

Defining Your *Unique Value Proposition*

A Step-by-Step Guide for Nonprofits





Introduction

There are *millions of charities* in the United States alone, and many of them are going after the same prospective donors you are. But, the reality is that not every donor will be *inspired* to give to your cause.

Not everyone will connect with your mission, so don't waste time chasing dead ends. Instead, hone your messaging to attract the *right* audience — one that will support your cause with years of loyalty.

Success starts with your **unique value proposition (UVP)**. This is what separates your organization from others and positions you as the best possible solution to the challenge or issue your mission serves. Without a clearly defined UVP, you're left trying to appeal to everyone, only to end up appealing to no one.

Even if you know who your ideal donor is (and isn't), you may still struggle to identify your UVP.



Simply put, you're too close to it.

As a fundraiser, you're immersed in your organization. You live, sleep, and breathe the mission. And while it would be nice if donors also thought about your organization all the time, they don't. In those brief moments when they give or volunteer, they only want to know they're making a difference. This donor tunnel vision, if you will — to feed the hungry, heal the sick, support students, and stop abuse — is how you find your UVP.

When you think about your ideal donor, what is the “why” behind their giving?

We designed this resource to help you discover your unique value proposition. In it, we'll walk you through a six-step, structured process to uncover the “why” you share with your core audience.

Instructions Before Beginning this Exercise

Get a cross-functional team together. Include frontline staff and data experts, and consider a facilitator who can guide the discussion. You want to bring in voices of people who communicate with donors daily and deeply understand their mindset. You want people who talk to donors daily, data folks who have the numbers, and a facilitator who can balance the personalities in the room.

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Step One: Identify your *ideal* donor.



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Consider the personal identity of your current donors.

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Ask...

- ▶ What do our most committed donors say about giving to our mission?
- ▶ What are some messages that donors have responded to best?
- ▶ Are donors interested in providing short-term or long-term impact?
- ▶ What personality types or characteristics is our organization most suited to?

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Notes:

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Step Two:

Brainstorm *claims*.



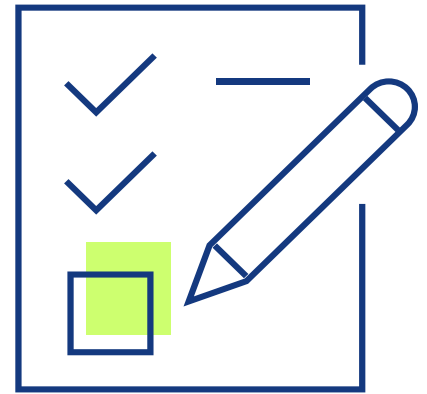
List 5—10 claims you can make about your impact.

- Ask...
- ▶ What matters most to our ideal donor?
 - ▶ What does our ideal donor find relevant?
 - ▶ What does our ideal donor find compelling?
 - ▶ What traits of our organization or program are most likely to appeal to our ideal donor?

Notes:

Step Three:

Rank your claims and select the *best*.



Score your claims for Appeal and Exclusivity

- ▶ Rate each potential claim by its appeal and exclusivity on a scale of 1—5, with 1 being the least appealing/exclusive and 5 being the most appealing/exclusive. Can the donor find this value elsewhere?
- ▶ Identify the top 3 most exclusive claims by totaling the appeal and exclusivity scores. There is a bit of an art to this as something that is highly appealing yet less exclusive can still be a good offer based on the evidence.

Example:

APPEAL	EXCLUSIVITY	RANK	CLAIM
5	1	6	We share the gospel clearly and simply.
5	3	8	We develop discipleship resources in local languages and distribute them free of charge.
5	5	10	Our pastoral training program draws on 20 years of our proven teaching materials to equip pastors in nations where traditional Bible schools are not an option, increasing the pastor's effectiveness.

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Step Four:

Support the *top* claims.



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Find evidence that backs up each of your claims

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Ask...

- ▶ Can we back up those claims we've just made, ideally with numbers?
- ▶ Can we prove that we can deliver on our promises?

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Example:

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Our pastoral training program draws on 20 years of our proven teaching materials to equip pastors in nations where traditional Bible schools are not an option, increasing the pastor's effectiveness.

