

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 Wonderful World of Fundraising**
2. **The Behavioral Science of Giving**

3. **My pick of the month: Sandy Hook Promise: Back-To-School Essentials**

The Wonderful World of Fundraising

Deciding to give money to a charity is an emotional process; it has more to do with the heart than the brain.

When it comes time to ask your supporters for money, of course you have facts that support the need. But do you have that emotional hook?

An emotional hook is a *lot* harder to find than a list of facts. You can't measure the tear-jerking percentage of a word-picture. You can't quantify the outrage factor of a video. You can plan emotional moments, but you can't know for sure if you got the right one, until it works.

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Here's how some charities around the world got it right:

1. Swedish Red Cross

'Put your foreign coins to good use and help someone while having fun.'

Airports are full of people returning from a holiday with foreign currencies in their pocket that they cannot use at home. The Swedish Red Cross made donating while waiting in baggage arrival a fun experience.

They changed the donation boxes at two airports in Sweden into arcades that allowed people to play games with whatever foreign coins they had.

<https://youtu.be/9eIRP68PQvo>



2. Women's Aid - London

'If you can see it, you can change it.'



The idea of this powerful campaign: don't turn a blind eye to domestic violence. It only takes one person to notice the problem to start making a change. The poster raised awareness of domestic violence and the role of Women's Aid and showed people in a really clear way that they can end domestic violence together.

This London campaign demonstrates the power of technology. Using facial recognition technology, it detects when someone is looking at the ad and the bruises begin to heal. The more people that look at the poster, the more the face will return to normal.

It also drives donations as everyone in proximity to the poster will receive a message via WEVE that will encourage them to donate to Women's Aid.

<https://vimeo.com/108381287>

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3. Fashion Revolution – Berlin

‘People care when they know.’

People want fashion for a bargain. But this campaign questions whether people would still buy it if they knew how it was made. A T-shirt booth in a central square in Berlin was selling T-shirts for €2. When shoppers inserted money, images of the women making the cheap clothes appeared on screen showing their poor working conditions and the low pay they receive. The shopper is then asked if they still want to buy the T-shirt or choose to donate the money instead. This is a good example of influencing consumer donation behaviour by tapping in to the shared compassion and humanity we have for one another.



https://youtu.be/KfANs2y_frk

4. Cancer Research – Spain

‘CRIS Cancer classical music concert in Madrid.’

In order to raise funds for three new research projects, CRIS Cancer organized a classical music concert in Madrid. The idea was that the orchestra played the 9th Symphony of Beethoven according to audience response.



Each bar of the score corresponded to a seat in the National Auditorium, therefore any un-sold tickets would mean an unplayed bar and silence in Beethoven’s 9th Symphony score.

This is what happened.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbV2NqPpibw>

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The Behavioral Science of Giving

It is said: **An event should produce laughter or comradeship or unity.**

A charity hopes to give its volunteers and donors planned emotional moments, moments when they feel like thanking the charity for the opportunity it has given them to do something they'd be unable to do without the charity.

But a direct mail appeal should aim to produce tears of sadness or outrage or anger.

Not so fast: first consider your target audience.

Case in point: St. Jude Children's Research Hospital tested two approaches using eight similar ads.



The ads bore the face of either a happy or a sad child and the words:

“Small change, big difference. You can help fight childhood cancer.”



The eight pictures were split evenly between happy-faced and sad-faced kids. Each participant was randomly assigned to see only one ad.

They then measured participants' charitable involvement by asking to what extent they agree or disagree with a number of statements such as “giving to charities means a great deal to me.” After seeing the ad, they were asked about their willingness to support St. Jude.

Results: They found that participants with high levels of charitable involvement were more likely to express an intent to donate in response to happy pictures. People who were less involved with charities were more likely to say they were interested in donating after seeing sad images.

What does this mean?

What should fundraisers learn from these findings? Nonprofits may want to tailor their materials based on their target audience. Specifically, campaigns should

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use sad-faced ads to target people with weaker ties to charities. But for people with stronger connections, happy-faced ads may be a safer bet.

A word of caution about this study: they measured only intentions to give. Although decades of psychological research suggest that intentions are a strong predictor of real behaviour, donors don't always follow through.

This study was based on research findings of: The Effects of the Facial Expression of Beneficiaries in Charity Appeals and Psychological Involvement on Donation Intentions.

Research source: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/nml.21261>

Focusing on the size of the problem has been shown to be ineffective for at least two reasons.

First, most people prefer to give to causes where they can save the greatest proportion of people.

This means that rather than save 100 out of 1,000 victims of malaria, the majority of people would rather use the same or even more resources to save all five out

of five people stranded on a boat or one girl starving with the same amount of resources, even if saving 100 people is clearly the more rational choice.

People are reluctant to help where they feel their impact is not going to be significant, often called the drop in the bucket effect.

Second, humans tend to neglect the scope of the problem when dealing with social issues. This is called scope insensitivity: people do not scale up their efforts in proportion to a problem's true size.

For example, a donor willing to give \$100 to help one person might only be willing to give \$200 to help 100 people, instead of the proportional amount of \$10,000.

Charities often have to deal with these problems. In such cases one solution is to break these big problems into smaller pieces (e.g., individuals, families or villages) and present situations on a scale that the donor can relate to and realistically address through their donation.

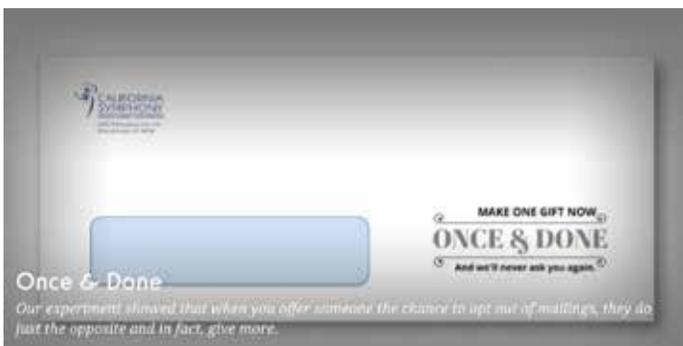
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Finally, what to do with lapsed or occasional donors?

Here is an interesting case study: A few years ago California Symphony realized the bottom of their donor pyramid consisted of thousands of cold patrons—people who hadn’t donated or attended an event in over three years. These inactive accounts made up 89% of their database and they weren’t having much luck getting them to return.

If you’ve ever worked in nonprofit fundraising, this problem will sound very familiar.

To solve this problem, they tried a strategy that seemed at first like it might be a terrible idea. They sent their cold list a special mailing that included the option to “never hear from us again”.



They even advertised that opt-out option on the outside of the envelope. The risky strategy was based on research* from University of Chicago economists.



They figured, worst case scenario, they’d get a lot of opt-outs with no donation—but those people were already so far gone that losing them wasn’t much of a risk.

Best case scenario, the special envelope might catch the eye of a few people on the cold list who usually throw their mailings in the trash.

Result: “The Once & Done group made 17 times more gifts compared to the year prior, and generated nearly 15 times more revenue.” On top of that, they’ve seen an increased number of these cold accounts buy tickets after the end of the campaign.

*Research source: http://spihub.org/site/resource_files/publications/spi_wp_025_list.pdf

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My pick of the month: Sandy Hook Promise: Back-To-School Essentials



I don't think I need to explain this.

Just watch: <https://youtu.be/b5ykNZI9mTQ>

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