



DIRECT FORUM

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Direct Forum is a free e-mail 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. **Ten sure-fire ways of creating an intriguing appeal**
2. **JUST IN TIME! Writing your holiday appeal**
3. **The Value of Direct Mail**

Ten sure-fire ways of creating an intriguing appeal

No matter what form of communication you wish to send out—an ad, billboard, email, ambient or direct mail piece—one of the hardest things is engaging your audience.

One of the best communicators in the direct marketing business was John Caples. He not only created but also tested each appeal to see which one was most effective. He then put together a list of what works best in his book, *Tested Advertising Methods*.

Similarly I have compiled my own list from many of my own appeals and have included examples of other successful work from around the globe.

Here are my ten sure-fire ways of creating an intriguing appeal:

1. Ask a question.

By far this is one of the most captivating ways to engage the reader. Here's the start of a letter for an organization that helps abused women:

Do you live in fear? The fear of being hurt again. The fear you harbour for your child's safety. The fear of not knowing where to turn when you

Continued overleaf ...

need help. Hundreds, maybe even thousands of women in the Greater Toronto Area live with this fear everyday. They are afraid for their lives and they don't know where to turn for help.

2. Ask the reader to do something

According to **Ipsos Reid** 68% of Canadians enjoy getting involved with quizzes and challenges. That's because these methods are not only engaging but also because people like to test themselves.

Here's one alongside that worked very well

3. Tell a story.

Story telling has always been a great way to engage your readers. A good story works every time.

The example in the middle for **Special Olympics Ontario** worked exceedingly well for them.

4. Give your headline a twist to help the reader visualize your message.

Capturing your reader's interest is best done when they can visualize the message.


Here's alongside is an Ad for **Integra Foundation**.

5. Demonstrate your benefits

The clearer you can demonstrate your benefits the more persuasive your material.

The billboard (on the next page) from India clearly shows the advantage of seatbelts.

HELP...



REVERSE BLINDNESS

Mrs. Longnamesample
Newport Creative Communications
33 Railroad Avenue
Duxbury, MA 02332-3807

March XX, 2008

Dear Mrs. Longnamesample,

I feel utterly frustrated and helpless. . . just like all the blind people we are trying so desperately to help because. . .

[BLINDNESS IS REVERSABLE](#)

Of the 37 million blind people in the world today, 80% have conditions that are either preventable or could even be cured!

We know we could help improve the lives of these people, but we can't because our hands are tied.


The lack of adequate funding is holding us back.

As a consequence blind men, women and children around the world continue to suffer needlessly.

If this tragedy upsets you like it upsets us, because it is

THE FOUR DISEASES RESPONSIBLE FOR MOST OF THE WORLD'S BLINDNESS ARE:

CHILDHOOD BLINDNESS:
Childhood Blindness is caused by a deficiency of Vitamin A. Most children in the developing world are malnourished do not get an adequate amount of Vitamin A. Just two capsules per year can prevent childhood blindness.




\$8.50

Your donation of just \$8.50 will provide a jar of 250 vitamin A capsules and help 125 children in desperate need of this miracle cure

RIVER BLINDNESS or ONCHOCERCIASIS:
River Blindness is spread by the bite of small black flies that breed in rivers and streams. When the black fly bites its victim, worm larvae are deposited into their human host. Eventually, the worms migrate into the victim's

April 2012



Special Olympics Ontario

THE DOUGLAS BOURGEOULT STORY

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

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.


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.

- He has difficulty with fine motor skills and so could not participate in regular classes and needed special education. He can read French and English and can write a little.
- He has never been able to hold a job but has been of great service running daily errands for his parents and for his older brother, Michael, a retired lawyer now.
- **The only true sadness in his life is that he was teased and bullied by other kids as a child, something that still happens occasionally today.**

However, on the bright side, he is very well known in our community and the people in his hometown of Hearst, Ontario like him and watch out for him.



Doug with his medals



WHEN JOHN HAD IMAGINARY FRIENDS AT AGE FOUR HIS PARENTS THOUGHT IT WAS CUTE.

NOW AT AGE TWELVE, THAT'S ALL HE HAS.

Imagine always being lonely - never being asked over to a friend's place or invited to a party. Worse still what if you wanted to have a party yourself, but no one was willing to come.

For some kids with learning disabilities, life is very lonely. They are shunned, teased and bullied

When you donate to Integra you help children with learning disabilities realize that they are not alone.



