

# Grant Writing: Your Idea + Your Story = Investors

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# An Interactive, Virtual Classroom

## TOPICS

- Your Brand and Messaging
- What Fundraising Is and Is Not
- The Individual Donor/Investor
- Foundation Fundraising





# The SOCO

Single Overriding Communications Objective

Your SOCO is the one single message or set of messages you want communicated about you and your product.

How is a  
SOCO  
used?

A SOCO is never printed or spoken word-for-word, but rather conveyed through messaging and examples

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It reinforces the goals and strengths that set you apart and increases top-of-mind awareness about your idea.

# Why do you need a SOCO?

FOCUSES ALL  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND MESSAGES

GETS EVERYBODY ON  
THE SAME PAGE AND  
COMMUNICATING  
THE SAME MESSAGE.

EASILY TAILORED TO  
ANY GIVEN  
AUDIENCE

ESPECIALLY  
IMPORTANT DURING  
TIMES OF GROWTH  
OR CHANGE



# Who else uses a SOCO?

Anyone who frequently communicates in sound bites and wants to get a clear message across to their audience(s)

Media-savvy organizations that know how to highlight their message, regardless of the questions posed during interviews

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## A SOCO Example



### ***The Leadership Design Alliance***



### **Key messages**

The Leadership Design Alliance provides the tools, inspiration, and opportunities to grow bold ideas and explore personal passions.

We support individuals and organizations who bravely challenge their own assumptions...dare to dream about what could be...and deliver on what will be.

# Working Session

What problem are you trying to solve? And/or what opportunity is waiting to be seized?

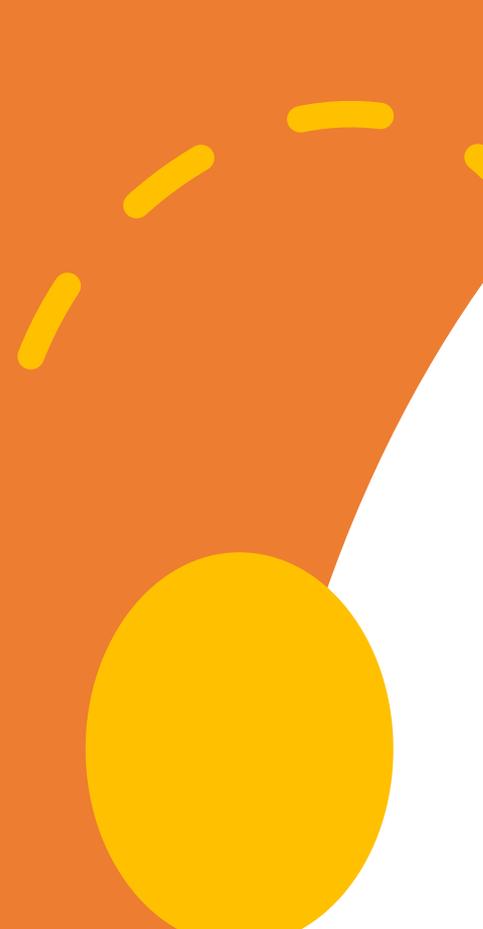
What do you envision and what are your goals?

How does your product/idea address the problem/opportunity?

Who will benefit? (Include all beneficiaries – end-of-market sale, workers, communities, etc.)

Why are you best suited to do this?

What's in it for the funder/investor?

A stylized sun graphic on the left side of the slide. It features a solid yellow circle at the bottom left, with several yellow curved lines of varying lengths extending upwards and to the right, suggesting rays of light. The background is a gradient from orange on the left to white on the right, with a large white semi-circle shape on the right side.

# Securing the Grant

# The Case Statement

Rationale for your fundraising effort

Your big picture; your story

Emotional

# The Process: As Important as the Product

“Force the discipline”  
of articulating exactly  
what you’re doing and  
why.



Craft a consistent  
message.

