

Nathan ([00:00:00](#)):

Well, thank you so much for being here. We are excited that you are here and that you have given us basically an hour of your time today. Hopefully we don't waste a moment of it. Let's jump in before we actually dive into the specifics of the webinar. I do want to cover a few quick things. The most popular question that we ever get is, is there a recording, but will you be able to send me the recording and kind of watch this back so I could share it with somebody else or like review? Cause you guys go so fast. Sometimes the answer is yes, and it's always the S later today, this evening, I'll send you an email with a link to the recording. I'll send you a link to the slide deck and a link to any additional resources that we've mentioned throughout the presentation today.

Nathan ([00:00:37](#)):

I also want you to know that we do have time for Q and a at the very end. Now, I want you to use the chat box throughout the presentation today to drop in your comments. And if, if Courtney asked you to vote for like version a or version B, feel free to use the chat for that. But if you have a question that you want us to answer at the very end go to your zoom, toolbar, hit Q and a, and enter your question there. That's just the best way for us to see the questions coming in and make sure that you get a response. Last thing before we dive in, I want to make sure that you always know about the NIO summit. The Anya summit stands for nonprofit innovation and optimization. This is our in-person conference. It's a first time being back since the start of the pandemic back in person.

Nathan ([00:01:17](#)):

It's two days at the end of September 16, plus speakers, all innovators in their space in terms of fundraising and marketing over 600 fundraisers and marketers will be there in person who would love for you to join us in Austin, Texas. For this event, you can learn more, get tickets@niosummit.com. Normally the price is about 1295, or you can actually get \$400 off your ticket if you buy today. So go ahead and check that out at [\[inaudible\] dot com](#). And if you've never been on a next after Institute webinar before, I just want to sort of set you up for what you can expect. Our mission is to decode what works in fundraising and make it as accessible as possible to you and to as many fundraising users nonprofits as possible. That's the only way that we're going to see generosity grow. We can do a bunch of research and testing over here next head next after.

Nathan ([00:02:03](#)):

But if no one's equipped with it, then we're not actually seeing generosity grow. So we want to do everything we can to empower and equip you for growth. Some of the way that we do this, we conduct research and two types of research. We run a lot of AB tests to really prove what actually works to increase conversion rates on donation pages and improve response to email fundraising and improve your advertising. And then we'll also go out into the nonprofit marketplace and become mystery donors. And we conduct these mystery donor research studies where we'll try to analyze the state of donation pages or the state of email cultivation and things like that. So from this research, we produce resources like this webinar that you're on right now, as well as eBooks and how to guides and templates and podcasts. We also produce training certification courses and key areas of online fundraising, as well as our Neo summit conference.

Nathan ([00:02:51](#)):

So that's kind of what you can expect. Everything that you'll hear today is based in research is based in testing from a variety of different organizations. But you can know these are not just gut feelings and

best practices. These are actually proven and tested strategies that can help you improve your online fundraising. So I'm going to hand things over to Courtney. Courtney Gaines is our vice president working with the client services side of next after. So she's working with nonprofits every single day to run campaigns and do every thing she can to use data, to listen to donors and figure out how can we grow giving and grow generosity. So Courtney I'll hand it over to you.

Courtney ([00:03:27](#)):

Awesome. Thanks Nathan. I am loving that. I'm here with you today to talk about value proposition. I'm even more excited that you are here. We are talking about one of the most foundational elements to your fundraising program, and honestly, it's a personal passion of mine as well, but before we get, you know, write it into value proposition, I do want to start with some tests. If you have been around next after it all and done any of our webinars or trainings, of course, as Nathan just talked about, we do testing and experimentation to really find what works. So the question here is which we'll get a greater response. We're going to start with the Facebook ad here's version aids with an organization called Wesley family services. It says, do you care for your child and needs an extra boost in everyday skills like personal hygiene and caring for their belongings.

Courtney ([00:04:20](#)):

If you're looking for free resources to help a child in your care, build confidence and skills like personal hygiene, online etiquette, et cetera, et cetera. We've got this free video series for you, which then developed version B says, when you have a teen or young adult with autism or intellectual disabilities in your care, you look for every resource and tool to equip them for a full and purposeful, full life. We understand we've been in your shoes. That's why we made this free video series for you. You can see them here side by side, version a on the left version B on the right. And I want you to think about which had received a greater response. Now I'm not going to tell you the answer quite yet. We will get to that in a little bit, but write it down, put it in the chat keep it in your head.

Courtney ([00:05:10](#)):

And we'll, we'll see how right you were. Let's take a look at a landing page example. This is with an organization again, kind of offering a free online course and then effort to grow subscribers for their organization. Version a the headline says, get the relationship that you really want with your team. Talk about this free online course that they're offering. It tells you what is included in this online course. And then there's a version B, it says, learn to parent your teen and today's culture. Again, the details about the online course and what to expect when you sign up for it, you can see them here side by side version, a version B, which do you think got the greater response. All right. Instant donation page. This is what the group called alley cat allies. It was around global cat day. After you signed this petition on global cat day, you were taken to an instant donation page.

Courtney ([00:06:08](#)):

Thanks people for being an advocate for cats who have no one else. It talks about why it's so important of why you added your name. And then it goes into this value proposition about why you should support financially, invest in this cause not just add your name to it, but invest in what they're doing. The page goes on pretty long. You can see that here with both copy and the form all the way down to the bottom of the page, the created version B, it's actually slightly shorter, a lot of the same value proposition, but just a little bit shorter in length. You can see them here side by side version a and version B, which

received the greater response. Are you guys keeping track of all these in your head, on which one you think is going to perform better? All right. So what is the difference between version a and version B?

