

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. What will be the new normal for Charities in 2021?

2. Looking to test your next direct mail? Here is a grab bag for you to steal from.

3. Appeal of the month: Reverse Selfie by Dove.

What will be the new normal for Charities in 2021?

Here we are, more than 14 months later, still impacted by the global pandemic. And in spite of the numerous challenges, a thin sliver of a silver lining did emerge in 2020.

The bad news

Many charitable organizations were forced to close their doors, and staff had to leverage the resources and tools they had available. Gone were lucrative resources like live galas, charity runs, silent auctions, and even one-to-one meeting with donors.

Revenues were down for 55% of charities, according to a report by Imagine Canada, COVID-19

Sector Monitor Report, May 2020.

The good news

Donors to some non-profits responded in remarkable ways:

- 1.1 million Canadians donated more than \$480 million online through CanadaHelps alone.
- Young people donated more to social justice causes.
- A large percentage of the donations were due to the remarkable online giving spike, as reported by Blackbaud Institute's "2020 Charitable Giving Report". 13% of all contributions were online last year.

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A word of caution though, this uptick in online giving did not mean that donors only gave via social media channels. Direct mail did play its fair share with fewer donors sending in cheques but more donating online.

What I can tell you is that the direct mail appeal has been making a bit of a comeback, though for some like me, it never stopped.

Although the printed fundraising appeal may have made its debut in 1235 when a Buddhist sage was looking for funds to build a monastery, in recent years it has now been supplanted by eAppeals, social media appeals and numerous other lower cost options that support event fundraising.



Eihei Dogen
mystic and
teacher,
1200-1253 at
the San
Francisco
Zen Center

Another piece of bad news

Many organizations did not successfully retain their new donors

gained over the previous years because many switched to social media fundraising and eAppeals. And many older loyal donors who did not have email addresses were lost or never targeted.

The challenge moving forward is not only whom you reach but how you reach them, how you impart to them and how you drive response, because this can no longer be left to chance. Non-profits need to start from the beginning. They must reset, re-evaluate and remerge to develop a broader more diverse pool of strategies to stay relevant and afloat.

Do not abandon direct mail if you want to boost retention and donor value, because when it comes to donor-centricity/obsession/love/devotion/passion no other medium does this better than direct mail, which is still surviving and still thriving. Also, like most charities your organization is still supported to a large extent by older donors who still prefer direct mail. Do not lose them just because the new way is eAppeals.

Also, do not consider social media and printed marketing as an either/or choice but rather as complementary media to work together as part of a marketing mix and an overarching strategy. Their combined power is more than the sum of its individual parts.

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Learn from the past

Many years ago experienced direct marketer **Denny Hatch** took a look at two superlative letters and explained the most powerful driving emotion they shared.

The first was from the **Wall Street Journal**, the “**Two Young Men**” letter written by **Martin Conroy**. It was an unbeatable control for The Wall Street Journal and they mailed it steadily for roughly 30 years.

It was a simple two-page letter with 775 words. Over those 30 years, it generated roughly \$2 billion in circulation revenue for the Journal.

That’s \$25.8 million a word!

And the second was a humongous **Mayo Clinic envelope** so large that it had to be folded in half to fit in an average letterbox.