Build the ultimate multi-  
purposing document –  
your roadmap.

Make more money –  
faster.

# Elements

- Title Page and Cover Letter
- Introduction/Abstract/Summary
- Your Background
- Problem Your Product Will Solve
- Goals and Objectives (Outcomes)
- Methods/Implementation Plan
- Evaluation
- Other Funding
- Appendices and Attachments



# The Hunt for Grants

- Small Business Innovation Research Grants (SBIR)
  - Explore local Economic Development agencies and their funding opportunities.
  - Uncover interest within your current business and personal network.
  - Network where you meet new and influential people.
  - Schedule informational meetings with foundations and businesses who might be interested in your work.
  - Talk with your local Community Foundation.
  - Get a press release out about your product and your adventure.  
Attract attention.
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# Grant Seeking Sources



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**eCivis Grants Network**: This is a subscription-based service with profiles for public and private sector funders.

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**The Foundation Center**: This subscription-based service for private-sector funders offers several newsletters, including *Philanthropy News Digest*.

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**Grants.gov**: Here, you can find government agency funding announcements for free.

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**<https://www.sbir.gov/about>**: Highly competitive programs that encourage domestic small businesses to engage in Federal Research/Research and Development (R/R&D) with the potential for commercialization.

# Writing Tips

- Articulate your core idea and tell your story.
- Distinguish yourself and your idea.
- Make it stick.
- Clarify your intent. Your purpose. Your goals.
- Lose the acronyms.
- Present one idea per sentence and make the sentences short and hard-hitting.
- Write transitions between ideas and new topics.
- Use headings and bulleted lists.

## More Writing Tips

- If you rewrite, don't lose your "wow".
- Expand your descriptive vocabulary. Keep a dictionary and/or thesaurus nearby.
- Tailor your narrative – your messages – to the grantor.
- Follow directions.
- Smart-up. Use the Freedom of Information Act to secure copies of funded grant applications.
- Quote the experts.
- Hire a proofreader or editor.

# Inspire and Persuade

- **Ethos: The Gut.** *Ethos is an appeal to ethics.* Give the reader the gut sense that you can be trusted by establishing your competence and credibility. Achieve this by including impressive credentials and qualifications that showcase the best about your organization and staff.
- **Logos: The Head.** *Logos is an appeal to logic.* Use well-supported facts, data, and testimonials to back up your claims. This gives your reader a reason to believe that your compelling claims are true. Use bulleted lists, explain facts via narrative, and insert graphs to help data stand out.
- **Pathos: The Heart.** *Pathos is an appeal to emotion.* Show, don't just tell. Instead of explaining the impact of your programs in the abstract, use real-life examples to make your proposal more gripping and memorable. When possible, use vivid imagery and powerful quotes to put the reader in the story.

# Writing Exercise



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# Fundraising Isn't About Money

- It's about...
  - helping each of us live our beliefs.
  - connecting with our hearts and walking our values.
  - our individual narratives and personal truths.
  - the donor – not your organization.

# People give...

...from the heart. It's an emotional decision.

...to meaningful solutions...solutions that lead to change.

...when we excite them into giving to a specific action.

...to live out their values. They give because *they are great*...not because our organization is great.

# Transformative Giving

- Trust
- Leap of Faith
- Possibility
- Problem Solving
- Life Changing
- Value Driven
- Looks to the Horizon
- Innovation



And this  
means we...

...commit to long-term relationships.

