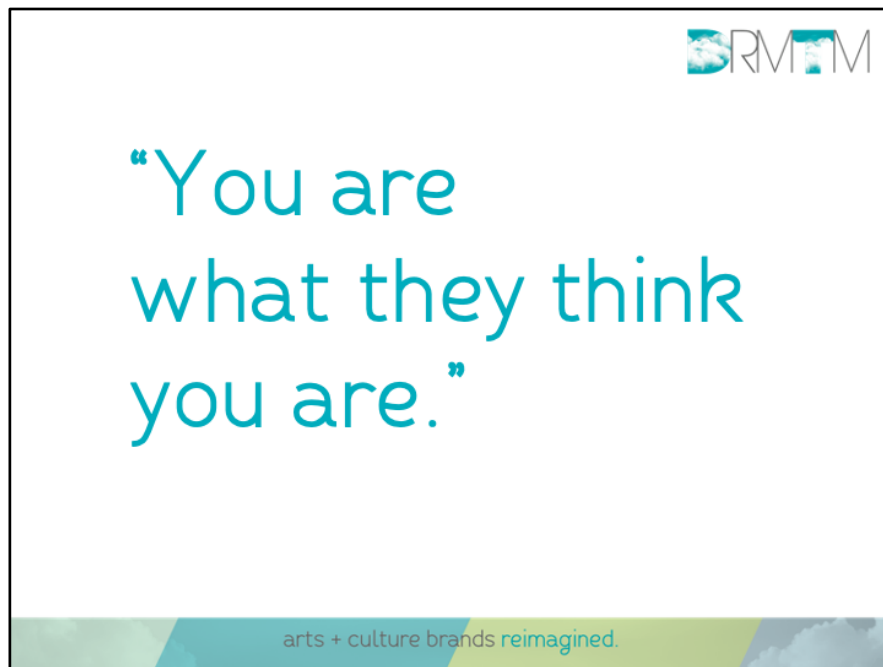
**#1 Research Tip:**

**Don't assume you know who your audience is. Find out.**

For every question you ask about your audience ask yourself, " Why do we need to know this? What can we do specifically with the answer?"

Be sure to contact Surale if you missed her presentation.





Your brand: You are what they think you are.

Only research and stewardship can show us what is in the minds and hearts of our audiences, and our relevance there.

"Your cause truly becomes meaningful when your audience says it does, and not a moment earlier." **Raise Your Voice -- A Cause Manifesto** by Brian Sooy





#### The DRMTM Gospel on Messaging – Your Written Brand:

- What makes you different makes you desirable.
- Appeal to the 1 donor, not the 100. Speak directly to them.
- No Jargon Speak – talk like a real person.
- Be Human – are you vulnerable, relatable, and likeable?
- Tell a great story. People are naturally wired to relax and listen when you say, “Let me tell you a story.”
- Successful brands connect the community to your *cause*, not to your organization.
- Donors want to support and engage with people, not programs.
- People respond to the plight of one, not many.
- Successful brands make emotional connections, because individuals make emotional decisions.
- People join causes that reflect on who they are, who they want to be, or how they want to be perceived by others.

Or simply put, it’s not about YOU, it’s about THEM. It’s not about your institution, or your staff.

It’s about how your work moves people and if you represent something they want to see in themselves.

Never discount self-interest as a major attraction to your brand and mission.





These Examples Turn Donors Off:

If you have any of these words, terms, or tools in your primary messaging, STOP and BACK AWAY:

~~IMPACT~~  
~~BEST PRACTICES~~  
~~EVIDENCE BASED~~  
~~INNOVATIVE~~  
~~CHARTS AND GRAPHS~~  
~~TECHNICAL DATA~~  
~~INDUSTRY JARGON~~

**Laura's #1 Advice Tip:**

**Stop talking about yourself as a program and come out strong on your cause.**

Your Mission is a Cause and causes are POWERFUL. Make people feel something about you. Make them want to be a part of you.





Example: Resource Depot

THIS IS OUR MANIFESTO: ENF IS ENOUGH.

ENF.

As in ENOUGH ALREADY.

We've had it with wastefulness, excess, throw-away thinking, and consumer convenience at a catastrophic cost to people and the earth.

ENF.

As in PLENTY.

There is enough stuff to last forever. There is plenty for everyone. We believe real things last and cherish objects that tell a story.

ENF.

As in WHAT SUSTAINS US.

