

Direct Forum is a free email newsletter containing useful direct marketing tips, news updates and how-to information. It's convenient, informative and I am not trying to sell you anything!

1. The three magic words in fundraising.

2. The power of storytelling.

The three magic words in fundraising.

Imagine if you had the power to use just 3 magic words in fundraising because they would help you increase donations. Do you know which ones you would pick?

Here's a hint: I've used all three of them in the sentence above.

They are: **"Imagine"**, **"You"** and **"Because."**

"Imagine" is a magical word because it asks your readers to open their eyes and minds.

The word **"You"** is glue. It has the same power as personalization and makes your letter or email more donor-focused.

Finally, **"Because"** explains why your message is important.

In a classical experiment conducted at Harvard University, a worker was instructed to cut in line at their office's copy machine using the word 'because' in two different ways:

1. "Excuse me, I have five pages. May I use the Xerox machine because I'm in a rush?"

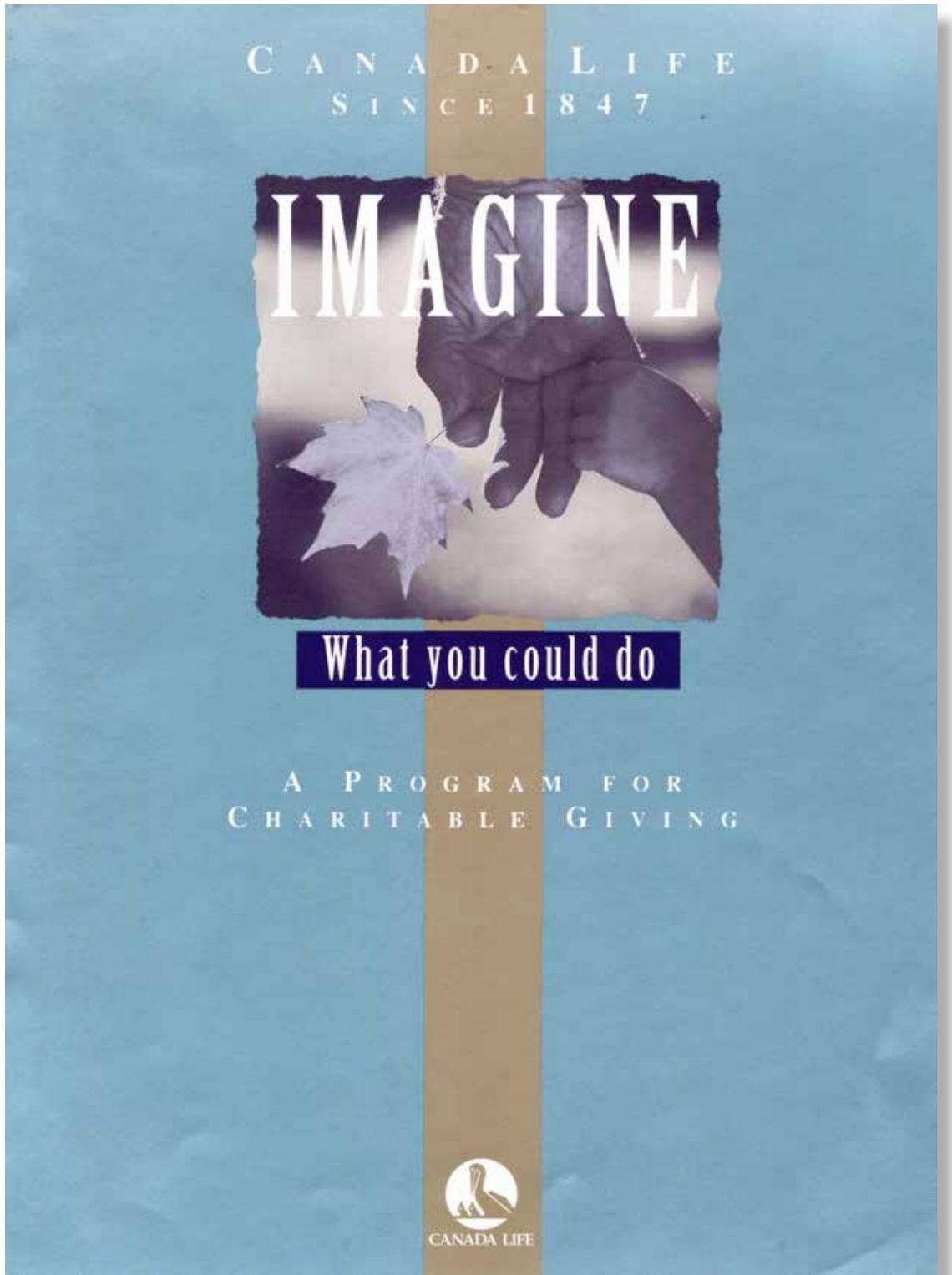
2. "Excuse me, I have five pages. May I use the Xerox machine because I have to make some copies?"

The result: In both cases there was virtually no difference; 93% of people let the person go ahead no matter what they said, even even though the second explanation made no sense at all. After all, everybody lined up at the copy

machine was there to make copies too.

The reason:

Our brains are great at taking shortcuts. It seems that using the word “because” satisfies our need for a reason and we don’t bother to listen to what they really said.



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The power of storytelling.

Truth be told, the power of a good story cannot be understated. There is plenty of proof in the many novels we read and number of movies we watch. More amazing, we sometimes read and watch them more than once.

In the last two decades, I've worked with dozens of charities and while each one has a distinct mission, most of the time, their end goals are the same: their message needs to engage the reader and gain financial support for the charity.

One way to do this is through the power of storytelling because the best stories have the ability to opens our eyes and hearts to someone's plight.

Stories can be agents of change.

There are multiple ways to tell a story.

Here's a great example:
J. Walter Thompson, Amsterdam used a video to tell the story of child trafficking called: **School for Justice.**



It's about an educational institution in India that just opened on April 6, 2017.

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The agency worked closely with the *Free a Girl Movement India* to bring the school to life. **School for Justice** is both a physical school and an educational programme that works in collaboration with one of the best law universities in India to ensure the highest level of education.

School for Justice has a bold aim: to counteract the injustice of child prostitution by educating girls rescued from child prostitution to become lawyers and public prosecutors with the power to prosecute the criminals that once owned them.

Here's the link to the video:
<https://youtu.be/KfcMMAFzLh0>

Stories can be told on many social media platforms.

You can engage your audience by using social media channels like Crowdfunding, Snapchat or Instagram, or even tell a story in a 140-character Tweet.

Placing your information in front of diverse audiences is a great way of obtaining new donors. All these versatile platforms allow you to reach a myriad of potential new funding sources.



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Information alone does not change people's minds.

Finally, trying to encourage people to donate by convincing them with logic does not work. Information alone does not change people's minds or convince them of anything. In many cases it does exactly the opposite.

For example, in one study conducted at Yale, two groups of people—one favoring capital punishment and one opposing it—were given fabricated information that presented equally compelling facts, pro and con.

The group that supported capital punishment rated the arguments for it as more credible, while the group who were against capital punishment rated the arguments against it as more credible.

Then, afterwards, the groups

were asked again. The pro-capital-punishment people were now even more in favor of it, and the anti-capital-punishment people were even more against it.

Most people with firmly held views live in an echo chamber and only read and agree with material that entrenches their biases and long held views.

In the Yale study, even when it was revealed to the two groups later that the information was made up, people still clung to their original positions.

It is clear that in fundraising we need to inform about our cause and explain why the need is great. Truthful storytelling does this more effectively than just presenting straight facts. Involvement outperforms logic every time.

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