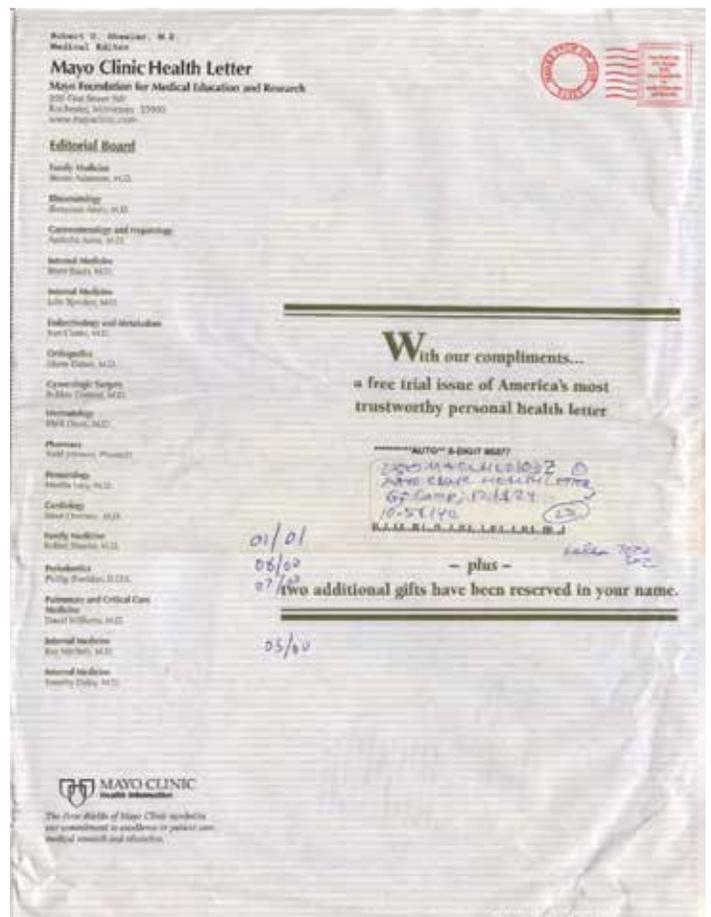
Denny Hatch’s article is still available on SOFII. It is worth reviewing no matter how you fundraise. Just type in: **Direct marketing copy and the amazing power of fear**. Here is the link to the website:

<https://sofii.org/>

In closing, let me say that non-profit organizations must acclimate quickly and prepare for this new reality, whenever their doors reopen.



The Wall Street Journal Envelope



The Mayo Clinic Package

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Looking to test your next direct mail?

Here is a grab bag for you to steal from.

Please feel free to adapt, steal, reproduce, or share these simple swipeables. They are field-tested and worked for me, so they may improve your results too.

As Denny Hatch explained, in the article above, there was a similarity between the **Wall Street Journal** package and the **Mayo Clinic** package.

To succeed it is easier to build on what has worked before rather than try to invent a new mousetrap and hope it works. You just have to be smart enough not to copy it blatantly.

1. Don't ignore your outer envelope.

Put the same thought into your envelope as you do into your letter. What will it say, and what will it look like?

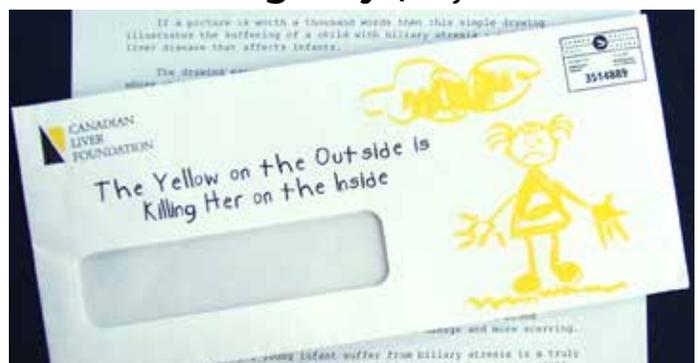
Here are six examples and reasons

why they worked for me:

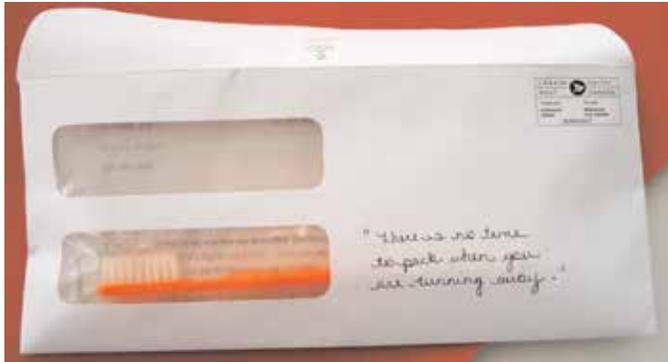
1. I asked a question, like this intriguing one for Integra, "What's the biggest thing you can fit in an envelope?"



