

Direct Forum is a free email 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!

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My chance to brag (tut-tut how un-Canadian, eh?)

Last November/December I worked on three year-end appeals and all of them were highly successful, each one raising more money than the year before.

Here below is an email from one of my clients:

Hey Billy

We are still receiving donations. A lot came online this year. It was fabulous. Am not sure of the count but I think we are somewhere around \$20,000.00 right now. Best campaign ever.

Happy New Year my Friend!

Gail

Here is the piece.



Dear Ms. Sample,

Darby is a young fawn that was found beside his dead mother on the side of the highway. A passing motorist saw him and took action. Suffering with a fractured leg, he was rushed to us for care.

Darby immediately underwent orthopedic surgery and was put under 24-hour watch. For several weeks his leg was pinned and secured with external fixators. Healing took time, expensive meds, lots of loving care and good nutrition...not to mention the necessary company of other fawns to grow up with. Thanks to the commitment of our donors, we were able to provide this care. Darby was released back into the forest with his friends this fall!



As the number of injured and compromised native animals grows each year, your support becomes more and more crucial.

We urgently need to expand our facilities to better accommodate our current patients and provide for the growth in numbers. Our Nursery and Intake Office has been held together with duct tape and plastic wrap for long enough! We are excited to tell you that a new nursery, clinic & ICU and expanded space for recovering adults is in the works!

Our ongoing goal is to meet the highest standards of care for our wildlife patients, but we cannot do this alone. We need caring partners like you!



Please consider any amount you can afford and donate to our 2017 Year-end Appeal. Better still, consider joining our SOH Family by becoming a monthly donor! For as little as \$10 a month you could help year round as we care for the 4,000 wild lives that depend on us for treatment each year. Visit us at: <http://www.shadesofhope.ca/membership.html>

On behalf of our dedicated staff, volunteers and rescued animals like Darby, we thank you for being an animal supporter, and we wish you and your loved ones a safe and happy holiday season.



Sincerely,

Gail Lenters
Chief Animal Lover

P.S. Please donate by December 31 for your 2017 tax receipt

2017 Year-End Appeal

Thanks to animal supporters like you, since January 2017 you helped us:

Treat **3,700** wild animals

&

Rescue **2,000** orphaned wildlife babies

INCLUDING:

100

Ducklings

7

Fawns

180

Bunnies

800

Squirrels

62

Skunks

10

Fox kits

PLEASE HELP US HELP THEM

P.O. Box 87, Pefferlaw, Ontario L0E 1N0 • Tel: 705.437.4654 • Email: info@shadesofhope.ca • Web: www.shadesofhope.ca



Yes! I want to help Shades of Hope Wildlife Refuge.

Here is my tax-deductable donation to help care for injured and orphaned wildlife like Darby so that they can be released back into their natural habitat.

Here is my gift of:

\$35 \$50 \$80 \$100 Other \$ _____

<Ms. Joan Sample>
<Address 1>
<Address 2>
<Address 3>

Methods of Payment

By cheque (Please, make cheque payable to Shades of Hope.)

By Credit Card or become a Monthly Donor (To donate by Credit card or to become a monthly donor, please visit: www.shadesofhope.ca and click on the Please donate button on the home page.)

Thank you!

Charitable Registration No:835493131RR0001

From time to time, Shades of Hope may contact you with information that may be of interest to you. If you do not wish to receive communications from us please check here.

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Now, let me tell you why they all worked.

My big shift in thinking

I am sure you have all read what many direct mail practitioners and nonprofit pundits profess. They tell you to circle every “I” or “We” in your appeals and replace them with “You” because the word “You” is glue.



This is my vital strategic shift.

My reason: Let us reconsider why donors give. The first step to understanding your donors’ motivations to donate is to take a step back.

This includes me—I myself have used this mantra in my appeals for years. After all, the appeal was not about the charity I was working for it was about the donor. It should to be “donor-centric”.

Now I have realized that I was only partially correct. We need to go back and rethink that again.

I am asking you to change the “You” back to “We”. No, not the “We” referring to your organization such as: “This year, we rescued 2,000 wildlife babies”— but the “We” that includes the donor and your organization working together.

The “We” that signifies what both have accomplished together.

The shift to “We”, signaling the power of collective action for stronger results.

Stop segmenting donors by how much potential they have to give. Instead first figure out why they give.

One chief reason they give is because you as a charity proclaimed in your mission something like: “Build a stronger, safer, happier community” or to “End poverty” or “Feed the hungry”. Donors give because they believe in your mission, so take responsibility. Show them that they can be proud to belong to an awesome team that delivers on this promise.

Besides, you owe it to your donors to show them how you used their past donations. Show them that “We’re in this together.”

The results I saw in all my appeals paid off handsomely.

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Total amount in dollars received by the charity **Shades of Hope** was over 20% from the previous year.

Another year-end appeal generated over 100% more funds, while a third appeal results did 400% better than the year before.

I'll share both of them with you in future newsletters.

To me this is proof that this slight shift in thinking can produce seismic results.

Does this mean the death of donor centrism? Does it mean no more “you” in my copy? Of course not.

So go ahead: Use words like “We” and “Us” to inspire action and engagement.

Some other suggestions:

Talk about your struggles even if sometimes you end up losing.

I know that my work as a writer is to make donors feel good so that they will keep giving, and to make them feel “warm and fuzzy” for doing it.

