



DIRECT FORUM

FEBRUARY 2013

VOLUME 9 • ISSUE 2

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. **Do you know what works better for charities: giving your donors the bad news or good news?**
2. **If you have an emergency than here are a few important hints on how your charity should craft an SOS.**
3. **How I measure good or bad responses.**

Do you know what works better for charities: giving your donors the bad news or good news?

Looking at the many charitable solicitations mailed each year, I see two distinct camps of followers:

1. **The Bad News Bearers:** Those who strongly believe that the best way to raise funds is by giving their donors the bad news about the problem that needs to be solved right now.
2. **The Good News Bearers:** Those who firmly believe that the best way to solicit funds is by giving their donors the good news as to how the impact of their donations can improve the lives of those who need help right now.

In other words some believe that donors respond to need (Bad News Bearers) while other believe that donors respond to hope. (Good News Bearers)

The Bad News Bearers think that donors are problem solvers by nature, so they tell them the problem they are encountering and feel that donors will respond to help alleviate that problem.

Look closely and you will find that their fundraising

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appeal is filled with emotional triggers (see alongside) like:

While the Good News Bearers firmly believes that by telling donors how their funds provides hope in resolving the setback that the charity is encountering will solve the problem.

Their solicitations are loaded with emotional triggers (see alongside) like:

Here's a question. If you were asked to select one of these groups, which one would you choose?

If you picked Good News Fundraising chances are you are half wrong because test after test shows that a bad news appeal almost always out-pulls a good news appeal.

However, the flip side of the coin is that Bad News Fundraising wears thin over time. You cannot keep asking donors to rescue you every time. Donors want to see some progress—they want to see that their gift has made a difference.

The real answer therefore lies between the two choices because emotional triggers work best in opposites.

Don't just present a problem (Bad news)..you need to balance it by how it can be solved, with the donor's support. (Good news).

The best way to demonstrate what I am talking about is by showing you a real example. So here is my recent: a good news —bad news balanced appeal.

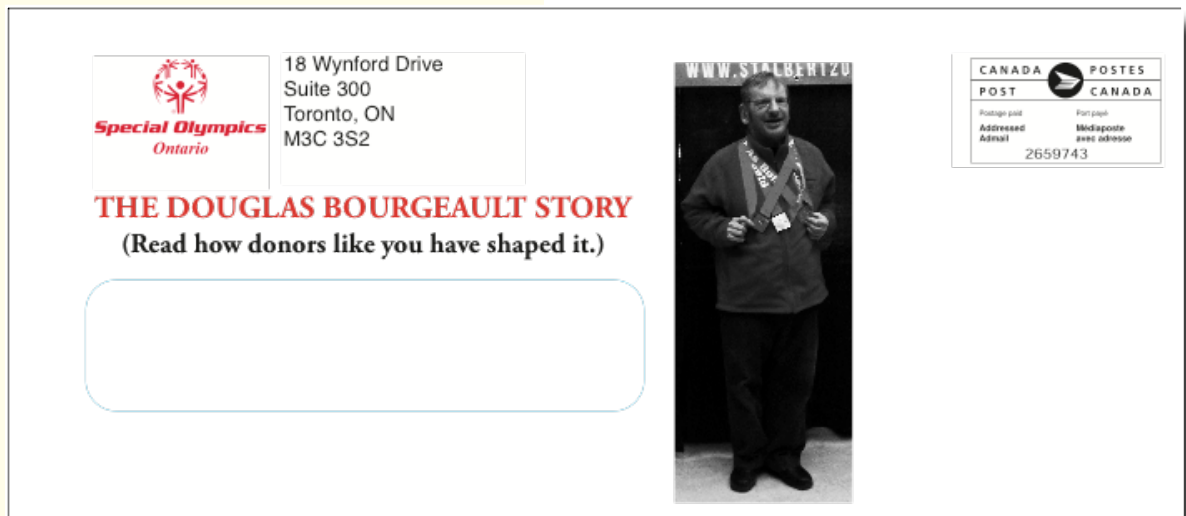
Result: A fantastic response of 25.76%. That's a response from 1 out of every 4 donors.

- Despair
- Anger
- Guilt
- Grief

- Flattery
- Love
- Pride/Ego/Stature
- Patriotism

Outer envelope below.

This mailing spoke about the problems, trials and tribulations of Special Olympic athletes with intellectual disabilities and how donors can help them.



Note: to read the letter, please see the attached called: Doug.pdf

If you have an emergency than here are a few important hints on how your charity should craft an SOS.