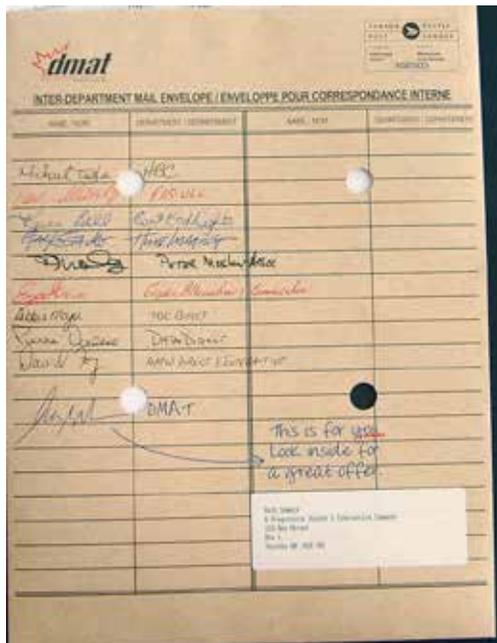
2. The Canadian Liver Foundation package is a classic example of grabbing attention. The envelope had a child's drawing of herself in yellow with the headline: "The Yellow on the Outside is Killing Her on the Inside." It got the reader's attention beating the client's target by \$41,500.



3. I added a toothbrush to this Interval House piece, which could be seen through the outer envelope window. This was enough to get the envelope opened and it beat the previous control package by 33%.



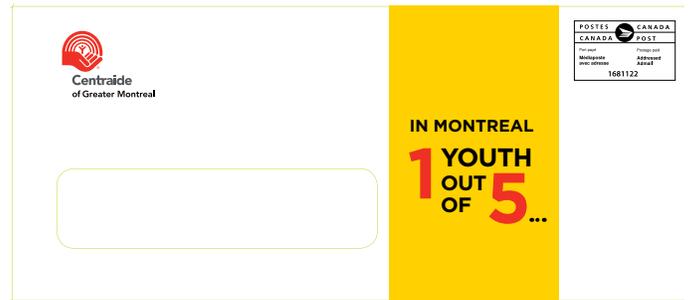
4. An inter-departmental business envelope was sent to prospects of the Direct Marketing Association, inviting them to join. Sometimes you just have to think out of the box.



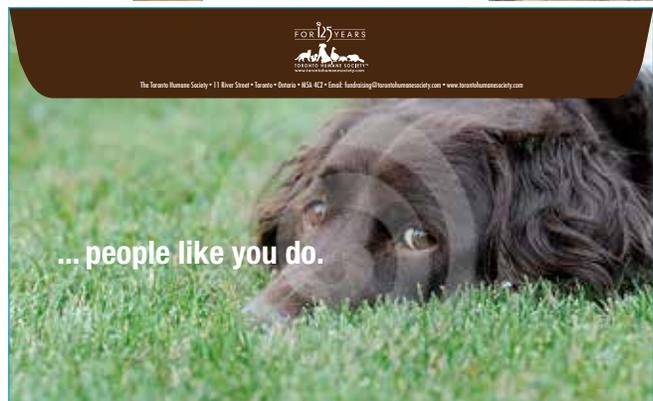
5. This blank envelope for Easter Seals, with just the recipient's handwritten name and address, was guaranteed to be opened.



6. Half a message, on this envelope for United Way Montreal, helped force readers to open it to find out more.



7. I used both sides of the envelope for the SPCA to get an important message across.



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2. The letter: Get them from the start.

Don't talk about your charity, talk about why your donors are important. Donors give because they want to share in your accomplishments, not because of the size or status of your organization.

Here are four examples:

1. Remember short lead sentences work wonders like this one for The Good Neighbours' Club, a charity for homeless men, now called Haven Toronto.

<p>Here is a most unusual <i>Greeting Card</i>.</p> <p>But please don't keep it!</p> <p>Instead, we are asking you to sign your name on it and send it back to us by December 16, in the enclosed reply envelope.</p> <p>We will give it to one of our homeless members here at The Good Neighbours' Club. These men, who are all over fifty years of age and living on the streets of Toronto, often have no contact with their family or friends from their earlier lives.</p> <p><u>A message from you will show them that they are not alone and that there</u></p>	<p><i>Your gift of \$10 will provide two hot meals and a warm snack.</i></p> <p><i>Your gift of \$30 will provide a cozy winter hat, scarf and gloves.</i></p>
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2. Here's the start of a letter for the Leukemia Research Fund of Canada, that exudes donor centricity.