Courtney ([00:07:03](#)):

Well, it received a greater response and what's going to cause the difference in response to each of these examples. Well, you might be familiar with our donor mountain. Again, if you have done any webinars or trainings or consumed any of our content, we have the concept of the donor mountain and the donor mountain really is this idea that donors are all starting at the base of the mountain. And what they're doing is trying to scale this mountain all the way to the top, to that macro decision, to make that gift. But along the way, there are these micro decisions that they have to do. Maybe they have to open the email or click an email or visit the donation page, start the donation page process. And then of course ultimately make that gift. But all along this journey to the top of the mountain, there are outside forces.

Courtney ([00:07:59](#)):

There's this gravity that's happening. That sometimes is beyond our control of keeping people from actually taking steps up the mountain. What I have great news for you because as marketers, it's our job to help the prospective donors, donors, subscribers, Gail this mountain to the top and even better news is that we have a tool, a very helpful tool to help them scale that donor mountain, that tool I'm sure you can all guess is the value proposition. So now let's look back at the examples that we just walked through and see how the value proposition was actually in play and each one of these. Alright, so version a on our left and version. BNR right. Do you remember which one you chose? Which one got the greater response. If you tell us version a you're right at had a 27% increase in clicks, but why let's look at that a little bit in version eight, you can see some key differences.

Courtney ([00:09:09](#)):

It says, you're looking for this free resource. These kids are in your care. I know that you're wanting this free video series. You will find it here. You can sign up, you will get this series. We want to give this to you. You, you, you, it was focused on the prospective subscriber version B a little different. It says we understand we've been in your shoes. That's why we've made this. That's why we want to offer this to you. Version a, had a stronger value proposition because it connected to the end reader. Let's take a look at the next example, version a, get the relationship that you really want with your team or version B, learn to parent your team in today's culture. Which one did you choose? If you chose version a, you were right. There was a 46% increase in core sign-ups, but why?

Courtney ([00:10:07](#)):

Hey, come look at the headline. There's some key differences here and version it says, get the relationship that you really want your team. This idea that I'm receiving something of value. There's no work involved. It really connects to this core belief or need that I'm feeling I can relate. I have a preteen. I would most definitely want version a, instead of learning the parent, your teen in today's culture, that's scary in reality as well for this idea to have to learn the parent, your team. Sure. We all know that we have to learn and get educated in those areas, but, but the idea of getting something versus the work to learn and have to do all of that work is less appealing resulting in this 46% increase in core sign-ups. And then this last version that we looked at with global cat day version a versus version B, this is really interesting because the value proposition was really strong in both of them version.

Courtney ([00:11:06](#)):

A just happened to be a little bit longer. We used more copy to what we thought adequately communicate the value proposition, but what happened is the shorter version actually saw an increase in, in donations by 14%. Now don't hear me in that I'm saying shorter is better or maybe even longer is better. In some cases it's really the strength of the value proposition that matters. So as we look at all of these experiments and see the results from them, you know, there's one thing that is very common throughout them is this value proposition because the market has we're extending the value proposition down the mountain to help more people say yes and ultimately make that gift. So what is value proposition value proposition is not your mission statement. This is a common issue that we hear or, or see on a lot of donation. Pages are like, oh, I've got a value proposition.

Courtney ([00:12:16](#)):

It's my mission statement. Wrong. The mission statement usually is very organization centric. You can see that with Sierra club here to explore, enjoy, and protect the planet to practice and promote the responsible use of earth, ecosystems and resources. All of this is really good messaging and good copy. And it's absolutely in line with who they are. It's after all their mission statement, but it does not speak to why a donor should give. It does not think about and put yourself in the mind of the donor. It's also a value proposition is not an incentive. Here's a great example of a radio station that has a lot of premiums on their donation page. You can, if you make a gift, you can get a free shirt or an umbrella, maybe American airlines miles which are all, you know, appealing. But that is not the reason why I have given to an organization.

Courtney ([00:13:14](#)):

Sure. I might want a free, t-shirt probably more like the American airlines miles. But it's not why I'm actually going to support you. That's not the impact or the difference that I can make as a donor by financially investing in your cause. So it's not a mission statement and it's not an incentive. What is value proposition will answers this one critical question. If I'm your ideal supporter, why should I donate to you rather than some other organization or not at all? Again, if I'm your ideal supporter, why should I donate to you rather than some other organization or not at all to help us really understand this key question around value proposition, I'm going to break it down for us a little bit so that we have a better idea of actually what we're trying to get to. So the first part is if I, we need to be able to answer this question in the mind of the donor.

Courtney ([00:14:20](#)):

This is not about the fundraiser. This is about the donor. Sure. We know internally why we do what we do, how great our causes, but we have to put ourselves in the shoes of the donor to answer a shin. We need to remove ourselves completely from this number two. Why should I? Now this part of the value proposition is the conclusion. What is the, why? The thing that a donor will remember when they go back to recall or tell others about why they actually gave to a cause now they won't remember every word of your email or donation page, but what was that picture that you helped paint in their head throughout all of your communication, whether it's videos or Facebook ads, your website, maybe a phone call to the organization. Are we actually telling them why they should give what their gift will do?

Courtney ([00:15:18](#)):

That's the reason why they ultimately gave number three rather than another organization. Now, this is a bit interesting. The reality is that donors do compare you to other organizations like your own. They're

comparing and contrasting who they should give to if they only have a limited of, of money to give. And there's two organizations that are very similar in, cause what is it that sets you apart from another organization? We'll drill into this a little bit more around exclusivity, but again, donors will compare you to other organizations. So what sets you apart from others? Number four, the reality is that people can also not even give a gift. They don't have to get plenty of other things going on in life. And a donor can also just decide not to give all together. We must inspire action with our value proposition in the midst of all of the distractions in life.

Courtney ([00:16:25](#)):

We're going to add to this a little bit. We get asked this question quite a bit is you know, does, does this actually happen just at the moment of their transaction of making that gift? And the answer is no, it doesn't just occur at the time of the donation. It actually occurs at every step and that donor mountain let's take a look, here's our donor mountain. And if you think about it, if I get an email, there's a lot of different factors going on and decisions that I have to make these micro yeses and each one of those micro yeses, there's value proposition involved. There's the sender, there's this subject line? Do I trust them? Do I not open it? Well, I delete it. And we're constantly having to outweigh this, these, this disbelief and the concern and the aggravation and any friction that we're presenting to go from, you know, Klotz heavy, this perceived costs to value, light, to value, heavy cost light at every single step in the donation pathway.

