

Keeping Donor Communications Human in the Age of AI

Sam Stern | MagnifyGood

Delesa Morris, M.S., CFRE



Planet Philanthropy 2026

“

The need for thoughtful, consistent messaging kept growing — but the time to create it wasn't.

— Delesa Morris, President, Tidewell Foundation

Two quick questions.

1

How many of you are currently using AI in donor communications?

2

How many of you have a documented, repeatable AI workflows?

92% of nonprofits use AI. Only 7% see major impact.

92%

using AI tools
in some capacity

7%

report major
donor impact

4%

have documented,
repeatable workflows

This gap is not an AI problem. It's a system problem.

SOURCE: Virtuous / Fundraising.AI Benchmark Study 2026

“

Connection doesn't erode because people stop caring.

It erodes when care is treated as an individual trait instead of an organizational responsibility.

**Connection doesn't scale
by accident.**

It scales by design.

The ConnectionWorks Framework

VOICE

How the organization sounds, feels, and shows up everywhere.

Voice creates recognition.

RELATIONSHIP ARCHITECTURE

How donors move from awareness to trust to deeper giving.

Relationship Architecture creates trust.

NARRATIVE CONTINUITY

How the organization's story stays coherent over time.

Narrative Continuity creates meaning.

Connection scales when these three things are intentionally designed to reinforce one another.

PART 1

Voice

How the organization sounds, feels, and shows up everywhere.

Without a designed voice, every message starts from scratch— regardless of who's writing.

“Do we sound like the same organization to every donor, everywhere?”

Two completely different outputs.

ChatGPT

Thank you for your generous support of Tidewell Foundation for the third year in a row. Your continued giving is a meaningful expression of trust in our mission and compassion for the people and families we serve. We are truly grateful for your ongoing commitment and the difference you help make in our community.

ConnectionWorks

Three years running.

You've shown up for families when they need it most. It means a hospice patient gets the extra visit from a chaplain. It means a child at Camp Blue Butterfly finds the courage to share their story. It means someone facing the hardest moment of their life doesn't face it alone.

Same prompt. One tool knows nothing. One knows everything.

CORE BELIEF

"One relationship at a time — that's how we brighten lives."

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Generosity → Presence → Dignity →
Brighter Lives

OUR VOICE IS

- Familial, not institutional
- Hopeful, not wishful
- Grateful, not obligated
- Present, not distant
- Uplifting, not heavy
- Specific and human

WE NEVER SOUND

- × Caring supporters like you
- × Supporters like you
- × Compassionate friends like you
- × Support our mission
- × Make a difference
- × Now more than ever
- × Hope and healing
- × Clinical or institutional
- × Like an annual report
- × Faithful / faithfulness
- × Partnership

This tool knows Tidewell Foundation's brand, voice, programs, and FY2025 impact numbers.

What do you need to write today?

Trained on Tidewell Foundation's brand voice, mission, and FY2025 impact. Every output sounds like your organization, not like AI.



Donor Thank-You Letter

Write a warm stewardship letter for a multi-year donor



Gala Remarks

Draft remarks or a speech for Delesa or board leadership



Social Media Post

Create a platform-ready post about a program or impact story



Marketing Plan

Build a staged campaign plan for an event or fundraising push

Start here — describe what you need to write...

Trained on Tidewell Foundation's brand voice and FY2025 impact data



Start building your voice.

Right now.



Scan the code or go to:

voice.connectionworks.ai

Start it now. You'll have something real before we're done today.

PART 2

Relationship Architecture

How donors move from awareness to trust to deeper giving.

Most organizations rely on heroic individuals. When those people leave, the relationships leave with them.

“Have we designed a donor journey — or are we relying on individual effort and chance?”

Every donor goes through three moments.

Most organizations have only one of them designed.

01

First Impression

How they find you — and what they feel in the first 72 hours.

OFTEN LEFT TO CHANCE

02

The In-Between

Stewardship. Where trust compounds — or quietly erodes between asks.

WHERE MOST DONORS GO SILENT

03

Belonging

When they stop being donors and start being yours.

THE GOAL

PART 3

Narrative Continuity

How the organization's story stays coherent over time.

Strong isolated moments are not cumulative trust. Donors feel the fragmentation — they just can't name it.

“Do our communications add up to a larger story donors can follow and believe in?”

Scattered messages reset trust. Connected messages compound it.

STANDALONE MESSAGE

As we approach the end of the year, we hope you will consider making a gift to Tidewell Foundation. Your support helps us provide compassionate hospice care to patients and families in our community.

This holiday season, your generosity can make a real difference. We are grateful for donors like you who make our mission possible.

*With appreciation,
Tidewell Foundation*

MESSAGE WITH NARRATIVE THREAD

Last spring we told you about the families we serve. You responded. Because of you, that changed for seventeen families in Sarasota County.

This December, the need is the same. The families are different. The story continues.

Your gift today is the next chapter.

With deep gratitude,
Delesa Morris
President, Tidewell Foundation

“What did it feel like when your donor communications started connecting to a larger story?”

Voice creates recognition.
Relationship Architecture creates
trust.
Narrative Continuity creates
meaning.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVE

What the ConnectionWorks Framework looked like at Tidewell Foundation.

If the framework works there — it can work anywhere.

Delesa Morris, President

Voice built. Capacity eroded. System restored.

01

THE VOICE WAS BUILT

Six years ago, MagnifyGood built Tidewell's voice, brand guidelines, and messaging platform from scratch.

02

THE CAPACITY ERODED

Director of Marketing eliminated. Marketing firm eliminated. PR absorbed by Empath Health. Three consecutive losses — the voice didn't drift. The infrastructure disappeared.

03

THE SYSTEM WAS RESTORED

What does it look like when the system holds?

“

**If you don't know what's missing,
you can't fix it.**

**That's forty years of brand experience baked
into the tool — so you don't have to know.
The system knows for you.**

The same prompt.
Watch what happens.

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Write 12 short monthly donor stewardship letters for Tidewell Foundation. Each letter should be 3-4 sentences. Monthly themes: July — Dementia Care. August — Nurse Residency. September — Palliative Care Services. October — Hospice. November — We Honor Veterans. December — Adult Grief Care. January — Wishes Fund. February — Cardiac Care. March — Music Therapy. April — Blue Butterfly. May — We Honor Veterans. June — Volunteer Services.

Trained on Tidewell Foundation's brand voice and FY2025 impact data



Three questions. Thirty seconds.

Before any AI-assisted donor communication goes out.

1

Does this sound like us?

2

Does this honor where this donor is in their journey?

3

Does this build on our larger story or stand alone?

“If the answer to any of these is NO — fix the prompt first.”

Three things that aren't optional.

1

Always disclose AI assistance when asked.

2

Never let AI make donor relationship judgments.

3

If it doesn't feel right, trust that instinct.

connectionworks.ai



Everything from today is on your leave-behind.

The ConnectionWorks Framework • The Three-Question Check

START YOUR VOICE DIAGNOSTIC



voice.connectionworks.ai

DOWNLOAD THE LEAVE-BEHIND



Framework + Check + Prompts

THE SIGNAL LINE



connectionworks.ai/weekly

One weekly read on AI + nonprofits

Just start.