

How to Build an Engaging Case for Support: a six-step guide

A case for support is the clear, compelling explanation of why your organisation needs to raise money and what that money will achieve in the world. It convinces someone their gift will make a meaningful difference and that now is the moment to act.

The strongest cases combine rationale, emotion and urgency. They hook people with a vision, walk them through the problem, show them the plan, and make it clear why their support matters today.

You might tailor this in a grant application, a donor facing pamphlet, or your website messaging. Being consistent is key!

Here's a six-step guide to building your own compelling case for support.

1. Start with your vision

What difference will the money you raise make in the world?

Notice we didn't say: what difference will it make to your organisation...

The vision is not about your organisation's needs. It's about the lives that will be improved, the stories that will be told, the communities that will thrive or the heritage that will be protected when your organisation is better funded.

A great case for support does one thing above all else: it makes people feel the difference their gift will make. Paint that future first, vividly, with feeling. Only once they're emotionally invested will they want to know how you'll get there.

Ask yourself:

What difference will the money we raise make in the world?

2. Define the problem

Every strong case has a clear obstacle. Explain what is currently holding you back from achieving your vision.

The problem is not your funding gap. It's the human cost of that gap. Who is missing out? What is being lost? What risks becoming permanent if nothing changes?

This is where you can articulate what is missing, what is at risk and what can't happen without investment.

Ask yourself:

What does it mean for the communities we serve if this problem goes unsolved? Who loses out, and how?

3. Present your plan

Now show how you will overcome the problem. Spell out, simply and confidently, what you will do with the money you raise and why that will solve the problem you've just described.

This is the bridge between the emotional opening and the practical ask. Keep it clear and free of jargon.

Ask yourself:

If a donor gave us what we need tomorrow, what would we do first, second, and third? Can we say that in plain language?

4. Set out the costs

A campaign needs a clear, credible financial framework. Summarise the key elements of your budget and add them up. Be transparent about what it costs and break it into named components.

Donors are more willing to give when they can see exactly where their gift goes.

Ask yourself:

Can we show donors exactly where every pound goes, and why each element is essential to achieving the vision?

5. Create urgency

Every campaign needs a reason to act now. Match-funding deadlines, deteriorating conditions, a closing window of opportunity - what makes this moment the one that matters?

Without urgency, decisions are postponed. Give people a compelling reason to act today, not next month.

Ask yourself:

What happens if we don't raise the money this year? What opportunity is lost, or what situation gets worse?

6. Make the call to action unmistakable

Tell donors exactly how they can help achieve the vision.

Be specific about:

- how they can give
- what different levels of support unlock
- how their gift moves the organisation closer to the future you've described

Make it feel like joining something, not paying a bill. The donor is your partner in achieving the vision, donors want to know how they fit into the story.

Ask yourself:

Have we made giving as easy and meaningful as possible? Does each gift level tell a story about what it achieves?

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