Courtney ([00:17:33](#)):

Additionally value proposition can happen at multiple times throughout a single piece of marketing. For instance, like an email is the subject line strong enough for me to want to open it and then to read it and then maybe I'll delete it or maybe I'll click it and open it and read it and click through to the donation page and then continue along that journey. So value proposition is not only present at one, one point a marketing is actually at every single point and, and throughout a piece of marketing, all right, we've broken down the core value proposition question. Now I want to help you craft an effective value proposition. In fact, we're going to walk through four elements of an effective value proposition. Number one, appeal, how badly do I want it? Now, this makes a little more sense when you're thinking about an offer, like, do I want to take this online course or sign up for this email ebook.

Courtney ([00:18:35](#)):

But when you think about a donation, how badly they should answer the question of how badly do I want to actually make this gift? A great example is through our friends at CaringBridge, they are constantly doing testing around value proposition and trying to understand the motivation of their prospective donors. And they actually have four examples here. This is a donation banner, here's their control. You can see this here. It says honor, Caden Callen with a donation to CaringBridge, you make paid and Callan's website possible treatment at one says Kate's CaringBridge site is supported by generous donors. Like you make a donation to CaringBridge in honor of Cade. All they simply did was just kind of reimburse that order. Would that resonate better with prospective donors here's treatment to help kids stay connected to family and friends, make a donation to CaringBridge, to keep Kate's site up and running.

Courtney ([00:19:30](#)):

Again, the idea around this is the appeal of the impact that a person is going to make. And finally, treatment three, it says, show your love and support for Cade, make a donation to CaringBridge, to keep

kids site up and running. And this example, they use more of an emotional appeal to it. And here are the results. What they learned is that they saw a about a 6% increase in donations. Now that wasn't valid again, we try and get to the 95% level of confidence in our testing. Treatment had to had a slight increase of 1%, but to take a look at treatment three says 67% increase in donations simply by testing into this appeal. What is it that resonates with our prospect of donors that they're going to say? Yes, I want to give that was really, really fascinating about this experiment is that there were no difference in clicks yet.

Courtney ([00:20:25](#)):

We saw a significant difference in donor conversion. What that tells us is that that treatment three, the emotional appeal connected more strongly with that actual core value proposition of who and what CaringBridge does. All right. Number two exclusivity. Can I get somewhere or anywhere else again? What sets you apart from others? What is so special about your value proposition, about what you do about what you're offering that might be different from other organizations? Here's a great example from Buckner. This was actually an email acquisition opportunity on their website. The control says get uplifting. Stories of held Buckner is shining hope in the us and around the world, sign up. Now we develop those treatment. That was a bit longer. Now again, length is not, is not what we're focused on here. It's the strength of the value proposition is, is we're excited to share with you all the ways you can shine, hope to vulnerable children and families.

Courtney ([00:21:30](#)):

We invite you to the stay connected click below to get the latest news updates and invitations to exclusive events from Buckner. And we'll send you a spiritual encouragement throughout our weekly devotion. You won't find these stories and resources anywhere else. This part, this, you won't find these stories and resources anywhere else. This really tapped into that exclusivity angle of the value proposition, and they saw an overwhelming response with a 276% increase in emails acquired simply by strengthening that value proposition and leaning into exclusivity for their message. Number three, clarity how quickly and easily do I understand it? This is an interesting one because so much of the time, I think that we believe that we're being very clear with what we're communicating, but most of the time people might be confused. Here's another example from CaringBridge while they do, you know their goals are donations and revenue, they do encourage people to start their free free sites.

Courtney ([00:22:38](#)):

So on the controller, you can see an example here where they invite people to start the free website. They developed a treatment that, that had a little bit more clarity, I guess, in, in what they're asking you to do. So this is personal protected sites for every health journey and another version. It says, start your free personal CaringBridge site today. What they found was actually the one in the middle increase the number of people creating sites on their website, because the clarity was so much stronger than both the control, the control and the third option. You can also see that here and example with a broadcast organization, there's a, the control set give now. So you could actually receive a CD of the broadcast for a donation of any amount. And the call to action said, give now they developed actually two additional treatments.

Courtney ([00:23:34](#)):

One of them says, get your resource for a gift of any amount here. And another one says for a gift of any amendment, get your resource here, again, small nuances in that coffee. But as you can see a significant

difference in conversion just by bringing that clarity to the forefront and telling people what they will get and how all right, the fourth element of an effective value proposition credibility, do I believe what you're claiming is true? So if you're telling me that you're the greatest at what you do well, can I believe you? I believe you, what can be done to actually increase credibility within your value proposition? Here's a great example from harvest ministries, it was on a donation page and they were offering this book to people whenever they made a gift called the good, good father. And as we looked at this, we thought, you know, the value proposition is strong.

Courtney ([00:24:40](#)):

What can we do to actually create some credibility that this offer is the best offer for you to make you want it even more? Well, we simply added a testimonial and not just some testimonial from the organization saying how Austin we are. How much could we, I love this book, but it's actually from an grandmother, of course, I'm going to give to somebody, who's a grandma, but as a grandmother, I want them grandchildren to know that our God and king is not distant, but he's a good, good father. It goes on to talk about why this book is such a good resource and why you should get it. This resulted in a 27% increase in donor conversion just by adding that testimonial to give credibility to why you should get this resource. Now we've done all of this AB testing and that's fantastic, but of course, we're always curious what is actually happening in the nonprofit space?

