

# SWAIM STRATEGIES

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## PUTTING YOUR EVENT PROGRAM TOGETHER

Get started shaping your event program!

To do this, you need to do three things: focus on what your organization believes, explore what your organization is doing to make that belief happen and identify one story of your impact that embodies that belief in action. With those in hand you will know the voice your organization should speak from, what you should speak about and what your special appeal story is. This allows you to develop a path from the beginning of the program to the special appeal.

1. As an organization, we believe \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Use this belief to drive your program content. Script all of your speakers to use this thread. It will help connect your content into a cohesive narrative. When you speak from the WHY of your work, you engage the emotional center and decision-making part of your donor's brain. This will drive connection and giving.*

2. This year, our biggest area of impact was (a) \_\_\_\_\_

This is what we're doing as an organization to continue making stories of impact like this happen (b) \_\_\_\_\_

*You can't cover everything and the kitchen sink at your event. Perhaps focus on just one of your programs or one theme of your work for this year and trust your audience to paint the bigger picture of your organization. When you get specific and show the depth of your impact, people will lean in.*

3. A client success story that shows that impact is \_\_\_\_\_

This is where they started \_\_\_\_\_

This is how our work together changed things \_\_\_\_\_

This is where they are now \_\_\_\_\_

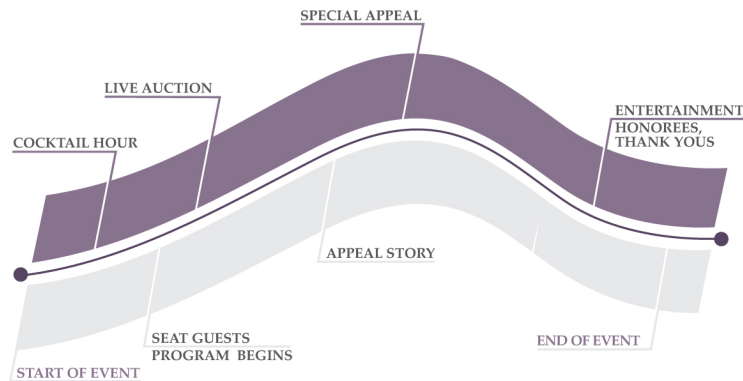
*Use this story as your special appeal story. Tell where they were, how they were impacted by your organization, and how their life is better now. Make them the hero. This will be the emotional height of your event and your fundraising.*

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So now take your answers from above and build your event program:

- ^ Welcome – **Emcee**  
Sponsor Thank Yous / Volunteer Thank Yous  
“Tonight, we are here to support...” – Tell the story of your answer to question 1
- ^ Organizational Speaker – **Executive Director/Key Staff Member**  
About the Organization – Use your answer to question 2a  
Tell the story of your answer to question 2b
- ^ Organizational Video (show people your work)
- ^ Fundraising  
Live Auction – **Auctioneer**  
Appeal Story – Use answer to question 3 to shape the story that ends with an ask  
Appeal Collection – **Auctioneer**
- ^ Honorees
- ^ Entertainment

Here’s a visual example of how your program looks as an event arc:



This is a simplified version of a run of show for your event to get you going, use the questions to start building your own. If you’d like help fleshing out your program, contact us at [swaimstrategies.com](http://swaimstrategies.com), 503-234-4546 or join us in Portland at our fundraising event conference. Click [here](#) to learn more!