

Cultivation in a Crisis/ Content as your Case

Defining Your Value Proposition and Staying in Touch with Your Donors



COVID-19: What Now?

- Widespread public crisis combined with market uncertainty make ultimate implications for fundraising hard to predict
- BUT: Typically, Americans are more generous in the wake of a crisis/natural disaster – i.e., they continue to support the causes important to them, and give additional gifts for disaster relief/crisis mitigation. (for more, see [Center for Disaster Philanthropy](#); this article in [The Conversation](#))
- AND while foundations calculate their payout based on their endowment's performance, it is calculated at a minimum on a twelve-month average, and many foundations use a longer term – three years or more – time frame for calculating net assets and the resulting payout rate. (For more, see Foundation Center's [IssueLab whitepaper](#); the Ford Foundation alluded to this in its recent [letter to grantees](#))

COVID-19: What Now?

- SO: Many people are at home looking for ways to spend time and consume content – why not yours?
- As news organizations, you are part of the solution, making sure your community/constituency has the information it needs – make that case.
- Your community has questions, concerns, is feeling disconnected – how can you meet those needs and demonstrate your value?
- What are the virtual alternatives to the in-person meetings/events you might have convened?
- Resources/food for thought: <https://www.mrss.com/lab/here-for-this/>;
<http://mail.metmuseum.org/q/13V0VhVKvH26YZEXG3Gil/wv>

Unique Value Proposition



Challenge/Opportunity:
Why this? What is the
project?



Urgency: Why now?



Credentials: Why you?



Sample Case for Support

Our Challenge

Mississippi has myriad challenges -- persistent and widespread poverty; racial polarization; high rates of obesity, diabetes, and teen pregnancy; the lowest-ranked schools in the nation -- and a culture of opacity that helps perpetuate them, made all the more acute by the collapse of journalism's traditional business model, which has severely restricted resources for investigative and accountability reporting.

Without quality news and information, Mississippi's citizens and communities cannot understand and make good decisions about the challenges they face, and cannot hold government and institutional powers accountable.

Our Approach

Mississippi Today was founded to fill these information gaps. We focus on providing context and background on the news events unfolding in Mississippi's communities, and on lifting up the voices of Mississippi's rural and underserved communities in particular. We do so with a newsroom that looks like the communities we cover, with women and people of color leading our teams at every level. We were founded and led at the board level by some of the most prominent leaders of Mississippi's communities and the national news industry. We cultivate deep connections to our communities, with a bureau in the Delta and a program of events to promote dialogue across communities, community leaders, and our team.

Our Needs

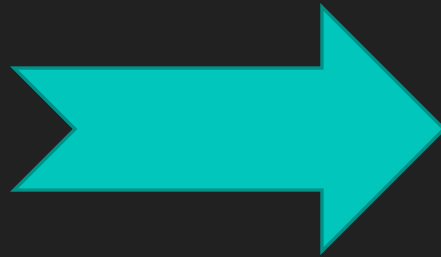
Mississippi Today is off to a strong start, with supporters that have included the Walton, Ford, and Packard Foundations, the American Journalism Projects, and hundreds of Mississippians. But it is critical that we grow and diversify our revenue streams and attract more partners -- and we hope you'll be one of them.

Exercise: Define Your Unique Value Proposition

Take 15 minutes to answer these three key questions and sketch out case for support/intro language.

Embodying Your Value Prop

- What are the stories that only you can tell?
 - Showcase the work that best exemplifies the urgency/uniqueness in your case



- How do your communications demonstrate this uniqueness?

Case Study

Mass Comms: Newsletters



Case Study

Different Communities, Different Events

What does the 2020 Census Count have to do with school funding, health care and infrastructure? And if you don't get counted, what does that mean for these issues?



February 27
6:30 - 8 p.m.
Delta Hands for Hope
124 E Peeler Ave
Shaw, MS

MISSISSIPPI TODAY presents...



March 12 | 6 p.m.

The MAX
2155 Front Street
Meridian, MS



People, Politics & the Press



2019 Gubernatorial Debate
Watch Party



Considerations

Be intentional: Who is the donor target for every forward-facing communication you produce?

Tailor communications for audiences of many prospective donors vs major gift prospect or donor.

Be collaborative: Are there orgs in your community that share your values/concerns? Can you partner with local organizations (schools/colleges, local arts groups, community groups, churches) in events or newsletters to help you reach new audiences/potential donors?

Be proactive: How are you communicating with donors and prospects about major projects and achievements? Have a rollout/launch strategy for major projects or other announcements.

Questions?

Thank you and stay safe!

Resources

Disaster Giving

- <http://theconversation.com/american-generosity-after-disasters-4-questions-answered-83277>
- <https://www.issuelab.org/resources/34757/34757.pdf>
- <https://givingusa.org/disaster-fundraising-lessons-from-the-australian-bushfires/>

Food for Thought: Newsletters and Messaging

- <http://mail.metmuseum.org/q/13V0VhVKvH26YZEXG3Gil/wv>
- <https://www.mrss.com/lab/here-for-this/>
- <https://mailchi.mp/inn/innovation-200317?e=025ae85334>

Training & Guides for Presentations and Events

- <https://www.nonprofitlearninglab.org/onlinetraining>
- <https://www.duarte.com/resources/>