

# Nonprofit Narratives Must Be Respectfully Written, Expertly Edited, and Poignantly Produced

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Regardless of the purpose of any nonprofit message, you have a story to tell – a story that must be respectfully written, expertly edited, and poignantly produced.

**Respectfully written:** Respectful (nonprofit) writing refers to a narrative demonstrating truth and trust for and in all stakeholders:

- Truth in facts and metrics, especially when reporting outcomes and impacts (ex. the number of meals a \$100 provides, or how that \$100 is additionally leveraged for even more impact)
- Authenticity in testimonials from constituents, volunteers, board members, staff, or partners, presented in the appropriate context
- Relevance in tone and intention – a grant proposal will have a different tone and intention than a social media post or story in a newsletter because the audiences differ, and therefore, relevance differs
- Retains the mission although keeping up with trends and current conversations throughout the community

**Expertly edited:** Expert editing refers to ensuring the content and structure of your nonprofit narrative are reviewed by someone having a comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter, including writing conventions before posting, publishing, or submitting. This does not mean you have to be an expert in grammar and punctuation, but rather an expert on tools that polish your prose.

Editing tools include:

- Software and apps correct grammar and punctuation mistakes while making suggestions for better message delivery and readability. Grammarly, Hemingway App,
- For longer writing projects, consider using stages of the editing process to stay on track and meet deadlines. The editing process may include developmental editing, copy editing, and proofreading.
- Time management is a valuable tool for editing. A rushed editing job, especially when combined with a rushed writing job, can be disastrous for the message and the nonprofit's image and branding.

**Poignantly produced:** Poignant production of any nonprofit narrative is crucial to story conveyance for fundraising or annual reports or even an end-of-year campaign letter:

- Poignance in the nonprofit world evokes emotion, touching the audience and moving them to action or at least advocacy,
- Poignance affects constituent participation, donor participation, board member interest, and so much more.
- Production of nonprofit narratives present in a variety of ways depending upon the audience and the medium with strict attention to images and layout along with content for a one-page letter, a brief social media post, a feature article in the quarterly digital newsletter, a multi-page grant proposal, an infographic for a board meeting presentation, PowerPoint slide show for volunteer orientation.
- Production must always be crisp and attention-grabbing (i.e., poignant).
- Mastering poignance and production takes practice and patience.

Writing any nonprofit message (grant proposals, website content, annual reports, social media posts, fundraising campaign letters, and more) is best when treated as any other business or nonfiction writing project.

Find writing tips and more at [SMARTMoneyGrantWriting.com](http://SMARTMoneyGrantWriting.com).