

**Telling your story**, whether it be a grant application, newsletter, direct mail, brochure, etc, unfolds in a three-part process:

*digging, finding, & producing.*

- **Digging means getting to know your audience** – for grants and funding, check target foundations through a foundation database to see that your intended project matches up; spend extra time on a corporation’s giving site; call to verify specific requirements and guidelines. For donor relations and marketing programs, get to know your audience and the issues they find important. Research is the foundation from where all of your grant and communications programs will grow.
- **Finding the words** – start by dreaming big: What is your project? How will your project benefit the community? Your organization? What needs will this meet? Who stands to benefit? Don’t be afraid of how it sounds at first – that’s why it’s called a *first draft*. The key is to get it out of your head and onto paper or screen. Your research will help guide you during this process. After you’ve answered your core questions, it’s time to polish and build – be concise, straightforward and persuasive.
- **Producing is the fun part** – and also the part where many people get cold feet. Sometimes people don’t trust their words, or aren’t sure they’re “good enough writers.” If you’ve done the first two steps, the third part will prove to be rewarding. Before you’re ready to mail in an application or send a brochure to the printer, be sure to print a clean copy of your work. Give it a final read, **slowly and out loud**. Then, when you think you’re ready, ask someone you trust (and someone who will give you an honest critique) to do the same. Is it convincing? Confident? Do you believe in the words on paper? Is it compelling? If you can answer “Yes” to these questions, and you’ve followed the right steps to get you here, you’re ready.

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To view samples of Dave’s work, visit:  
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