

DIRECT FORUM

JUNE 2014

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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!

1. How much money should you ask **your donors** for?

2. Here's how to make an effective **fundraising appeal**.

How much money should you ask your donors for?



Many textbooks will tell you that, when you are appealing to your house donors, you should add gift ladders starting with the smallest amount they gave last time and then go up or down.

I disagree; I feel it all depends on how well you know your house donors. Sometimes when a donor has a history of sending in \$25 they may surprise you with a donation of \$500. Or those who generally send in four-figure amounts will suddenly send only a small amount.

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One charity's donors I have come to know quite well are Special Olympics Ontario givers. My letters to them usually go like this: *Please give whatever you can afford right now.* This prompts not only larger donations but it encourages more donors to give.

I have been averaging a response of between 17% and 30% from them. The result of my latest appeal got a response of 20% with an average gift size of \$54.53. That's one out of every five people who got the letter.



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When it comes to asking online, the amounts that I have asked for have been smaller—\$10 or even \$5. (As shown alongside).

In the UK, campaigns that ask the public to make text donations of small amounts have become a regular sight.

In fact, it's not unusual for text-to-donate ads from several charities to be displayed side-by-side in a single vehicle on commuter routes.

According to the research firm ThinkTank in the UK, text-to-donate campaigns raised £32.7m in 2011, and are projected to raise £150m in 2015.

Pledge (\$5 or more) to help young girls who get pregnant finish high school at **Massey Centre.**



Where 1 donation helps 2 lives.

You can make a donation online by [clicking on the link: https://www.canadahelps.org/dn/18722](https://www.canadahelps.org/dn/18722)

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Here's why: These small amounts are perfect for reaching out to first time donors and younger donors to make an online or text donation.

Small amounts open up the possibility of a two-way conversation with new donors because the value is not just the monetary worth of the initial gift, but the indication that the supporter is interested in the cause.

Adrian Sargeant, Professor of Fundraising at Plymouth University, says conversion rates can be as high as 20%. He points out that this is significant when a monthly donor can be worth up to £700 over the lifetime of their relationship with a charity. "For many charities, this amount isn't small," he says. "It is pretty significant, and we shouldn't be surprised by that because by sending in a small text donation you're in effect raising your hand and saying 'yes, I'm genuinely interested in the work that you're doing.'"

Small text donations generally attract younger donors who may have never given to a charity before. When they find that the cause has touched them emotionally, because the amount is manageable, they donate giving them instant gratification for having done something to help.

Remember, Mobile Giving is not a strategy but a way of using technology that the younger generation is familiar with and uses constantly.

Here's a case study of a NSPCC text-to-donate Campaign in the UK.



The children's charity NSPCC ran a campaign last Christmas that combined text-to-donate posters on the London Underground trains with TV ads. The charity asked for just £4 from text donors

The campaign ran for six weeks and resulted in 24,000 text messages, raising more than £96,000 in one-off donations and an estimated £80,000 in regular donations over the year. This surpassed the charity's targets of 19,000 texts, £76,000 in one-off donations and £56,000 in regular gifts.

Here's how to make an effective Fundraising appeal.

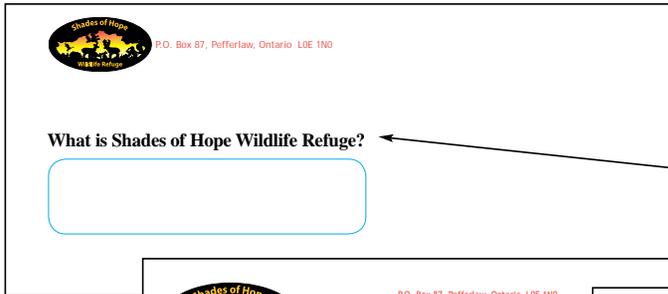
Each year before I give my student's a real assignment to work on behalf of a charity, the first question I am asked is, "***What makes an effective appeal?***"

Here's the answer I give them: **An effective fundraising appeal must have three important attributes:**

1. It must sound like a conversation or plea from one person to the other.
2. It must appeal on an emotional level to the recipient—this can be in the form of a story that touches the heart of the recipient.
3. It must be persuasive enough to get the recipient to act.

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However, since the best way to demonstrate what I mean is by examining a real fundraising appeal, here's my recent piece for a great new charity, *Shades of Hope*.



THE OUTER ENVELOPE: Since the saying, "if your direct mail piece never gets opened, your message never gets read" is true, here's how I did it.

I asked the very question that would pop up in the recipient's mind: What is Shades of Hope Wildlife Refuge? It was enough to tantalize them to look inside.

THE LETTER:

The first sentence answered the above question with an equally intriguing answer: Shades of Hope Wildlife Refuge - is my Heart. Just enough to get them to read on.

The image of Cracker next to her story were important because visuals are 8 times easier to understand and remember than words.