Courtney ([00:25:38](#)):

Well, a couple of years ago, we did a research study. It was called, why should I give to you? And in this research study, we gave to 127 organizations and we monitored all of the communication from phone and email to social the donation pages to really score the value proposition within the nonprofit space. What we found is maybe alarming, but also I'm great an opportunity. You can see this average score across all verticals. The environment and wildlife vertical has was, was scored the highest for value proposition strength. We'll call it. The universities we found had the greatest opportunity for improvement. We also looked at channels where value proposition was being communicated from website, email, phone, and social media, all of the channels that we monitored, social media had the the weakest value proposition when we're website had the strongest, which kind of makes sense.

Courtney ([00:26:37](#)):

If you think about the web, a website, you have more space and opportunity to actually clearly communicate your value proposition. Let me show you a good and a bad example of how the value proposition was communicated to us during this study. It says, I'm looking at making a donation, but I'm wondering if you can answer a quick question for me. Why should I give to you rather than some other organization or not at all? I know we've just gone through that question. And this was the response that we got. Hi, Mary, thanks for your message. You can learn more about our mission at our website. I just told you that I want to give money to you. And you said, awesome. Go to the website, check it out, learn for yourself, figure it out. That's a big old fail. All right, let's take a look at a good a good one.

Courtney ([00:27:33](#)):

It says, hi, Jeff, thank you for considering our organization. Very general. Generally what distinguishes us is that we do how we do it. We were founded in 1945 to do this specific thing, and it goes on and on to talk about the organization. Again, they, you know, they talked about how long they've been around for. That's really interesting. That's very exclusive. Then they, they kept talking about, you know, like what the, what your gift will do. That's appealing to this specific prospective donor. This was definitely a win.

You can see that it, it was, I kept going on and on and on, which is awesome because there was so much clarity in our question. And the answer to the question that we had asked. This is definitely a winner. Now let's say that you craft this awesome value proposition and you do all of this work to make the strong message clear, incredible exclusivity involved as a high appeal, but then we can be our own enemy.

Courtney ([00:28:39](#)):

Look at this example, this one had great value proposition in the page. And you can imagine that we've got this donor on this journey and they're saying, yes, absolutely, absolutely. I want to support you. Yes, yes. They're saying these micro yeses along the way, and they're about to make their gift and they've put in their credit card information. They've gone through all of these steps on this donor mountain. And we present them with a message like this fraud alert identify himself has attempted to fraud individuals by claiming it in affiliation with you. This person has no affiliation, blah, blah, blah. Then it goes on and says, please click the donate button only once, do not click back or refresh on your browser. Any of these actions may result in your credit card being charged more than once.

Courtney ([00:29:30](#)):

What does that do to that donation pathway? We've got them climbing this mountain. We worked so hard to get them to say yes, all along the way. And then it crashes because what has happened is that we've, we've entered this disbelief and concern, anxiety, and that outweighs this value prop strength. So again, let's not be our own horse enemy. Let's do all the things that we can to make us a strong value proposition, but not ruin it at the end, at the moment of a decision. So how do we know if our value proposition is effective? I think that this is such a critical tool that we can provide for you. Again, we don't want you to fail this. We want you to continue to, we want to continue to help you and craft a very effective value proposition. But how do you actually know if it's good?

Courtney ([00:30:24](#)):

Well, we have a very simple scoring model. I'm just going to quickly walk you through first is appeal. So once you craft your value proposition, take a look at it, ask yourself the question of how badly do I actually want it. Do I have a high interest? Is there possible interests, maybe no interest, and then rate it with one to three points. Again, the more points that you would score your value prop, the stronger your value proposition is then do the same for exclusivity. Where else can I get this? Can I give to some organizations organization that is identical or maybe nowhere else again, score it from a scale from one to three clarity. How quickly do I understand it? Does it take people a very long time to really understand what you're communicating, what you're trying to achieve as an organization, what their gift will do for your organization, or do they instantly understand that again, score from one to three and finally credibility?

Courtney ([00:31:34](#)):

Do I, or maybe, but can I trust you? So score your value proposition on believability? Is it easy to believe? Do I feel like I can trust you? Are you giving me some maybe testimonials or some kind of seal of approval that I can trust to give my gift to you? Or is it completely unbelievable? You're telling me that you're the best at something, but I don't know if I can trust that. So do you think about this and as you craft your value proposition, you can use this scoring card to really see if it's strong or not. Now, I know we've got a decent amount of time left. And so what I would like to do is invite you to wherever you're at on your mobile devices, at your computer, in your home, write down your value proposition

statement with those four elements to mind appeal, exclusivity, credibility, and, and then I think you have crafted that.

Courtney ([00:32:43](#)):

Don't just sit with it, put it up on the website, but bring it to a colleague, share that value proposition with them, and then start brainstorming new ideas of how you can actually improve each of those four elements. I've gone through this value proposition workshop, quite a bit with a lot of different organizations and in trainings. And usually the first go round at writing or crafting your value proposition is, is pretty difficult. It becomes easier and easier. And what we have found is when you invite more people in the easier it is to actually think through of new ideas, but how to increase all of these elements to have a strong value proposition. So we're going to take a little bit of time now, wherever you're at. Think about that core question of if I'm your ideal donor, why should I give to you rather than some organization or not at all? Take some time now and have you guys do that.

Nathan ([00:33:47](#)):

Thanks so much, Courtney. This is awesome. Yeah, I just actually say, well, let me, let me duck down. Hello, take the next, we'll say two minutes. And just as to have this time, spend some time, write out your, your value proposition as best you can try to think about those four elements and then while you're doing that, feel free to drop any and all questions that you have into the QA tool. I see that there's a few questions in there already. There's some in the chat. If you put your question in the chat, go to the Q and a tab and put it in there, it's just easier to make sure that we see it. It's easier for you to make sure you get an answer. I want to just go through a couple up things here, as you know, people are working on their value prop and, and jumping into some, some questions, again, feel free to put your questions in the Q and H we'll.

