



DIRECT FORUM

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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. The Value of a **Strong Concept** in your appeals.

2. Why Time Magazine's recent article, **How To Live Long**, warmed the cockles of my heart.

3. What's new **on the horizon?**

The Value of a **Strong Concept** in your appeals.

I recently had the privilege of interviewing Debbie Drewett, Director of Development at Geneva Centre for Autism, for my column *Direct & Personal* for Direct Marketing News. One of the things she said was, "I spend much more time now on the key response drivers such as the 'list' and 'offer' and much less time fussing over creative."

This got me thinking as to the true value of what I bring to the table as a creative person.

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There is no question that data needs to be precise. Every book on the subject of direct marketing makes that claim. But even the best data only allows you to isolate your best prospects. You still need top notch creative to induce a response. If isolating best prospects doesn't produce a positive ROI, what good is that data?

So, in my book, data has to be combined with creativity to sell or produce a lead in order to be successful.

Debbie also went on to tell me about a piece she created by two very talented individuals at Easter Seals when she worked there. They were Barry Baker, a retired priest with a passion for direct mail fundraising and telethons and Steve Thomas, the head of Easter Seals' agency at that time. The two were the masterminds behind the iconic children's artwork for the Easter Seal package.

Steve Thomas describes this iconic Easter Seals package (shown above) in his book: *30 Letters That Changed the World*.

He wrote: "This package was our most famous."

The package was a fantastic success garnering a 2.2 per-cent response across the province. The previous high had



been 1.7 percent. We entered it in the Canadian Direct Marketing Association RSVP awards for November 1990 and were thrilled to win the Vic Perry Award, presented to the Canadian direct marketing campaign considered to be the best of the year. A high-end version of the package was entered the following year and won Fund Raising Gold."

To my mind the iconic Easter Seals package was a huge success largely due to its creativity.

The other thing to remember is that today's media landscape keeps getting more diverse—broadcast, cable and streaming, online, tablet and smartphone, video, rich media, social media, branded content, banners, apps, in-app advertising and interactive technology.

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And now it even includes physical interactive gear like Nike+ Fuelband.



And Google Glass, the wearable computer with an optical head-mounted display (OHMD).



And soon there will be heated competition for smart watches



These new digital technologies have changed the way we need to market now and in the future.

So it's back to it being all about content. Yes, content is still king!

No matter what the medium is or how precisely you target the right audience, it is equally important to create and promote compelling content. And that means starting with a strong concept.

Let's focus on creating the great ideas that will move people and build great brands. Let's leverage the new tools, platforms and technology to make them bigger and have them engage with more people than ever before.

Here are a few things to consider when coming up with a concept in your next endeavor:

1. Who is your audience?
2. What is your message to that audience?
3. When do you intend to post/publish/submit?
4. Where should the message be delivered (selected media)?
5. What is the key point that needs to be delivered?
6. How best to express your message? (This could be copy, art or even a tactile object that helps you get your idea across.)

Case in point: The Alzheimer's eraser/usb.

To raise awareness of Alzheimer's disease's early warning signs, such as

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memory loss, and to remind everyday New Zealanders of the importance of Alzheimers New Zealand, an eraser/usb was distributed in numerous ways to act as a constant reminder of the disease, as well as help New Zealanders realize how important memories are and how difficult life can be for those living with this disease.

Working erasers were hollowed out and fitted with USB memory sticks. The message displayed on the top reads:

“ALZHEIMER’S ERASERS, YOUR MEMORIES. SAVE THEM.” On the reverse side was the Alzheimers New Zealand logo and website address, the place recipients could turn to for more information and support of alzheimers.co.nz.

Alzheimers New Zealand distributed these eraser/usbs among the public, sent them to various local organizations, as well as distributed them to local politicians, with a letter, in an attempt to raise awareness of the charity. It was a huge success.



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Why Time Magazine's recent article, **How To Live Long**, warmed the cockles of my heart.

Those who know me also know that I have been in our business for a very long time working in advertising agencies, in my own private design firm and with charities as a copywriter, art director, creative director, teacher and consultant, mainly in the creative sphere.

So, I was heartened to read the article, **How To Live Long**, in Time Magazine

Here's the first part of the article:

One of the greatest buildings in New York City was created by a very old man. You won't find it on the skyline—it's far too small for that. You have to get up close, at street level. It's on Fifth Avenue, which for block after block obeys the old New York building rule of big and tall and flat—until all at once, at 88th Street, it doesn't. There stands the stout, round drinking cup that is the Guggenheim Museum, with its natural light and spiraling floor and snow white exterior, parting the neat scrim of the streetscape and filling it with a bit of stylish defiance. The human genius behind that structural genius was Frank Lloyd Wright, who started designing the building in 1943, when he was 76, kept at it until ground was broken in 1956 and lived until 1959—just shy of both his 92nd birthday and the museum's official opening.

