



**Nemeth Consulting**  
Stories that Move your Customers

## Tip Sheet for Non-Profits

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### 10 Ways To Use Case Studies to Promote your Cause

As explained in my blog post, [Mr. Spock's Guide to Improving your Charitable Appeals](#), cause marketing that highlights the profile of a specific person in need is likely to garner more empathy than requests to help multiple people or entire populations. The upshot of that post, drawing on research from psychology and the decision sciences, was that stories trump statistics when it comes to tugging on both the heart-strings and the purse-strings of your supporters and donors.

I've compiled this list of some obvious and some not-so-obvious ways that you can use client case studies to raise money, build buzz, and increase support for your non-profit.

#### For Fund-raising

I think we can place fund-raising in the “obvious” category. Your non-profit would likely not be functioning without it. So go ahead and introduce potential donors to some of the people they could be helping. Make it personal.

1. **Soliciting Donations** – During funding drives, be sure to include well-written profiles of people your organization has succeeded in helping, or a story about the struggles of someone it is trying to help. These profiles can be included in direct mail requests, or used as vignettes integrated into the call scripts of your volunteers. And of course, they should be highlighted on your website.
2. **Applying for Grants** – Don't forget to include one or more success stories when submitting your grant applications. They not only give the grantor or committee a reason to care, they are also a powerful testimony that highlights your proven ability to use the funds you seek to accomplish the mission you are pursuing.

## For Advocacy

Still on the obvious side of the continuum, case studies are a fantastic way to promote your cause beyond your immediate supporters and donor base.

3. **Engaging the Media** – Journalists are in the business of storytelling, so if you can provide them with an engaging tale, they're bound to follow-up and bring your organization more attention in the process. Make sure your communications person gives a heads-up to local reporters, via news release or other means, when you've published a fresh success story.
4. **Advocating for Public Policy** – Case studies are also a great way to advocate to your elected officials. You see politicians do it all the time when they are on the stump. They bring a local person or family up to the podium and tell the tale of their suffering (which they claim would be alleviated if said politician's policies were enacted) or the tale of their success (due, of course, to said politician's already implemented policies). So when engaging politicians, play a game they understand. Give them a face, a name, a STORY, that highlights exactly how and why their constituents need them to support your cause.

## For Community Relations

Partnerships are vital to the on-going work that non-profits do, whether those partnerships are with individuals (supporters and volunteers) or other organizations. Make sure they know about the good work you are doing.

5. **Keeping Supporters Up-to-Date** – Make sure that financial requests aren't the only times you are reaching out to supporters. Success stories delivered via email or newsletter are a great tool for keeping them informed about the goings-on in your organization and helping them to feel good about the help they've made possible via their contributions.
6. **Building Alliances** – Non-profits rarely operate in a vacuum, often partnering with municipalities, citizen's groups, and other non-profits in order to build a coalition whose combined impact will be greater than if each group were acting alone. When reaching out to build these alliances, use case studies to showcase your organization's expertise and to highlight the strengths that you bring to the partnership. Success stories also make a compelling case to stakeholders when you are looking to expand your services into a new area or extend them to a new population of clients.
7. **Augmenting your Annual Report** – Annual reports don't have to be boring documents full of mind-numbing fiduciary lists and statistics. And they don't have to be a chore to create. In fact, they can and should be a celebration of the

lives that were changed over the course of the year due to your organization's good work. (See the [KID's annual report](#) at this link for a strong example of the use of story in year-end reporting).

## For Internal Communications & Organization Building

These last few tips may not be as obvious, but that doesn't mean they are any less effective in getting your stories to the right people in order to strengthen your organization.

8. **Volunteer Recruitment** – There are two ways to use case studies in order to recruit volunteers to your cause. One is your standard story, showing potential recruits the good that your organization does in the community in hopes that they'll want to contribute. The other way, often underutilized, is to create success profiles of your current volunteers discussing how and why service through your non-profit has been rewarding for them. This peer to peer communication makes for a persuasive and personal to others of like mind.
9. **BOD Communication** – Your board of directors is responsible for oversight of the organization, and in many cases, advocacy of your cause to donors and other partners. As such, they need to be kept up-to-date with what's happening on the ground and case studies are a succinct way to capture those details. They also give your board members easy-to-remember vignettes that they can share when discussing your work with others.
10. **Staff Training** – Turnover is an inevitable part of any organization, but when you have a roster of volunteers on top of your regular staff and interns, keeping everyone on the same page can be a challenge. Avoid reinventing the wheel with each new staffer or cohort of volunteers. Preserve the knowledge of your best practices and successful campaigns by recording them in case studies.

**\*\*Bonus Tip:** Case studies are a versatile type of content. Once you have the story down, it can be reproduced or re-purposed across many formats other than the standard web page or PDF file. This gives you a chance to reach supporters who prefer certain content mediums – video over text, for example – and to extend the reach of your brand message across multiple channels.

If you'd like to read about more ways to get extra mileage from your success stories, check out my blog post: “[15 Ways to Show Off your Organization's Success Story](#)”

## Thank you for Reading!

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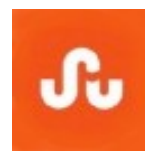
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## About Us

Nemeth Consulting has over 7 years experience in communications & publishing gained through work in the non-profit, education, and small business sectors.

We strive to create clear & compelling communications in plain language, and bring an end-user focused perspective to every project so that you succeed by meeting your constituents' needs. We're adept at interviewing & extracting key information from clients, stakeholders, and subject matter experts, and translating that information into stories that educate, motivate, and inspire.

*What others are saying:*

*“Nemeth Consulting has been a mirror example of what the Taproot Foundation looks for in a copy-writing consultant. The quality they brought to the table, combined with their friendly demeanor and precise attention to detail ensured that we received a high caliber product.”*

*– Erica Williams, Program Manager at Taproot Foundation*



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