But don't forget that sometimes making donors feel uncomfortable is important too. This is an old copywriting tactic to show transparency—“exposing your warts and all”; talking about your struggle to get funding for an important program; how close you are to doing what you wish to, if only you could get more help.

When you frame things honestly,

without bashing your corporate or government sponsors, without blaming circumstances beyond your control—just stating the fact that times are tough—then donors will gladly fill in to help.

Educate your donors.

Show them that today 62% of Canadians say: It's not my problem. The number of people who now feel this way has increased from 57% in 2014.

Canadians say it is mostly the role of government to help those in need. At the same time, the government is cutting back on their commitment.

Canadians used to take great pride in our social safety net, but lately we seem to

be distancing ourselves from it. (Source: Ipsos)

Talk about this in your newsletters and appeals.

Take donors inside the work you do... the work they make possible!

Show them that they, as equal partners in this work, help create an awesome community together.

Finally, I'm not embarrassed to confess that the way I communicate with donors keeps evolving. Every day as a teacher, I too learn something new and when I do I promise to pass that on to you.



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A fun video called: I'm moving to Canada



On Donald Trump's one-year presidency, I watched the protest march by women again in the US and around the world and was reminded of this video that won a Cleo Award last year.

It's from Doctors of the World and is called: I'm Moving To Canada.

The link:

<https://vimeo.com/caseystudies/canada>

Credits

Client: Doctors of the World

Agency: Publicis New York .

Production Company: Prodigious

Chief Creative Officer: Andy Bird

Executive Creative Director: Joe Johnson

Creative Directors: Jeremy Filgate,

Josh Horn & Einav Jacobovich

Account Executive: Michael Emer

Search Analyst: Evan Finkelstein

Strategy Director: Erica Herman

Strategist: Beth Beckman

Technology Director: Alec Cumming

Associate Technical Director: Wojo Wieronski

Editor: Doug Zaner

Senior Producer: Haleigh Arnst

Integrated Producer: Jason Bailey

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Another fun item: Washington Post's Annual Neologism Contest

This one is a treat for writers.

Each year, The Washington Post publishes the winning submissions to its yearly neologism contest, in which readers are asked to supply alternative meanings for common words.

Here are the winners:

1. **Coffee** (N.), the person upon whom one coughs.
2. **Flabbergasted** (adj.), appalled over how much weight you have gained.
3. **Abdicate** (V.), to give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.
4. **Esplanade** (V.), to attempt an explanation while drunk.
5. **Willy-nilly** (Adj.), impotent.
6. **Negligent** (Adj.), describes a condition in which you absentmindedly answer the door in your nightgown.
7. **Lymph** (V.), to walk with a lisp.
8. **Gargoyle** (N.), olive-flavored mouthwash.
9. **Flatulence** (N.) emergency vehicle that picks you up after you are run over by a steamroller.
10. **Balderdash** (N.), a rapidly receding hairline.
11. **Testicle** (N.), a humorous question on an exam.
12. **Rectitude** (N.), the formal, dignified bearing adopted by proctologists.
13. **Pokemon** (N), a Rastafarian proctologist.
14. **Oyster** (N.), a person who sprinkles his conversation with Yiddishisms.
15. **Frisbeetarianism** (N.), The belief that, when you die, your Soul flies up onto the roof and gets stuck there.
16. **Circumvent** (N.), an opening in the front of boxer shorts worn by Jewish men.

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And Another Washington Post's Annual Neologism Contest

The Washington Post's Style Invitational also asks readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and supply a new definition.

Here are the winners:

1. **Bozone** (N.): The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The bozone layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of breaking down in the near future.
2. **Foreploy** (V): Any misrepresentation about yourself for the purpose of getting laid.
3. **Cashtration** (N.): The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period.
4. **Giraffiti** (N): Vandalism spray-painted very, very high.
5. **Sarchasm** (N): The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.
6. **Inoculatte** (V): To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.
7. **Hipatitis** (N): Terminal coolness.
8. **Osteopornosis** (N): A degenerate disease. (This one got extra credit.)
9. **Decafalon** (N.): The grueling event of getting through the day consuming only things that are good for you.
10. **Glibido** (V): All talk and no action.
11. **Dopeler effect** (N): The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly.
12. **Arachnoleptic fit** (N.): The frantic dance performed just after you've accidentally walked through a spider web.
13. **Beelzebug** (N.): Satan in the form of a mosquito that gets into your bedroom at three in the morning and cannot be cast out.
14. **Caterpallor** (N.): The color you turn after finding half a grub in the fruit you're eating.

And my favourite, drumroll please:

15. **Ignoranus** (N): A person who's both stupid and an asshole

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The best wish I received this year.

This email is in response to my year-end mailing. All I can say in return is: A very big thank you back Christine.

Dear Billy,

Thank you so much for your inspiring letter and gift this Christmas.

A bookmark is a simple thing, really. But the one you sent, thanks to the story that you included in your letter, has a totally different value, at least to me. I will use it and cherish it very much.

It's another great demonstration of your incredible talent to create compelling content, touch your audience directly to the heart, and generate action... I guess this message is a proof of this last point.

I wish you an incredible 2018, may health and happiness accompany you all along.

Christine

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To post a comment, please include your name, email address and your thoughts.

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