Nathan ([00:34:34](#)):

We'll answer those here in just a moment and coming up on June 29th. So in a couple of weeks, it's kind of the next step out of this webinars. So this was interesting to you as you're learning some new ideas, how to improve your value proposition. One key place that you can start to put your value proposition to the test is in your email fundraising. So we have this certification workshop that we'll be teaching for about, it's basically a full day workshop. We'll teach over zoom in a very similar format to this a little bit smaller group. Typically we have anywhere from 25 to 50 people, I will break into small groups and have breakout discussions about how to improve your email fundraising. We'll spend a lot of time looking at what we've learned through testing and optimization leads to the more opens from your subject.

Nathan ([00:35:18](#)):

Clients leads to more donations just based on how you're framing your copy and laying out your design and things like that. So you can find out all about this workshop at [nextafter.com/workshop](#). I'd love for you to join us. I'd love for you to attend. I think you'll get a lot out of it. And basically every single person that attends this workshop walks away with practical proven principles comes back a couple of weeks later and says, oh, you know, we put a couple of these ideas to the test and we saw this huge increase in performance. So I'd love for you to join us again, find out more at [nextdoor.com/workshop](#). Let's see if there's any questions that have come in so far. Here's dark question slide. We've got, oh, it looks like there's 12 and that's good. There's an interesting comment. Less of a question, more of a common, but I thought it might be interesting to discuss.

Nathan ([00:36:03](#)):

So when Barbara says it's, you were showing that example I think of like the social media messages that came back, she said, someone wants to give me money I'm on the phone ASAP. I wonder if you have any thoughts about that? Cause what, what went through my head was like, yes, you, as a fundraiser are like, all of us probably on this webinar today would be you on it. But I think some of the challenges like equipping everyone in your organization who has some sort of like front facing interaction with a potential donor, with the language, with the messaging to talk about giving a gift, any thoughts, just insights, you

Courtney ([00:36:39](#)):

Know, Nathan United chatted about this before we even started today. This is just the tip of the iceberg proposition. You know, I think this webinar is really to get you started and get you, you know, on this path towards crafting your value proposition. What happens after that is, you know, as, as referenced here is equipping not just your, you know, internal fundraising team, but anyone that has any kind of connection with prospective donors or donors or subscribers because you don't want this whiplash effect. So for instance, if you have this strong value proposition in email and on your donation page, and you even incorporated it into your website or on social media, and then someone calls your organization and actually asked that question and it's radically different in nature than what people will have just read and experience, it can be like, well, who am I talking to?

Courtney ([00:37:40](#)):

Like, is this the same organization that I have been receiving emails from? And so that same, like that experience that you're that people are having in every communication does need to you know, kind of being every element of your organization. And so when we talk about crafting this value prop prompt it, you know, with your internal team test into it, kind of find these angles that work best. Can we pull levers on exclusivity here or appeal or credibility find what works and when you have that core value proposition, get it out to everybody and not just get it out, like invite everyone to a little workshop. Talk about the why, like, why aren't you doing this? I think so often we both worked at a nonprofit before, is that communication goes out, you read it. And you're like, okay, if this is like, you can take it for face value and you don't really have the context on why. So like sit down with your teens, walk them through how this is not about the organization. This is about the donor. We have to get into their shoes, get into their mind on why they're actually considering giving to this organization.

Nathan ([00:38:47](#)):

Yeah. So good. Kind of along those lines, there's a few questions around appeal. And how do you really figure out what your ideal donor wants? I think Alexis has a similar question around that. Had you narrowed down your value proposition when your organization does so many different things. Katie is asking in the Q and a, you know, any tips for understanding, you know, how much someone wants, like how you actually answered those questions, especially when you have a complicated organization,

Courtney ([00:39:15](#)):

It can be very challenging, you know? And I think that, again, this whole like tip of the iceberg, we're just getting started. Is there, there should be a core value proposition to your organization, which is going to probably include a lot of the facets of what you do, whether that's health, education, justice, religious work, whatever, all of the different extensions or arms are include that in your value proposition, in your core value proposition. Now this is like the value prop 2.0, but you will then look at crafting value props

for probably each of those entities. So if it's for the health vertical or education, then like, what is it about that specific you know, extension of your organization resonates with people? Additionally of course, testing, you know, I think that that's, what's so great about it is that with, with digital and value proposition around understanding the motivation of our donors is test into these different angles.

Courtney ([00:40:19](#)):

Maybe somebody at your organization says they're all equally weighted, but I think what you'll find is that some, something might actually resonate more with your donors than the other, like lean into that press into that. But you won't know until you test into it. So find your core value proposition. And then you could also look at working to make additional value propositions around those very specific entities of your organization and test into them. You know, maybe you have a donation page that focuses on health and the beavers and focuses on education. See what kind of response you get, you know, between the two that's great.

Nathan ([00:40:59](#)):

Kind of shifting gears a little bit, a question from Alison, wondering about colleges and universities, when you showed some of the, the scores, you know, higher ed organizations tend to score pretty low on value proposition, and that's pretty consistent with some of the other research we've done as well. Why

Courtney ([00:41:17](#)):

I have, I did not do that study personally. I have a hypothesis. Like, I mean, I think a lot of colleges and universities are about getting you enrolled, right? So I was very focused on like, let's get students in the door. Yeah. And the focus around like having support from donors is maybe less important or a secondary thought. I don't know, Nathan, if you have any insight on that, but that's probably, why is that you have a lot of kind of competing goals, right? You need, you need people in seats and versus guests to need to support the organization. We need, we need donations to, to keep this, this running, but we really do need these people, you know, going to our school. So

Nathan ([00:42:01](#)):

It was a lot of major universities around the country don't necessarily need you know, the small, like \$50 chip type of gift and have large foundations. And some that just, aren't all that focused on, you know, lower level donor fundraising. Granted, that's a means to, you know, acquiring more major donors downstream, but it's just not the highest priority. So that might be a factor of factor as well. Mark, that one is answered and we'll jump to Jenny. It feels good to check them off the list, but we got 14 more. We've got plenty of questions coming in. Let's see question from Jenny English, which of your certification courses would be most helpful in strengthening your value proposition? We have a session on value proposition similar to this webinar, a baked into every certification course that we offer in every workshop that you would attend.

