Donor Progression & Storytelling Strategy Guide

It can be difficult to decide where to start on your storytelling journey. But knowing who your intended audience is and how to reach them is crucial for success. The Donor Progression & Storytelling Strategy Guide is a "cheat sheet" matrix that suggests tactics, types of storytelling and communication channels you can use based on the type of donor and their likelihood to donate based on a scale from 0-100%.

Likelihood to Donate	Type of Person	Donor Progression Tactics	Types of Storytelling	Communication Channels
0% Highly Unlikely	Strong disinterest/opposition or unaware of the cause.	Raise awareness.	General information about your organization's mission, goals and activities.	General press releases, advertisements and social media posts
10% Unlikely	Minimal awareness of the cause, little history of charitable giving.	Personalize communication, invite to a low-commitment activity.	Stories of how your organization has made a difference in the community or for individuals.	Direct mail, email newsletters and website articles.
20% Somewhat Unlikely	Aware but not personally engaged or connected, sporadic giving history.	Educate about the impact, engage through surveys or feedback.	Personal stories from volunteers or beneficiaries.	Personalized emails, website blogs and video content on social media.
30% Neutral	Familiar with the organization but have not donated before, donate to other causes.	Ask for a small donation, invite to donor-appreciation events.	Testimonials from previous donors and their reasons for supporting your organization.	Direct mail, personalized emails and interactive social media posts (like Q&As or AMA sessions).
40% Somewhat Likely	Have donated to the cause in the distant past, donate to similar causes.	Strengthen the relationship, present opportunities for more significant involvement.	Stories highlighting the impact of a donation and what a future donation could achieve.	Personalized emails, exclusive web content and donor-exclusive social media groups.
50% Likely	Have donated to the cause within the last few years, frequently engage with the organization.	Increase ask amount, offer recognition.	Success stories showing the direct impact of donations and stories about ongoing projects that need support.	Personalized emails, phone calls and donor-exclusive events (virtual or physical).
60% Highly Likely	Regular donors, participate in events, strong interest in the mission.	Propose regular giving, offer more personal interaction.	Stories showing your organization's future plans and how the donor can contribute to making them a reality.	Personal meetings, webinars and donor-exclusive newsletters.
70% Very Highly Likely	Regular donors, involved in the organization in other ways.	Encourage increased regular giving, cultivate deeper involvement.	Stories of your organization's most successful projects and initiatives, emphasizing how regular donations contributed to these successes.	Personal meetings, video calls, exclusive digital content and VIP events.
80% Extremely Likely	Major donors, deeply involved with the organization.	Foster a major gift, create legacy opportunities.	Personalized stories showcasing how the individual's donation has made a difference.	Personal meetings, one-on-one phone calls and private VIP events.
90% Almost Certain	Lifetime donors, included the organization in their will.	Facilitate a pledge, maintain the relationship.	Stories focusing on legacy, showing how the donor can make a lasting impact.	Personal meetings, one-on-one phone calls, private VIP events and personalized legacy planning materials.
100% Certain	Pledged a future gift or in the process of donating.	Maintain regular appreciation and communication.	Acknowledgement stories expressing gratitude for the donor's contribution and outlining the impact of their donation.	Personal thank-you letters, personalized impact reports and invitations to see your donations in action (site visits, project tours, etc.)

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