



DIRECT FORUM

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Direct Forum is a free e-mail newsletter containing useful direct marketing tips, news updates and how-to information. It's convenient, informative and I am not trying to sell you anything.

- 1. Don't complain that your loyal donor base is eroding, because that's not the only reason why your charitable donations are down.**
- 2. Why charities that create their own fundraising appeals may be doing more harm than good.**
- 3. What motivates people to respond?**

Don't complain that your loyal donor base is eroding, because that's not the only reason why your charitable donations are down.

It's an established fact that the biggest supporters of charities are older people. They have steadily supported charities for years, giving generously year after year and continue to do so.

One of the biggest complaints of most charities is that this very group of loyal donors is slowly eroding. This group of previous older generation of people that they relied on for years is either unable to support them financially any more or are literally disappearing slowly.

Here's another fact. **Baby boomers are retiring at an unprecedented rate and are now filling in the gap of older donors fading from your database.** The population of those over the age of 65 has surged to nearly five million over the past five years, growing by 14.1% since the last official count (Statistics Canada)

That's more than double the 5.9% increase for the population as a whole since the last count.

Where do most creative people go wrong?

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Baby boomers are not the same as their parents. They don't consider supporting a charity like their parent's did as a moral obligation.

This is the hippy and flower generation of North America that marched to the tune of a different drummer.

They are not less compassionate or caring
Remember they were the ones who:

- Revolted against the Vietnam War
- Clashed with the police at the Democratic convention
- Got shot at the Kent State University because they no longer believed in the status quo
- And many left their own country to come to Canada to avoid the draft because of their moral conviction

You cannot talk to them the same way as you did to their parents.

The older generation lived under hard times, during a war and a depression. They believed in:

- Hard work
- Saving for a rainy day
- Respect for authority

Baby boomers are completely different—while they are comfortable with traditional fundraising methods like direct marketing they are also tech savvy.

They are not passive givers they need to be involved with the charity or feel a close connection to it.

They believe in:

- Keeping up with trends—fastest growing sector of internet users
- Women play as big a role as men
- They've seen enough change in their lifetime to fill a history book
- They have also not fully retired and very active still.



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So here's what you should really be saying:
"Thanks to donors like you, you have helped us save more lives than anyone else from prostate cancer."

2. Being so close to the charity makes them eager to tell the facts:

That 22,000 children are starving or that AIDS is killing 1.2 million people in Africa each year

Numbers and statistics hardly work—they are lousy fundraising motivators and incomprehensible by the average Jane or John Doe. If you want people to donate you have to touch them emotionally.

Tell them a story about the plight of one individual. Talk about how a donor can save that one child who has not eaten since yesterday or how their donation today will get medication to that one farmer who is stricken with AIDS that will allow him to feed his family of a wife and kids—that's what motivates people.

Also, telling your audience that you need \$1.5 million to solve the looming crisis is futile to the average person, unless of course you are talking to Bill Gates or Warren Buffet and not to the average Jane or John Doe.

3. Fundraising is not just about asking for funds, it's also about inspiring others to embrace a good cause.

In our clinical technology driven world, we lay too much emphasis on logic and reason.

We believe that what sets us apart from other species is our ability to work our way intellectually through problems.

Yet ironically, that's not what comes into play when we make many of our most important decisions.

Emotions, not reason, control many of our selection choices. One of the most significant decisions we make has nothing to do with logic – the act of falling in love. It has little to do with reason. People don't coolly weigh the pro and cons of their attraction to one particular person.

Similarly people give to a charity from the heart



inspire

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and not from the head. Sure, logic is important but people generally give because they are moved, not because you have rationally presented a flawless argument.

4. They pack more than one issues in the appeal.

This ends up confusing the reader. When you need to communicate with your donors about a donating for one specific issue, stick to it don't include other issues like planned giving or legacy giving.

I have seen that happen too often and right away can tell that this message is from someone who is not a fundraising specialist by profession.

5. Finally, writing fundraising appeals is unique method and you need time and knowledge to master it.

It has taken me 12 years and I am still learning every day. It is a body of accumulated knowledge and a set of principles—not just a dumbed-down version of copywriting.

It's also not begging or arm-twisting, it's the ultimate one-on-one conversation with your current donors, potential donors and lapsed donors and each ones is different and each charity's donors are different.

Often it involves more than just direct mail appeals but various integrated methods or multi-channel communications to gain, hold and get donors to respond.

Below are a few examples that motivate people to respond.

What motivates people to respond?

The foremost reason why people respond to any initiative—advertising, direct marketing or a sales pitch is when you make sure you have answered the age old question that is front and center in their minds: WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Selling the benefits they will derive from your product or service is key. So if you are selling a lock you don't talk about the number of tumblers in the lock you talk about the safety they will derive from



your unbreakable lock.

But how do you do this in a fundraising appeal?

Here you are selling something intangible like a good feeling or a 'warm glow' inside.

HERE'S SOMETHING VITAL THAT I DO:

- 1. I use the TTY (Thanks To You) rule in all my appeals.**

I don't write: *The Good Neighbours' Club has helped feed homeless men for 79 years.*

I say: *Thanks to donors like you The Good Neighbours' Club has helped feed homeless men for 79 years now.*

Here are a few more ways:

- 2. Involve the reader let them experience the problem first hand.**

Here's a buckslip that I recently created for the Canadian Paraplegic Society.

TAKE THIS CHALLENGE

- 1. With your ring finger extended (as shown), rest your hand on a flat surface**
- 2. Press down lightly.**
- 3. Now try and lift your ring finger.**

Can't do it? Well, that gives you a tiny idea of the frustration and helplessness people feel who are disabled and confined to wheelchairs because of spinal cord injuries.

Each year about 600 new spinal cord injuries occur in Ontario—that's more than one a day. Current estimates indicate that there are approximately 33,140 Ontarians living with spinal cord injury. That does not include the thousands born with spinal cord injuries.

Now:

- 4. Go to the donation form.**
- 5. Pledge any amount you can currently afford.**
- 6. And see how wonderful it feels to help someone in need.**



3. Using word and picture association to paint a vivid picture of a problem to make a case as to why a donation is necessary.

Here's a recent piece I created for The Goodneighbours' Club. This charity deals with the feeding and the care of homeless seniors. Since, a volunteer firm agreed to drop it off in three neighbourhoods in the city of Toronto, I used a lunch-bag to talk about the problem of food, instead of a No 10 envelope with half a message on the lunch-bag to get people to open it. Inside was another recognizable item associated with food, a placemat on which I completed the message.

It said: **HUNGER DISAPPEARS ONLY WHEN WE ALL DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.**



4. Tell a compelling story that moves the audience.

A true story about a Special Olympic athlete, Doug Bourgeaut not only got a 17% response but actual letters back from donors. (See one alongside)

5. Add third party endorsements or appeals from experts, the press or other supporters if this is relevant.

Since various Police members are proud supporters of Special Olympics, who better than the Police Chiefs from five different municipalities to invite corporations to join them on a special day, designated to honour people with intellectual disabilities: Example: (See alongside below)

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Designers Inc.
1407-99 Harbour Square,
Toronto, ON
M5J 2H2

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