Nathan ([00:42:51](#)):

Again, I think that email course, that email workshop coming up in a couple of weeks will be really helpful for you as a next step, because email is a great place. Even if you don't have a ton of web traffic, it might be hard to, you know, text messaging on a donation page. If you don't have a lot of people visiting it, but you might tend to have better luck running some value proposition tests in your, in your emails. So this can be a great step to figure out how do you message it? Well, how do you position it

well with your design and all of that, to give you the best chance of getting a valid result. So I think that'd be a great next step for you, Jenny. And if you have questions about it, feel free to email me Nathan and annex. After we can talk about it. Question from Courtney, not this coordinated different Courtney, where did we start with crafting the value proposition? When we have multiple services outcomes for those, we serve so many values to donating to us. How do we narrow it down to one overarching value? You've kind of touched on that. Any, anything else you'd add there?

Courtney ([00:43:44](#)):

No, I mean, I think as you're crafting this, I didn't, I didn't even talk about kind of like, how do you start this? Usually I remember crafting my first value proposition. I sat there like what even is the first word, you know, where to start? And I always say, because, you know, because if the question is, why should I give to you is because, and then, you know, this example again with so many different values that you can communicate, maybe start making a list of what they are. Maybe you can even like pocket them into simple, you know, groups. And then again, going back to kind of her current, our answer before of looking at creating that core value prop and then potentially expanding into all of the other different, different values,

Nathan ([00:44:30](#)):

Also do some like donor surveys and things like that to try to get their existing donors feedback as to why they give that might give you some insights, maybe not everything.

Courtney ([00:44:38](#)):

Well, I mean, to that point, thanks for bringing that up. When we did the value proposition workshop internally here with the organizations that we get to work with every day we crashed the value proposition with, you know, the internal teams and, you know, because for internal teams, we all have the best ideas we know our donors

Speaker 3 ([00:44:58](#)):

Actually want to get, we have all the answers, all the answers. And we don't,

Courtney ([00:45:04](#)):

We don't, which is a lie. We do a survey and we actually go to our donors. So we'll craft a value proposition and then usually create a survey from that. And in that survey, we will actually say, which is most appealing to you. What, you know, what that speaks to the credibility of this organization, what is most clear in what we do and the impact that you can have as a donor. You know, how do you believe us and trust us and everything that we're saying that we're doing with your donations and going to people that already support your cause. Cause they're giving to you for a reason, right? They've already said, yes, count me in. I want to invest in what you're doing and we ask them and it comes back with like this wealth of knowledge that we then are able to fine tune our value proposition. And what we find often is that when we're wrong, shocking. So and what I mean by that is, you know, like I think that we might think that this one thing is so important or really critical to why people find us when our donors might say completely something different. And so surveys are so valuable for many reasons. But as we think about value proposition, man, I would absolutely utilize survey to specifically your donor file, but you could go to your entire email file.

Nathan ([00:46:24](#)):

So when you're brainstorming, you know, internally around, you know, what are all the possible angles we could take with our value proposition we'll be talking with who are some of the people to have in the room? I think there's a question from Laurie about like, are we just doing this with our just, you know, fundraising people development committee? Or is this, should it be broader than that? Yeah, I

Courtney ([00:46:42](#)):

Would, I would definitely go broader than that. I think about anybody who's creating content, anybody who is communicating to the public honestly anyone who has a vested interest in the core of what you're doing. I think content people are awesome because they are creating, you know, what people are actually coming to you for. So of course you, you need the people in the room that are making a lot of the big decisions at the organization. But I would, I would not keep it to like all of your senior level staff, you know, like the idea of this is to have lots of different perspectives, because again, just because someone's maybe a senior level staff doesn't mean that they, they know all the things or someone who isn't, you know, more entry-level that they know all the things. Cause they might be talking with people on a more day-to-day basis. That's where you can get that wealth of ideas and knowledge. Again, the more you have to work with, the more you can test with so that you can really see what resonates with them.

Nathan ([00:47:49](#)):

That's great. Okay. I'm not going to put you on the spot with this question, cause I don't know how I would answer this question. It's not bad, but Ann says what's essentially, what's the best value proposition you've ever seen. So I don't expect you to recite something, but maybe like maybe you have an answer. If not, then maybe, you know, what are outside of the four things you've talked about in this webinar? What are some of the components that you commonly see in a value proposition where you're like, oh, this is good or something you see is actually really effective. I'm

Courtney ([00:48:21](#)):

Going to actually take the opposite on that and go what I've seen that [inaudible],

Courtney ([00:48:30](#)):

I'm going to tell you what doesn't is not good. Okay. So great examples of this. And we see this all the time. I know that you have seen those, maybe even your donation pages say those are emails or websites. Things like have an impact, make a difference. We constantly see examples where we're using kind of this really vague language, a language that I actually, I call it almost like lazy language because we're not clearly communicating what their gift is going to do. Sure. I'm going to have an impact. Sure. I'm going to make a difference, but I guarantee you, thousands of other organizations can say the exact same thing. So when I see the strongest value proposition, it actually does. They do a really great job of setting themselves apart from other organizations, organizations like them. I mean, we work with a lot of organizations that are similar in nature.

Courtney ([00:49:28](#)):

And if I would, you know, put up an image on a page and say, have an impact, and I would do it for two organizations that were the same, I would think that they're those same exact organization. Yeah. But at the core of what you do, there are things that sets you apart from others. So like tell people, like communicate that I would say like clarity is so critical in the value proposition and maybe that's my, a personal thing of what resonates with me. But I think the data supports that. So anytime there's like

clarity in that value proposition, that's usually when I see the strongest, the strongest value. Yeah. That's really good. If you had make a difference or have an impact, we have that event.