Life gives us enough. We can each obtain what we really need, what truly matters. Time, thoughts, and relationships are our greatest possessions. Living simply shapes a more fair society.

*I TAKE MY STAND:*

- *I will figure out what is enough for me • I will buy used first • I will value quality and craftsmanship*
- *I will stop buying junk I don't need • I will share, donate, reuse, and repurpose*
- *I will donate excess goods to Resource Depot*
- *I will create, express, and innovate with what already exists*
- *I will support this cause with my time or money*





Your brand is the perceived emotional experience of your mission or organization as a whole.

Your visual brand represents the connection and trust your believers have with you.

Your brand design is your nametag to the world, the way you distinguish yourself from others and the impression formed from interacting with you.

Large companies with big budgets aren't the only ones who can create memorable, well-designed brands and build trust.

**Cheryl's #1 Advice Tip:**

**Less is More. It's really true. You don't have to put everything you do on one brochure or tell your whole story on one piece.**

Great design includes an array of distinct pieces that support each other, allowing each one to grab your audience and "wow them," not overwhelm them.





Be BOLD

arts + culture brands reimagined.





Example:

Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies – New campaign effort (diaper pantry); how do you make diapers appealing?

Went with humor and heart to underscore a relatable yet important topic.





# Be CAPTIVATING

arts + culture brands reimagined.





Example:  
Busch Wildlife

Transition from crowded, confusing, collaterals that had no distinguishing voice to outstanding cause with a niche message





Be HUMAN

arts + culture brands reimagined.





Example:  
*Dress for Success*

Strategy was to give a face to the campaign, an ambassador, whose voice did the asking and promoted the programs.

Took them from info and program driven to *story driven*.

Story telling provides the context for people to envision and understand the circumstances of your clients.

Story telling humanizes issues and situations, making them relevant and compelling to the reader.

Highlighting success is appealing to donors when they can see the direct impact of their giving in the life of a real person.

A great example of helping the person, not the program.

Our team had to work within DfS national colors and design.

We gave it movement, personalized hashtags, took their color palette and typography to a new level.





## WHAT NOW

Question: How would you reimagine your brand as it applies to fundraising from what you've discovered today?

5 Things to quickly make changes to instantly improve your fundraising design and messaging:

- Simplify and reimagine your fundraising appeal according to Bold, Captivating, and Human
- Make it about your donors and what they accomplish through you
- Talk about yourself as a cause, not programs, to draw donors to give
- Define what differentiates you and solves problems donors care about
- Eliminate meaningless language that doesn't support the donor connection





### **Your Fall Fundraising 3 Point Checklist**

NOTHING should happen related to your fundraising the remainder of the year until you do the following, which will ensure you are informed about your donors before you involve them in your campaign or virtual event.

#### **1. CALL**

Personally call your most important donors and check on them. Find out how they are doing. Tell them they matter. Thank them for their support and don't ask them for a thing, (except maybe if they would be willing to help you on a survey).

Likewise, have some caring and human conversations with your funders. What is shifting for them? What are their pressures and worries? What are they hoping our work will do to accomplish their current community goals? How can you both be more creative in meeting your aligned goals?

#### **2. SURVEY**

It's rare that orgs intimately communicate with their donors outside of asking.

Surveys are an opportunity to bring donors into the loop of important discussions and decisions. They feel more engaged and an important part of your next ask.

Conduct an email donor survey before any campaigns go out this fall with these Survey/Research Questions:

- Why do you give (or have given) to our museum?
- Do you feel appreciated and engaged by our staff and programs?
- Rank by order the importance of our programs (list).
- Tell us how our museum can help support and heal our community.
- If asked, would you give to support current funding priorities caused by the pandemic?
- Would you attend or support a virtual event if we held one?

Always make the effort to take what you learned back to the group.

Let them know survey results will be shared with them (can be in a newsletter).

Participants often don't see their input realized unless a big change occurs. Sharing their influence shows you listened.

#### **3. ASK**

Your fall fundraising campaign and message conducted by phone, direct mail, email, event or a combination will be totally directed by donor feedback, providing you the greatest confidence in success.





Keep in touch.

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Thanks and Here's to your Great Fall Campaign!!!

EMAIL US FOR A FREE CONSULTATION, SPECIAL OFFERS AND DEEP DISCOUNTS FOR  
WEBINAR PARTICIPANTS!!