<p>Dear Ms Sample,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">This letter is not about us. It is about you</p> <p>In the past we have sent you letters that told of the strength and courage of people who face the devastating effects of leukemia.</p> <p>Many of them were children who had to endure this disease themselves but their suffering also took a heavy toll on their parents. Most have been fortunate because they gallantly fought back and managed to survive.</p> <p>Twenty years ago leukemia was considered a death sentence. Today, 70% of affected children are being cured and more than 50% of affected adults reach disease remission lasting up to five years and sometimes more.</p> <p>The real hero behind their successes is you. Without your generosity in the</p>
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3. Here is a letter for Easter Seals Ontario with a short catchy opening.

Dear Mr Sample,

I believe in angels.

They have looked after my son Nicholas for sixteen years.

My son was born with cerebral palsy and endures agonizing spastic pains due to joint dislocations because his bones keep growing faster than his muscles. His frail body has had a hip replacement and from time to time, because his pain is so unbearable, he has to have a tube inserted to dispense nerve blocks to reduce his pain.

Nicholas has done a lot of his growing up in hospitals. He has been hospitalized over 50 times, and last year he missed his entire spring term at school.

4. Here is the start of a letter, for Easter Seals Ontario, that is donor centric.

**Something wonderful happens
when you join an Easter Seals Parade**

Dear Friend,

You assist children like Rhiannon, who has **spina bifida, cope with her paralysis by giving her a wheelchair that lets her play with her friends rather than just silently watch them from her window.**

You improve the lives of kids like Nicholas, diagnosed with **muscular dystrophy, who couldn't speak, by helping him get a voice equipment system so that he can be heard.**

You give children like Noel, afflicted with **cerebral palsy a chance to be mobile and lead a fuller life.**

You help teenagers like Liana Duff, who fell off a horse and become a **paraplegic, a chance to work and dedicate her life to helping other children with**

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4. Giving to a charity is an emotional process. It has much more to do with the heart than the brain.

Your letter should stir your donors to act, to produce tears of sadness or outrage or anger. So, stories are gold; tell a story that paints a picture of what is happening and how the reader can help.

Here are three examples:

1. This Easter Seal Society letter tells a story about Nicholas.



This spring help a child's voice be heard...



Dear Friend,

Soon it will be spring, a time of year when all children eagerly look forward to running carefree in the outdoors again, full of rejuvenated energy and hope. Yes! Spring is freedom.

Yet for many children with physical disabilities, freedom is the one thing they cannot enjoy without the assistance of necessary equipment. Simple everyday tasks that we all take for granted, like just opening this envelope or holding up this letter, can be enormous challenges for these children.



Take for example Nicholas. (I like to call him "Nicholas the Lion Hearted"). He was born with cerebral palsy. He not only has had to endure excruciating spastic pains and joint dislocations because his bones were growing faster than his muscles, but he also had a hip replacement and a tube inserted to dispense medication to relax his muscles and reduce the pain.

He suffered in silence because he did not have the ability to speak or to express where or how much it hurt. Only his mother could sense his agony.

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2. This is a letter for Special Olympics Ontario.

THE DOUGLAS BOURGEAULT STORY

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

00/X
XX1234

Dear Jane Sample

When Douglas Bourgeault was born he was not expected to live. The very forceps that were trying to save him at childbirth crushed his head.

He survived because he is headstrong and determined. A trait that has helped him in everything he does, including participating in Special Olympics events since 1985.

So, qualifying in Thunder Bay for the National Games in Edmonton came as no surprise at all.

 WWW.STALBERT2012.COM

What was a surprise was that he had never skated on long blade skates before. He had to get used to the long blade skates when the speed skating rules were changed as he had only skated with hockey skates before.

When his coach Angela asked if he could learn to skate with long blades, his answer was "no problem". He came home as a winner of silver medals in all three races: the 110-meter, the 222-meter and the 333-meter speed skating events.

Doug has encountered many set backs because of his intellectual disability.

4. This Canadian Liver Foundation's letter tells the story of a girl with a liver disease

 **CANADIAN LIVER FOUNDATION**
2235 Sheppard Ave. E. • Suite 1500 • Toronto, Ontario M2J 5B5

Mr. Joe Sample
123 Anywhere St.
Regina, SK S4N 2C3

J878
K084761

August 26, 2002

Dear Mr. Sample,

Lisa wants you to save her drawing on the envelope.