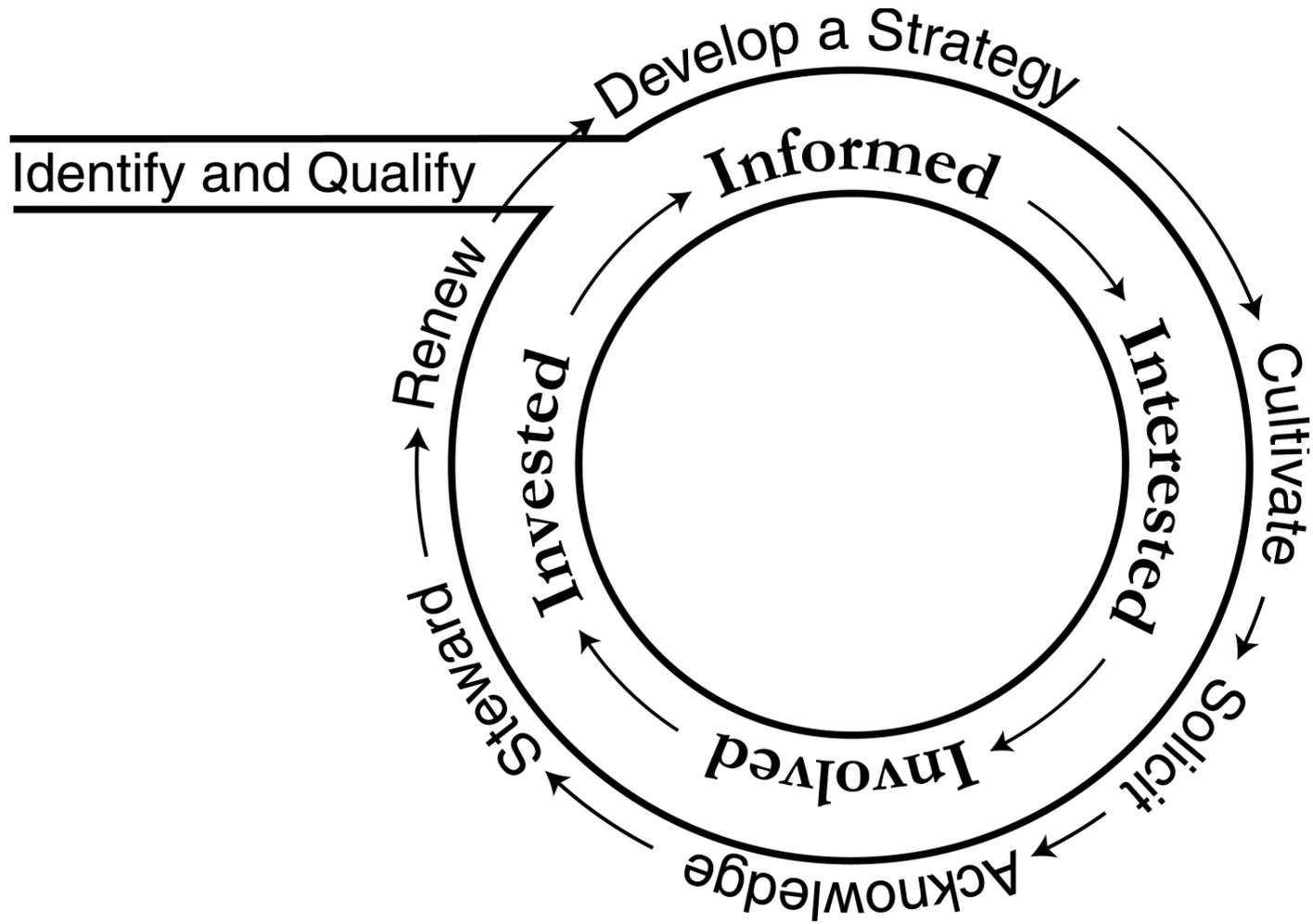
...ask WHY and listen.

...personalize our invitation to make it easy for the donor to engage with the mission.