THE DONATION FORM Was easy to fill with clear payment options.

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

What is Shades of Hope Wildlife Refuge?

Dear Ms. Sample,

Shades of Hope Wildlife Refuge—is my Heart

Everyone that has cared for a pet will know how special that experience can be. For all of us who were born in the country, caring for nature and its wild inhabitants is an additional that we learn at an early age.

I was taught that every life is precious. This belief helped form a dream that one day I be able to provide hope for the wildlife that I cared so much about and that appeared to be in need of rescue and support.

Today, Shades of Hope (SOH) is a safe haven—a clinic and a rehabilitation center native orphaned and injured wildlife.

Our volunteers and co-workers are—its Arms

Here at SOH we work together with great efforts to heal, nurture, rehabilitate and then all wildlife in our care. Many of our charges are brought to us by adults or children clutching precious cargo of injured birds or animals that have suffered from some sort of human interference who simply plead, "Make it better please!"



Crackers licking her wounds

I remember clearly the day when Crackers was delivered to us. This beautiful fawn was born in the well-fenced back yard of a local farmer who had large dogs. When the dogs ran to the scene the mother deer jumped the fence but baby could not. The dogs attacked the fawn, severely tearing the flesh of her hindquarters. Hearing the commotion, the owner came to the rescue and called the dogs; he rushed the injured fawn to the local vet who then stitched her and called us.

Little Crackers came to Shades of Hope to recover from her trauma. She was placed in the nursery and was with us for six months. She and Cheese, another fawn raised here were then released back into the wild.

I remember writing on our Facebook page that day: Healthy, Happy & Back in the Wild! We will leave a corner open in their pen and in our hearts, just in case they need a little food until they find their own way! And someone promptly responded: *Godspeed little ones.*

Another story that touched our hearts is about a mother skunk scavenging for scraps of food last July when someone grabbed her and stuffed her into a garbage bag, breaking her leg, and leaving her on the curb!

Yes! I want to help Shades of Hope Wildlife Refuge

Here is my tax-deductible donation to help care for injured and orphaned wildlife and these beautiful creatures back into their natural habitats.

Single gift: \$XXX \$XXX \$XXX \$ _____

Monthly gift: \$10 \$20 \$40 \$ _____ other _____

Code number goes here

By Credit Card (To pay by credit card, please go to: www.shadesofhope.ca to make a donation via Facebook)

Please return this slip with your donation in the return envelope provided. A tax receipt will be issued for all donations.

Thank you! Charitable Registration No. 898000000

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leaving her on the curb! The panicked creature suffered for hours in extreme heat in a garbage bag, with a broken leg.

She eventually managed to find her way out of the bag and the garbage removal people called the OSPCA. A coordinated effort was made between the SPCA and Local Animal Control to get this dying animal to Shades of Hope.

With heroic efforts our rescuers, staff and volunteers worked tirelessly for hours to reduce her body heat, avoid stroke, rehydrate and reduce her pain. Then it was up to her.

A week later mother skunk, still swollen with milk, had healed enough to receive her vaccinations. And though her leg would always be twisted, she was well on her way to returning home. After caring for her for six weeks, we were all thrilled to see this little fighter returned to the conservation area, which was probably her original home. She had endured much and had lost her babies, but she now had another chance to thrive.

Made me wonder: Who was the real animal—the poor skunk or the brute who stuffed her into a garbage bag?

You—are its Soul

We receive no outside funding... no municipal, federal or provincial help. We count solely on the generosity of people like you who believe that every animal has a right to live.

If it wasn't for the kindness of animal lovers like you, I have often wondered what would happen to the hundreds of animals we help. Last year we cared for over 800 birds and mammals. Our expectation for 2014 is double that number.

Please be a guardian angel by helping us continue our work and donate whatever amount you can afford right now.

Providing medical care and protection to wildlife is extremely resource intensive and each year raising the funds needed to help those that suffer from injury, disease, loss of habitat or abandonment is a daunting challenge.

Be the voice for those who cannot speak for themselves. Many of the birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians we help are not only common local wildlife, but some are also rare or endangered species that rely on us for their ultimate survival. Ensuring the protection of wildlife is a shared responsibility. We cannot do it alone.

With sincere gratitude,

Shades of Hope
Gail RM Lenters

P.S. You can watch the progress and the stories of many of the animals in our care on our Facebook page.

Some of the wildlife we have rescued and released back into their natural habitats



It clearly told donors what to do, how and when.

The P.S. directed the prospects to the charity's Facebook Page, because it gives all kinds of information that I couldn't fit in 2 pages.

If you too care about animals, then here's a link to their Indigo Crowdfunding page:

<https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/oxygen-for-orphaned-and-injured-wildlife-save-a-life>

This campaign expires on June 7, 2014

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

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

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