She hopes you'll hang it on your fridge as a very important reminder of her urgent, compelling need.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then this simple drawing



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4. Unlike any other media—print, television, social media or emails—direct mail is tactile.

It has been scientifically proven that the brain retains more information when you can touch and feel an object, so don't forget that power and use it to your advantage.

It is also the only three-dimensional medium where you can include things in it to tell your story, which is a big plus.

Here are four examples:

1. I've mailed a bandage to talk about women abuse.



2. A package of sugar to make a point about the cause of obesity in our children.

CONTINUES ...

3. And a piece of cardboard to dramatize the plight of the homeless. All with great results.

Acquisition Mailing for UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

This package had 3 elements: The outer envelope; a letter and a cardboard insert.

Result: This direct mail package was mailed to 50,000 prospects from various rented lists. It generated \$61,500 from 726 new donors.

It became the control package, in Canada and in the U.S. for years.

This piece of cardboard acted as the main driving element around which the entire refugee story evolved.

Outside. *Inside.*

Refugees deserve a better shelter than this.

Hold this cardboard over your head and imagine that it is the roof of your home. This will give you a glimpse of what it is like to be a refugee.

Cardboard boxes, plastic sheeting, eggs and tin are often the only materials refugees have to build a shelter for themselves and their families.

Having lost all their material possessions, many refugees also suffer the loss of parents, partners or children. Refugees are people just like you and me, who have been forced to flee their homes because of war or persecution. They are not a threat. They are people who are threatened, and they need our help and protection. Refugees rely on the generosity of others for their basic needs: shelter, food, water, sanitation and medical care.

Physical shelter is arguably the most pressing need of refugees. From the forests of Central Africa to the mountain ranges of Afghanistan, these people need protection from the elements. UNHCR strives to put a roof over every refugee's head.

Though sometimes this is only a temporary measure, it can make all the difference. Where possible, we also provide refugees and returnees with construction materials to build a family shelter or to rebuild a destroyed home. To them shelter is more than just a pile of bricks: it means security and the chance to bring back some normality in family life.

This winter nearly 10 million refugees and other internally displaced people will turn to UNHCR for shelter from the cold and snow. Our ability to meet these needs will rely in large part on the contributions from private individuals like you.

Please help us provide refugees with a better shelter than this. Your action today will help them rebuild their homes, their communities and their lives.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
1775 K Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20006
www.unhcr.org

USA FOR UNHCR
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
1775 K Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20006
www.unhcr.org

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
1775 K Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20006
Toll-free number: 1-800-770-1100
E-mail: info@usaforunhcr.org
Website: www.unhcr.org

August 2004

\$28
One mattress, food, and shelter: \$28 providing one refugee family with cooking supplies, food, and a canvas tarpaulin for shelter.

\$41
One bathroom kit to provide a returning Afghan refugee family with the necessary materials to rebuild their home - wood beams, tin roofline, a stove, hinges, pipes, nails, and tools.

\$54
One shelter's tent to a refugee camp to provide necessary medical attention and care to refugees.

\$150
Delivery of one truckload of emergency supplies to refugees by a local driver traveling treacherous roads.

continued over...

So remember that direct mail is interactive; in fact it is the original interactive medium.

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Appeal of the month: Reverse Selfie by Dove.



Before digital, glossy photo shopped ads in women's magazines were condemned for their part in generating a dangerously idealized definition of beauty.

Today, young girls face the same problem. Research shows that, by the age of 13, 80% of girls distort the way they look online. Beauty brand Dove is once more on a mission to tackle the issue of real beauty standards in a digital era. It is using its platform to highlight the widespread damage caused by the trend of heavily edited selfies.

Created by Ogilvy, "Reverse Selfie" features a young girl locked into the artificial world of social media. We are introduced to her in the form of her highly edited photograph, that she has posted with the caption "my new look".

As the name suggests, the campaign is a story told in reverse, revealing which digital effects were used to create the image.

Here's the link to the video:
<https://youtu.be/z2T-Rh838GA>

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