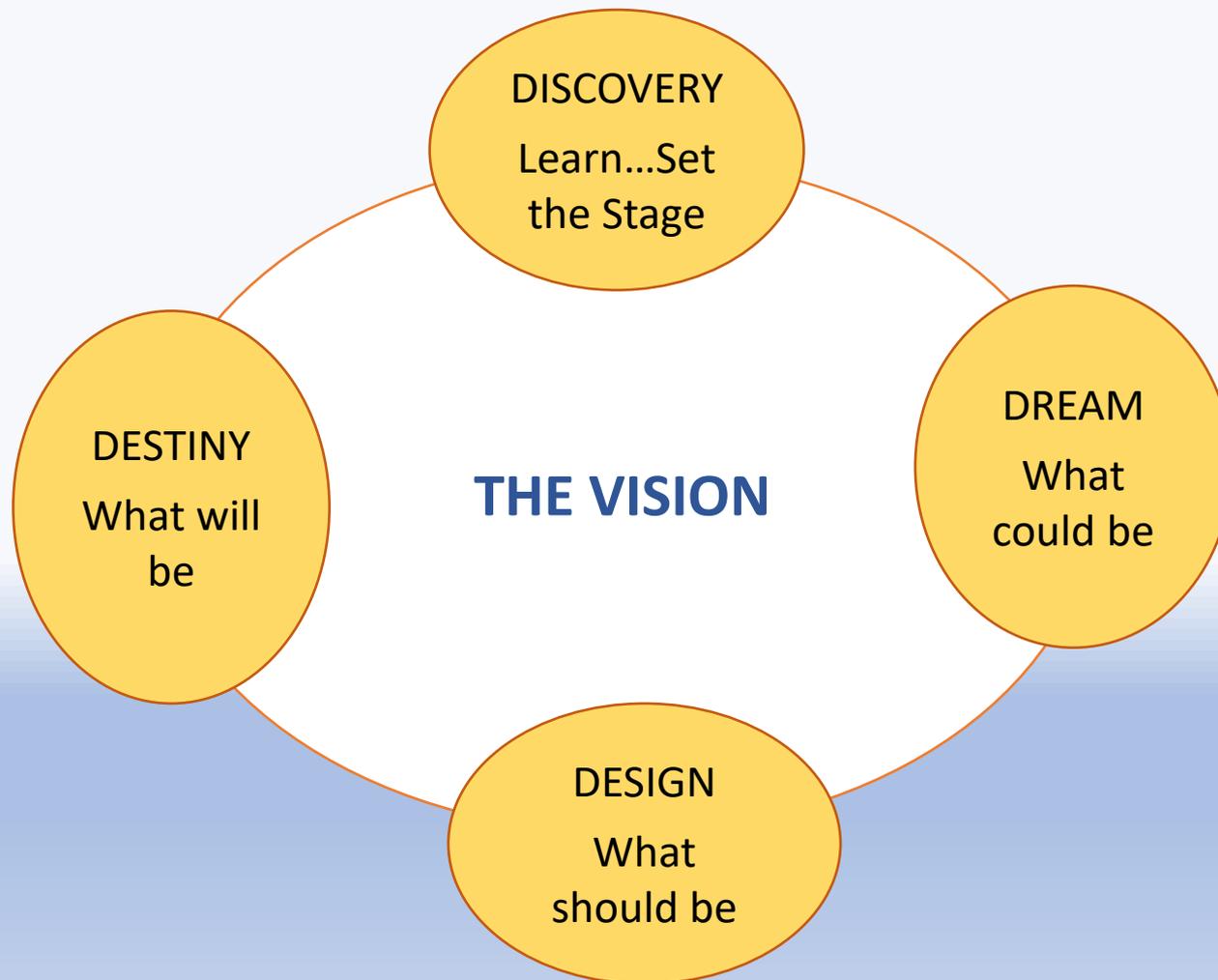
...tell stories.

...create opportunities that transform.

# The Relationship Cycle



# THE APPRECIATE INQUIRY APPROACH TO PARTNERSHIPS



# Three Questions That Establish Donor Trust

- The Success Question: What do you want to achieve?
- The Frustration Question: What do you want to avoid?
- The “Right Nonprofit” Question: What helps you decide which nonprofit to support?

Source: Bristol Strategies