Nathan ([00:50:19](#)):

Oh, awesome. You know, a free plug for our friend, Amy Harrison. She actually put a course together for us on copywriting. She's got some great teaching that can really help you start to brainstorm some, some, some new language and that's not just like give hope or stand with us for how to communicate more effectively to your donors or would be potential donors. So feel free to check that out courses done except for.com. It's full course on copyright and great

Courtney ([00:50:44](#)):

Questions to that. Nathan of like how you get clarity and give hope or make a difference or have an impact. It's like, how am I the donor creating hope or giving hope? What are the things that I am able to do by making a gift? So make a difference. What am I as a donor? How am I making a difference? Like what are the actual things I'm doing to make a difference? You know,

Nathan ([00:51:15](#)):

The, well, a nice little comment from our friend RD. So there's lots of bad things in this world that can make an impact or transform the world that doesn't make them worth donating to. So obviously lots of different perspective as to what's good. What's bad. What's helpful. What's not, how do you differentiate yourself? Have for your ideal donor, not for the entirety of the planet, but for your ideal donor. Okay. Thanks RD. That's super helpful. Let's see question from Carol. Should the value proposition stay the same or should it be similar throughout a campaign or can it be different in each email? Really great question. The answer is you just copy and paste the same thing. Every email you

Speaker 3 ([00:51:55](#)):

Said, don't listen from now into eternity.

Courtney ([00:51:58](#)):

Don't listen to him. No. Well, I mean, at the core of your messaging, the core, your messaging should be consistent otherwise, you know, for sure who are you? So that core value proposition can remain consistent. But again, thinking about kind of these extensions of arrogance that you can kind of go into and really focus in on for a campaign. So if you have this core value proposition for a campaign, you know, again, I kind of, when we do campaigns here, we do, we have this core value proposition. And then we say, okay, from this value proposition, what are some things that support it? So maybe the testimonial that reinforces it, you know, or maybe it's a story of impact that reinforces it, or maybe it's some kind of content or resource that we've produced that we want to talk about. That reinforces it everything's should point back to your value proposition, but it does not mean that the copy really and messaging should be identical. It should, it should actually reinforce what that value proposition is. That's good.

Nathan ([00:53:01](#)):

And Kevin Sullivan had the same question. I marked it as complete, but Kevin, if there was some other angle you wanted to focus on, feel free to drop any question, right. Let's see. Let me mark that one from Carol is, is answered question from Mike. I've moved forward in my 5 0 1 C3. I need to learn about how

to reach out to corporations, get a flow of doing it. Got my status. Last December thought I'd move forward. Great. But haven't done the water, not moving forward. I don't know if we're the best people to consultant, you know, how to get things going with, with a nonprofit. Maybe you've got a better answer than I do, but it's certainly value proposition is help cause you can't really raise funds without being able to answer that core question. [inaudible],

Courtney ([00:53:44](#)):

I'm sorry. I'm like, I don't have a great answer to this, but again regardless of where you're at in this fundraising journey is really where I will go with this is whether you're an experienced fundraiser and you've been around for hundreds of years or you're a brand new nonprofit, or you're just getting started in the fundraising space. Value proposition, I said at the beginning is foundational to everything. You do, everything you do. So as you're going to corporations, or maybe you're even going to major donors like this value proposition and idea methodology is, is not just for this broad based program. It's it's for, you know, every part of your fundraising fundraising program, because it's core to what you are doing and why people are investing, whether it's our corporation, major donor, a mid-level donor broad-base donor, someone giving, you know donations to you, whether like non-monetary and whatever it is, value proposition has to the core of everything you do.

Nathan ([00:54:52](#)):

That's good. Mike, you might also check out our friends at nonprofit hub. They have a lot of resources for organizations that are just starting out, trying to figure things out and try to move the ball forward. So maybe check them out again. That's nonprofit hub, a good friends of our good, good resources over there. A question from Henry I'm thinking there may not always be an opportunity to nail all four elements. Yep. Any thoughts or tips on which ones to focus on first or again, times where you should really focus on one over another

Courtney ([00:55:22](#)):

Again, I kind of go back to that question earlier about what's the best one that we've seen. And I would always go back to probably a clarity, the clarity of your value proposition. So I would start there again, cause it's easy to this use like lazy statements on what a gift will do focus in on that, because that, that is really the core message. I would say, like exclusivity and credibility are kind of nice to have. I know that that's not really what we're teaching because we're saying the four elements, but if you're going to start somewhere, start on on clarity, what are we trying to communicate? Cause that's actually usually the hardest to get to get, right? Yeah. The exclusivity and credibility are, are great. Add-Ons so you're saying that you do this, you know, was the, the, the factor that sets you apart in that area or credibility is like, how can I believe in trust you in that area? Does that make sense? Yeah. Yeah.

Nathan ([00:56:21](#)):

I think as you focus on clarity, you're going to naturally find credibility and you're going to naturally find exclusivity because if you're clear about what you do, that is going to set you apart. Yeah. You're clearly identifying, you know, what a gift is going to do uniquely through you. So. Absolutely. Yeah. I think everything else kind of naturally flows.

Courtney ([00:56:42](#)):

They're all equally important.

Speaker 3 ([00:56:48](#)):

It's very helpful. Okay. Question

Nathan ([00:56:51](#)):

From Tracy. We've got time for just a couple more questions. I know there's lots of questions, a question from Tracy, and then we'll jump to a Biola I believe is how you say that in the chat. That's let's go there first. Then we'll come back to Tracy. That's great. How long should my value proposition be Courtney

Speaker 3 ([00:57:09](#)):

Word, count character count.

Courtney ([00:57:11](#)):

I can give you that. What I can get, I mean, I know you're like, come on, just give me something to work with. I understand that. So I'll, I'll for the sake of that, I will say this, we usually say three to four sentences. I hate even saying that out loud, but I will, I will say that to like, get you started, right? So it's three to four sentences and that's why that kind of like practice it, rework it, rework it, rework it, rework it because if you only have so much you know, three to four sentences to actually communicate all of those things right now, how value proposition works is if you think about email or your website or your donation page, that's where you can expand upon that. So my core value proposition is these three to four sentences. You can expand in all of those channels around that. And so again, this is really just to kind of get you started. I was like, what is the core message of why someone should give to you rather than some other organizations, the organization or not at all? And then you can expand upon that with messaging that reinforces that for value.