At some stage or another every charity runs into a desperate situation; they need funds badly because of a disaster, an impending dire need or because the situation of those they currently help is getting worse.

They need to reach out to their loyal donors at once for badly needed help.

Urgency in an appeal should be looked at like an emergency plan of action not as a technique.

Imagine, that you have had CPR training and someone is having a stroke in front of you. As you rush to help the first thing you would do is point to someone and shout: “You, call 911!”

You wouldn’t say, “Someone please call 911.”

Why? Because if there is no clear sense of urgency directed at anyone in particular in the latter case. This is what psychologists call a ‘diffusion of responsibility.’

Also know as the “bystander effect,” this human trait allows us to assume that since you in particular have not been asked then someone else will do what needs to be done. As a result no one makes the life-saving call.

If the situation demands this kind of action then fundraising requires the same sense of aggressive urgency in your appeal.

Here alongside is another example of: an urgent appeal. It showed donors of **The Good Neighbours’ Club** why helping homeless men right now was so important.

Result: It produced enough funds to feed 2,510 homeless men. It generated an ROI of over 847% and raised twice the amount as the previous year.

The key element in The Good Neighbours’ Club was this Greeting Card that asked donors to respond.

Brlow: Front of card.



Inside of card.

This card is to let you know
that you are not alone this festive season.
Here’s wishing you
a Happy Holiday.

Note: to read the letter, please see the attached called GNC.pdf

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Here are some of the reasons why it worked:

1. It gave the donors a real deadline and a good reason why it is important now.
2. It showed the donors what was at stake.
3. It gave donors options by showing them what each amount would accomplish.
4. It asked each donor to get involved and do something concrete. (**Just like the: "You, call 911!"**)

How I measure good or bad responses.

While most people judge the success of an initiative by the ROI or number of responses I assess it differently.

As a creative person I have always felt that how people react to my copy is the best measure of whether I have been able to connect with them and to touch them or not.

It's not just the response rate that matters to me, it's also the kind of response or feedback that I get from them.

These responses demonstrate a key element of writing: Understanding your target audience completely by getting under their skin. It's a process called "Method Marketing" as described by **Danny Hatch** in his wonderful book by the same name.

My greatest satisfaction came years ago when I created two children's clubs. First for 'Lipton's Super Soupers,' followed by a second club called "Lipton's Fun Fruits Wild Things Club"

The first surpassed the target mark of 15,000 set by the client by enrolling 32,000 members in three years, while the second Club attracted 14% more members. Children enrolled from schools in entire classroom groups along with their teachers.

Both the clubs received the ultimate accolade by winning back-to-back Gold Awards at The Canadian Marketing Association Award show.

Below is a response to the Douglas Bougheault's story featured in article 1: What's better: giving donors the good news or bad news?

TO THE FAMILY
OF DOUGLAS BOUGHEAULT.
AS THE MOTHER OF A DEVELOPMENT
DELAYED SON I KNOW THE PAIN
& HEARINGS WE ENDURE
GOD BLESS YOUR SON.
I WISH I COULD GET MY SON
INTO THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS.
HE IS A GOOD SWIMMER.
MAYBE SOMEDAY.
REGARDS.

And here below are responses to article 2: How to craft an SOS.

YES! I WISH TO SUPPORT THE GOOD NEIGHBOURS' CLUB

Here is my donation of: \$10 \$30 \$50 \$100 \$500 Other \$ _____

Enclosed is a cheque payable to the Good Neighbours' Club

Please charge my: VISA MasterCard AMEX

Card Number _____ Expiry Date _____

Name on Card _____

Signature *Keep up the good work, Ellen.*

Please return this form with your donation in the postage paid envelope. Official receipts will be issued for gifts over \$10. We appreciate the support of each and every one of our donors. Thanks to you, we can provide a better quality of life for homeless people in Toronto. To contact us: Mail to 170 Jarvis Street, Toronto, Ontario M5B 2B7

a Christmas gift for
the man in the
Good Neighbours club
Love
Nancy

Thanks
everyone
for your
good work
Phil.

Good Neighbours' Club
Here's a donation.
Best wishes!
Edith

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To do this successfully I had to think like a child—which is not hard for me—as the fictitious spokespersons of the two clubs: Big Foot, Alligator and Safari Sam.

The Result: the biggest reward for me was when hundreds of kids wrote back with letters of praise or with invitations to parties, birthdays or even to classroom picnics and events.

These days I write not only on behalf of CEO's and mothers, but even on behalf of cats and dogs. What a great and fun way to earn a living!

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