

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!
- Sample Letters – From Mediocre to Marvelous
- 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
- Client 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's 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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