"If you walk into any of Wright's buildings, you see he didn't think like us," says neuropsychologist Donald Davidoff of Harvard Medical School. "His rooms can have seven different heights to them depending on where you're standing. He thought in three dimensions, which is something we can appreciate when we see it but can't do ourselves."

Wright may have been unique in the style and quality and iconoclasm of his work, but he was not unique in how old he was when he did it—and that's true in a lot of fields.

You can keep your boy geniuses in Silicon Valley, your young guns tearing up the fashion world, your celebrated wunderkinder in music and art and finance and government. Spare a moment—spare more than a moment—for the superannuated creators: Goya, who produced some of his most haunting paintings when he was in his late 70s; Goethe, who finished writing his masterpiece, Faust, when he was 81; Galileo, who published his last paper when he was 74, just a few years before his death—at a time when average human life expectancy was 35.

And it's not just the long-ago names: props to Maggie Smith, still starring in movies and TV series at age 78; to Warren Buffett, the 83-year-old financial genius who's not called the Oracle of Omaha because he loses money; to Picasso, who died at 91 and had paint under his nails till the very end; to Herman Wouk, 98, who published his 18th and most recent novel just last year; to comedian George Burns, who died in 1996 at age 100 and celebrated his 95th birthday by signing a two-year contract to perform in Las Vegas.

Still, there's something very real about the way creativity endures in the face of age—and maybe even pushes back age."

Yes, the great thing about age is all the knowledge you have accumulated and how and when to best use it. As David Ogilvy said: *"The difference between a good surgeon and a great surgeon has nothing to do with their hands. A great surgeon simply knows more."*

What's new **on the horizon?**

First there is a new study of note for the non-profit segment: ***The 2013 Next Generation of Canadian Giving*** by **Blackbard** and **hjc**

This study reveals some steady giving behaviour but also a few new surprises. This national study of more than 800 Canadian donors explored the charitable giving and communication preferences of four generations of Canadian donors:

1. **Gen Y: Born 1981-1995**

(age 18-32 as of 2013)

- They represent 15% of total giving—3.4 million donors in Canada—62% give an average annual gift of \$639
- On average they support 4 charities

2. **Gen X: Born 1965-1980**

(age 33-48 as of 2013)

- They represent 27% of total giving—4.8 million donors in Canada—79% give an average annual gift of \$831
- On average they support 4.5 charities

3. **Baby Boomers: Born 1946-1964**

(age 49-67 as of 2013)

- They represent 32% of total giving—5 million donors in Canada—78% give an average annual gift of \$942
- On average they support 4.9 charities

4. **Civics: Born 1945 and earlier**

(age 68+ as of 2013)

- They represent 25% of total giving— 2.4 million donors in Canada—87% give an average annual gift of \$1,507
- On average they support 7 charities.

Here are their key findings:

- Most Canadians give. Civics are the most generous generation. Almost 9 in 10 of Civics give and they support a wider variety of causes than younger generations. On average, individual Civic donors also give more money than individual donors in other generations; however, the population is dwindling and their income is holding steady.
- Baby Boomers will exert an outsize influence on charitable giving for the foreseeable future, but Generation X is quickly catching up. Gen X is certainly one to watch in the immediate term.
- Most donors across all age groups do not plan to expand their giving in the coming year.
- Multichannel is the new normal. While all generations are multichannel in their communications habits, the ideal mix varies from generation to generation.
- Direct mail is far from dead, but it perhaps won't last forever. Generations Y and X are far more likely to give online. And as many Baby Boomers say they give online as well as via direct mail.

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Here are some surprises:

- Gen X is better off in Canada than in US, UK.
- Text giving is down, but smart phone giving is up.
- Facebook has shown little fundraising impact.
- Gen X is and should be the next target audience for charities.

Giving across the generations:

- Generation Y donors have distinct priorities and preferences with regard to causes they support. Notably, they are far more likely to demand accountability and transparency than older donors.
- The value of some channels (e.g. social media) is undervalued if measured by transaction metrics, as opposed to by engagement.
- Among transaction channels, the future looks cloudy for telemarketing and giving by SMS/text, but face-to-face and street funding is still surprisingly strong.
- Peer-to-peer fundraising and crowdfunding appear to have promising futures as fundraising strategies for younger generations.
- Nearly half of those who give engage with causes in ways other than making donations.

Then there is a new product of note for environmentally conscious charities:

The Beta Inkless Pen

The Beta Inkless pen (made in Germany) is a Bauhaus design to the max: form and function!

The Beta Inkless Pen is the most eco-green writing instrument, designed to stop the cutting of trees. It comes in silver, black or cherry wood finish and it won't smudge or erase. Its design is the revival of an age-old artistic technique of writing in metal! The tiny metal tip is made of lead (so do not put it in your mouth). The pen is available in anodized aluminum, which is cool to the touch. Those who prefer a warm and an airy feel can select the cherry wood finish, but of course, it's not real wood.

The pens can write on most paper surfaces, at any temperature or in any weather condition and will never need to be sharpened. There is no ink, so it will never dry up, leak or smear.



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