Copywriting: How To Write An Appeal That Gets Results

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What We are Going to Discuss Today:

- Introduction
- Copy Basics
- Sample Openings, Closings and the P.S!
- Copywriting Toolbox
- Q&A
Introduction

- Why are direct mail fundraising letters so long?
Acquisition Letters Sent to Prospects

- Designed to enlist the support of brand new donors.
- Must capture the reader’s attention in the first 10 seconds.
- Assumes that the reader knows little about your organization.
- Needs to be long enough to tell your story well!
Renewal and Appeal Letters

- Designed to obtain additional gifts from your current donors or members.
- Assumes that the reader knows something about you and is interested in learning more.
- Is part of the ongoing conversation that you are having with your donors.
- Needs to be long enough to tell your story well!
One Theory on How People Read Letters:

- Streakers
- Strollers
- Studiers
Writing Great Copywriting “Do’s”

- Make it look like a letter.
- Write to one person, from one person.
- Pay attention to paragraph length.
- Focus on first and last paragraphs. Use the P.S. wisely.
- Ask for money—tell how a donation will be used.
- Write about people, not the organization.
- Use short sentences and simple words.
- Use underlining and bold face.
- Above all—make it personal, emotional, conversational and repetitive.
“Don’t”

- Use big words or jargon.
- Go with your first draft or first opening.
- Use photos in the copy.
- Include everything about your organization.
- Assume the reader knows too much.
Sample Phrases to Use in Your Letter

- And in just a moment, I’ll tell you how … but first, …
- Here is what is at stake!
- Your help is desperately needed.
- You see, without your help …
- Please don’t put this letter aside for a later time … time is not on our side.
- And that’s where you come in.
- That’s the reason that I’m writing today: to ask you to …
- If you agree with me please read on…
- If you have not yet decided to join, let me …
- My pledge to you is this …
Great Openings

- *I wish you could have been with me when ...*

- *Yesterday we received a thank you note from 89 year-old Rose, but it was really meant for you ...*

- *All too often the story is the same. We receive a call from a doctor, concerned neighbor or family member who lives too far away to help.*
Make Sure You Have a Strong Ask

Should be on page #1 and two other places

- Your gift of $50 today will provide a week of home delivered meals and other critical services. And $100 will provide twice as much food for a homebound neighbor.

- Your gift today will help cover this terrible gap in funding. Just $35 will provide a home delivered meal to an elderly neighbor in our community.

- Please make a generous gift today to help us continue providing home delivered meals to elderly neighbors like Dorothy.

- Please renew your support of our Meals on Wheels Program for 2012 and help us continue this important work. We can’t do it without you!
Successful Copy Themes

- Annual Renewal or Year In Review
- Senior Stories
- Seasonal Appeals
- Emergency Appeals
- Special Projects (or ‘mini-proposal’)
- Challenge Grant Appeals
- Premium-based Appeals
Writing For Online Fundraising Is Different

- Subject Line – Limit to 50 characters including spaces.
- Tease, Tell, Take Action.
- Online users are ruthless – they don’t intend to read what you sent.
To really get attention online ...

- Bulleted lists.
- Use **bold** to prevent skimming.
- Keep things short for the masses, use links for type ‘A’ who want more.
- Give or take action above the line.
- Use a default font for screen reading: Verdana/Georgia.
Thank you!

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