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- A.** We've trained 3,200 pastors in sub-Saharan Africa in the last 5 years.
- B.** Pastors who've been through the training program report a 20% growth in church attendance in the first year.
- C.** Our teaching materials received a Christian Teachers Association Gold Standard award each year from 2015 to 2021 and are endorsed by the Academy of Christian Educators.

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Step Five:

Craft your *simple* statement.

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This is the summary that everybody agrees on about what's most important—the claims you will focus on to the exclusion of everything else the organization does.

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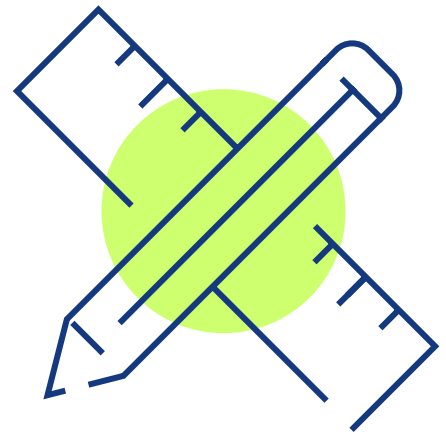
Example:

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Question: Why should I, as a current ministry supporter, become a monthly supporter vs. continuing to give on an occasional basis?

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Statement: Because as a monthly supporter, you will provide ongoing support to pastors in nations where traditional Bible school is not an option by providing sound Biblical doctrinal interpretation for pastors, proven teaching materials that will increase their effectiveness, and free discipleship materials in local languages to help them build spiritual maturity among their congregations.

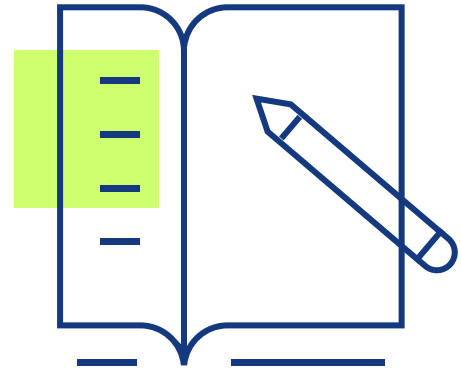


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Step Six:

List out the evidence & *apply*.

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For each claim, expand your evidence statements into proof points that will build your case for support—your appeal.

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- ▶ Bring the claims to life through the campaign creative.
- ▶ Add emotional depth to your proposition by using compelling quotes, stories, and imagery.
- ▶ Use your simple statement and proof points as guides to help you decide what to include and what to leave out when creating content.

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Conclusion

Your nonprofit's *unique value proposition* sets you apart from the millions of charities competing for donors.

More importantly, it connects you to your most loyal donors, the ones who will support you for years to come. When your UVP aligns with why your donors give, you've found the sweet spot.

But your work isn't done. As your organization evolves, you'll need to continuously evaluate and refine your UVP. Doing so will help ensure you always have a strong donor base.



Turn your UVP into a strategy that drives growth. A strong value proposition is just the start. AGP helps nonprofits turn that clarity into campaigns and strategies that drive measurable growth across the donor journey.





MORE ABOUT AGP

Turning Missions Into Movements

At AGP, we help nonprofits turn missions into *movements* — and supporters into passionate *champions*.

We're a strategic partner to mission-driven teams who want more than short-term wins. Our work blends insight and creativity to strengthen what matters most: deeper connection, lasting loyalty, and the resources to power your mission.

We've walked in your shoes. We understand the complexity nonprofits face—because we've lived it. That experience grounds our approach in authenticity, humility, and deep respect for your work.

From donor journeys to brand storytelling, direct mail to digital engagement, and data to design—we bring both intelligence and heart to help you grow what matters.

Whether you're looking to inspire action, modernize your strategy, or simply cut through the noise—we will meet you where you are and build from there.

This isn't just fundraising. It's not just marketing.

It's how powerful missions take root, gain momentum, and grow.

Choose AGP for Strategy & Consulting, Direct Mail, Web Design & Development, Digital Marketing, Advocacy, Membership Acquisition & Retention, Donation Platforms, Loyalty Programs, and more. Our clients feed the hungry, heal the sick, nourish souls, enrich lives, care for animals, and build minds. You have an important goal, and we're thrilled to leverage our blend of data, technology, and award-winning creative to get you there.



Contact Us

We'd love to connect *to learn more about your mission and the goals we can help you achieve.*

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