Nathan ([00:58:15](#)):

That's great. All right. Question from, from Tracy, and then we'll do, we'll say it's almost two o'clock we'll do Tracy and we'll do one more. We'll choose one at random. So no one. Yeah. Okay. Tracy, can you speak to answering the exclusivity question? Do you have any best practices you can share about answering? Why should he get to your question without coming across as arrogant or throwing shade at other organizations that might be doing similar work? That's a really, I don't think anyone's phrased it that way. That's a good question. Yeah.

Courtney ([00:58:41](#)):

Yeah. I would, I would say on the arrogant side, you're not, you're not breaking or anything like that. And I think that it will be very believable in the copy. If you support it with what we would call evidentials. So for instance, if you say that you've been around for a hundred years or that you're the very best in, you know, Northwest Ohio or wherever you are, wherever you live. That's okay. If that is true, you know, if the statement's true, that's totally fine. But how can I believe you again, as a prospective donor support that then with a testimonial to give yourself the credibility. So it becomes less about arrogance and like, wow, look at us. We're so awesome. We've been around for so long. We've got an incredible legacy and where the very best, and it becomes more about like, we've been, we are the very best at this in fact liquid, like look at what songs so has, has had to say about us, you know, or position it in a different way of like donors, just like you are giving because of we've been along for. So been around for so long and then for a testimonial in there, that kind of thing. So I think evidential tools to support those claims exclusivity is going to give you that credibility that you need.

Nathan ([01:00:04](#)):

Great. So most of the questions in here we've, we've answered in, in some way, shape or form, except really this one, which is more about testing. How do you go about testing a value proposition and I'll kind of break this into two chunks. How do you go about testing a value proposition? That's question number one. And then question two. How do you go about testing a value proposition when you have a small donor base where you have small traffic or a small newsletter following? Hmm,

Courtney ([01:00:27](#)):

Good. Okay. How do you go about testing? We'll tackle that first. So testing can be done. I mean, anywhere from social channels to within your email. So maybe you're going to send out what we'll start with email, because it's an easy one to, to explain. If you're going to send out an email, you could split your, your, your file and half 50 50, and have a value proposition in version A and version B, send it out to the file and then monitor the response. Both I would look at clicks. And since what you're, you're testing is your, your messaging. I don't care about things at that point, right? We're worried about what is on that page clicks and then ultimately donations and revenue, if that's what the goal of that email is. So you can do, you know, split traffic tests on the website. You could test your donation page with the different value proposition again, AB split tests. I know we've got a couple of resources to help you get started

Speaker 3 ([01:01:24](#)):

In sure do coordinator I'll spare you a sales pitch,

Nathan ([01:01:27](#)):

But if you check out that workshop, we'll talk all about it. You can test in your emails specifically. Great.

Courtney ([01:01:32](#)):

And then as far as like low traffic and how do you test into a donor base that is small. I would look at like maybe your social channel has greater engagement and you could do like a simple, full full through Facebook or whatever platform you're on. Yeah. To try and, and, and get some data behind it. I would also say just because you have a small donor base doesn't mean that, that data and information isn't going to be valuable. So, you know, if you have a thousand or more donors or maybe 50 donors, you know, like they're going to, they're, they're going to tell you what resonates with them. That's what is most appealing to them, why they gave to your organization, again, these aren't some strangers and people have invested in your cause. And we found that surveys work so well because people love to tell us what they think, you know, and especially if I've invested in something I'm much more likely to say, here's my opinion. I've invested in you. I believe in what you do. So I'm going to tell you why. So I would say I would absolutely still go to your file regardless of size and then also find other channels, you know, maybe it's on social work. Can you conduct a focus group? You know? Sure.

Nathan ([01:02:50](#)):

Yeah. That's great. If you've taken either our AB testing core. So you've seen any of our training or guides on AB testing. You certainly know about talking about like level of confidence and we typically try to shoot I mean, you mentioned it a few times throughout the presentation, but we try to shoot for like a 95% level of confidence in our testing to be really sure that what we're learning is going to hold true over time. But if you, if you don't have that volume to get a level of validity, you can aim for honestly,

something more like an 80% plus is at least a directional indicator that you're going in the right way or maybe going in the complete wrong direction. But especially if you have low, low volume, I wouldn't get so caught up in, like, we've got to hit this certain level of confidence or something like that. You might be okay with the 90% and get just a directional learning if none of that makes sense to you. We've got lots of resources on AB testing that you can dive into as well. Courtney, any parting words before we, we close down here? Any words of encouragement?

Courtney ([01:03:47](#)):

I would say like, you have to start somewhere. Just does just do it. It's, it's a bit of a hurdle to like start, but man, once you start this process and continue to fine tune your mission, like your organization's mission and, and what you're doing is going to resonate so much more with your donors. Because again, we need to take ourselves out of the picture and put our, our donor hat on. Like why, why would a donor support us? This is again, not about us, the organization, but like as a donor, why am I investing in your cause? It's like, keep that at the forefront of your mind. I know as nonprofits, again, working in one, I totally understand and see how easy it is to have a very organization centric mind, because that's just what we've always done. And so I would just challenge you to get outside of that mindset and think about a donor centric mind and put that hat on as you, as you begin to craft your value prop.

Nathan ([01:04:50](#)):

Awesome. Thank you so much, Courtney. This has been great killer work. You know, we are grateful for all of you. Thank you for giving us an hour and six minutes of your time today. Hopefully it was helpful. We're rooting for you every day here at NextAfter in wishing you the best. Hopefully we'll see you in this workshop in a couple of weeks until then best of luck. We'll talk to you soon.