



DIRECT FORUM

FEBRUARY 2023

VOLUME 19 ISSUE 2

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!

A Few Handy Tips to Boost Your Writing and Design Skills.

Today, we all struggle to get the shrinking attention span of our potential readers, donors, or customers. And this goes for the electronic channels, videos, as well as direct mail appeals or, for that matter, any other form of communication.

Consider these few handy tips to boost your writing and design skills so you will rivet their attention long enough to improve your chances of getting a response.

1. Specifics Outpull Generalizations. That's because we pay more attention to the generic units — seconds, minutes, hours, days, or months — more than we do to just numbers.

For example, the two sentences below:

- Our clients always come back to buy another shirt.
- Three out of four of our clients come back to buy another shirt.

Imagine if the television show **60 Minutes** was called **One Hour**. I doubt it would have been so successful.

2. Maximize your Prospect's Image. *For example, instead of saying:*

Dear John,

I am writing to 150 donors for help.

Write instead:

Dear John,

I am writing to you... and 149 other trustworthy donors for help.

CONTINUES ...

The first statement is just numbers that are unrelated to the reader. The second sentence involves the reader. Remember the word “you” is glue. So, whenever you run out of ideas as to how to connect to your target audience, just add anything with the word “you” in it. Voila! Now you have your reader’s instant attention.

Words matter a lot and there is a significant difference between “donors” and “loyal or trustworthy donors”. Most prospects or donors prefer to see themselves with the latter descriptive words.

3. Questions are Automatically Reader Engaging. That’s because they are less threatening and help develop rapport with the reader.

For example: “Why I am sending you this message.” vs. “Why am I sending you this message?”



The words are identical, but the psychological impact is entirely different.

4. Make It Quick. The trick to overcoming the perceived attention-span problem is to make a letter a quick scan. Make important words and ideas pop visually.

Example: Use a Johnson box, easy-to-spot subheads, underlines, highlights, colour, handwritten margin notes, short phrases, short paragraphs, and don’t forget to repeat the most important words you want remembered.

5. Make Sentences Short and Sharp. People who don’t know how to sell tend to write long sentences and use proper grammar they learned in school.



Write the way you would talk. “If your ear can catch it, your eye will catch it too.”

5. Keep Your Focus on the Star in the Picture. In direct mail, the letter is the star—the salesman who sits across from the prospect face to face to do the personal pitch. The voice. THE SELL. All the other pieces inside the envelope are “the supporting cast.”

When it Comes to Images, Here Are a Few Handy Tips:

1. Find the Right Image that Tells a Story. For example, this one photo in the article called: “Looking for the Lion King” says it all.



2. Use Captions to Help Readers Understand an Image in Context. That’s because captions allow viewers to contextualize where, or what, the image represents.

Here is one I used for my client with a fitness center.



Results may vary

"Blaine's program flat out works! I have lost 45 lbs. in 4 months and look and feel amazing!"

- Nancy

CONTINUES ...

3. Remove Any Parts of a Photo That are Unnecessary. The reader will automatically fill in the missing parts.

For example, in this letter below, you don't have to show the hospital surroundings to indicate where this child is.

Make-A-Wish® Eastern Ontario
92 Bentley Avenue, Unit 4
Ottawa, ON K2E 6T9
Tel: 613-234-3555


 MAKE·A·WISH.
Canada

November 14, 2008

Mrs. Jane Sample
1234 Main Street Apt 431
Toronto, ON M1M 1M1

XX1234

Dear Mr. Sample,

I am not a doctor but I truly believe that giving hope and happiness to a child with a life-threatening illness has magical medicinal powers.

Granting these children their wish helps lift their spirits . . . It lets them fight their illness with more vigor . . . It adds a glimmer of hope to their eyes . . . It puts a smile on their faces that could light up the whole world.

At times a wish results in tears of joy, and sometimes it may even help put an illness into remission.

But a wish always leaves them feeling much better.

Yes! Make-A-Wish® has witnessed these moments of pure happiness thousands of times and I continue to be deeply moved with the news of each wish we grant. How I wish you could be there to share in this joy. After all, it is because of wonderful donors like you that we have been able to bring this kind of unbridled joy to thousands of ill children.

So please support the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Canada once again.

**THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, GIVE A GIFT
WITH THE MAGICAL POWER OF HOPE**

The strength of this gift goes much deeper than just the impact it has on the child. It also touches the entire family of the child and fills them with everlasting gratitude.

It brings great satisfaction to our volunteers and staff who work tirelessly to ensure each and every child's wish is as unique and special as if it were the only one ever granted.

Best of all, I guarantee that it will bring you too, great satisfaction knowing that you have reached out and touched a child by making his or her wish come true.

Helping a great cause like Make-A-Wish does more than grant a wish. Your donation gives an invaluable gift to a child with a life-threatening illness . . . A gift that will be cherished forever.

Whether this wish fulfills a child's fantasy, takes them on an adventure or enables a meeting with

CONTINUES ...

Finally, when it Comes to Videos, How We String Images Together is Important.

The Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein was a pioneer in the juxtaposition of images or creating a “montage”. He believed that in filmmaking, one and one was equal to three.

He felt that the “collision” of independent shots had a multiplier effect wherein each sequential element is perceived not next to the other, but on top of the other. He said that we tend to fill in the missing story when we view images juxtaposed in a particular sequence.

For example, when we are presented with an image of a woman with raised hands screaming, followed by an image of a man with a knife ready to strike, we immediately understand that the woman is terrified that she is about to be attacked.

If, however, the next image after the woman screaming is an image of a pram tumbling down a flight of stairs, we feel her panic in reaction to the harm that can be done to the baby in the pram.

He described it as the mind taking two separate frames and then creating its own new conclusion.

1. A Rule of Thirds: The rule of thirds is the most common camera framing technique used in film or photography. It is about positioning a character to show their relationship to other elements in the scene.



CONTINUES ...

You do this by keeping the image on the intersecting lines. It's not only more pleasing to the eye, but it also an easy way to determine the main character's place in the story.



For example: to depict the loneliness of a child with learning disabilities, I focused on his shadow in a vast empty playground.

Here is a link to the video: <https://youtu.be/-FMkdIFIH1A>

Not only was this video easy and cheap to produce (less than \$700) but it also won a Silver Award at the Canadian Marketing Awards show.

OPT IN, OPT OUT, OPTIONS:

To subscribe, email me at:

billy@designersinc.ca

To download back issues of my newsletters go to 'Freebies' on my website:
www.designersinc.ca

To unsubscribe, send me an e-mail simply saying, "Please, remove."

To participate, send me an email with your article suggestions.

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

Let me remind you that your name and/or e-mail address will never be shared, sold, circulated, or passed along to anyone else.

BKS Fundraising Services/Designers Inc.
1806-77 Harbour Square
Toronto, ON
M5J 2S2

© Designers Inc.