6. Offer something unique.

Danny Hatch once said that 'without an offer' it's not direct marketing.

Here's (in the middle) is an invitation from **Majestic Windows**, a window manufacturer to Window installers offering just one glove. Those who responded got the second glove.

The first two line read:

Your company is one of the few dealerships we have selected to receive this very special offer!

Because manufacturing windows and installing them go hand in glove, we are sending you one glove with this letter to extend a hand in partnership.

7. Write with one particular type of reader in your mind.

How well do you know your readers? Are the older? Are they more males to females? What about their beliefs? What are their habits?

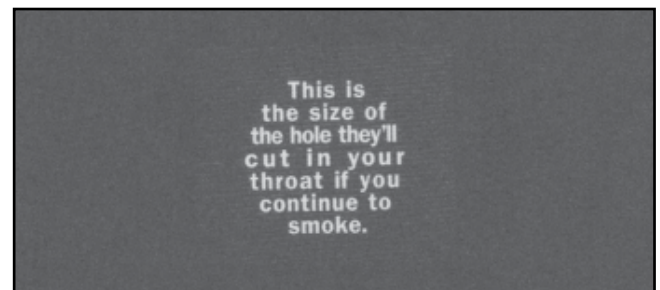
All these are important factors for any writer.

Before I start writing I spend time trying to build an image of my readers in my mind. Who are they? What do they like or dislike? Then I pick one of them and have an imaginary one-to-one conversation with that person.

Here's a great example of an Ad targeting people who still continue to smoke.

8. Add visual impact to your message.

Here's a great way of getting your point across, (bottom ad) using both a writers and an art directors skills.



9. Give a “reasons-why” in your communication.

Helping people understand why something is important is a great way of making sure your message is loud and clear.

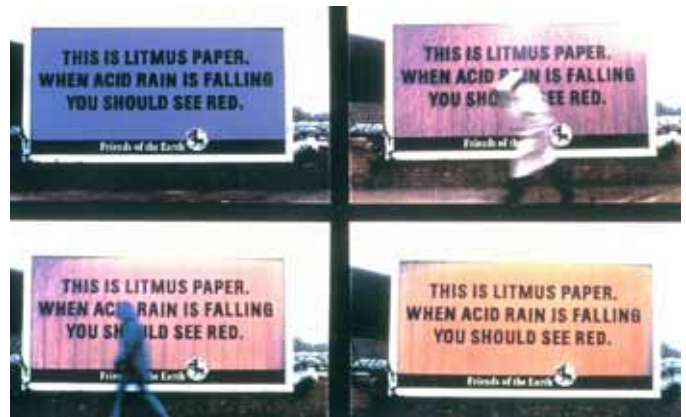
Here’ a simple idea from the **American Red Cross**



10. Help the reader understand why your message is important right now.

Sometimes demonstrating the consequences of ignoring an important issue is a better way to communicate.

Here’s a brilliant billboard from **Friends of the Earth**.



JUST IN TIME! Writing your holiday appeal.

I just gave my class a project on how to write an annual appeal.

Since many of you may be getting down to writing your own annual appeal, set to go out in November or December, I thought I’d give you a few pointers and reminders. I’ll use a hospital cause for my examples.

- First, write to one person. I often picture my brother, **Vikram**. He generous and kind, but since he is a doctor he is busy too. He volunteers as a medical doctor for delinquent children in a complex in Mumbai, India. He doesn’t have a lot of time to plow through difficult words. He wants a quick summery of what an organization is doing and how he can help.
- Next, although he himself has a medical degree, there are others that the appeal will go to that aren’t familiar with terms such as “acute care

Continued overleaf ...

pediatric facility”. Write about how your hospital is helping the sick. Your audience may not know the latest medical lingo, but they do understand that there are sick people in the world who need medical help.

- Now, it might be argued that, this person you are envisioning (in my case my brother) is a busy person, he won't want to read a long letter

That could be a mistake. If I want to get him emotionally involved enough to write a check, he may need a lot of information to make that decision. A good letter is as long as the story that needs to be told.

- Next, write a story of one person who has been helped by the organization, That's easier for one person to picture rather have to imagine hundreds or thousands or millions of people who need help.
- For organizations that don't have a concrete story to tell, such as cultural groups, talk about how the arts can nurture the soul.

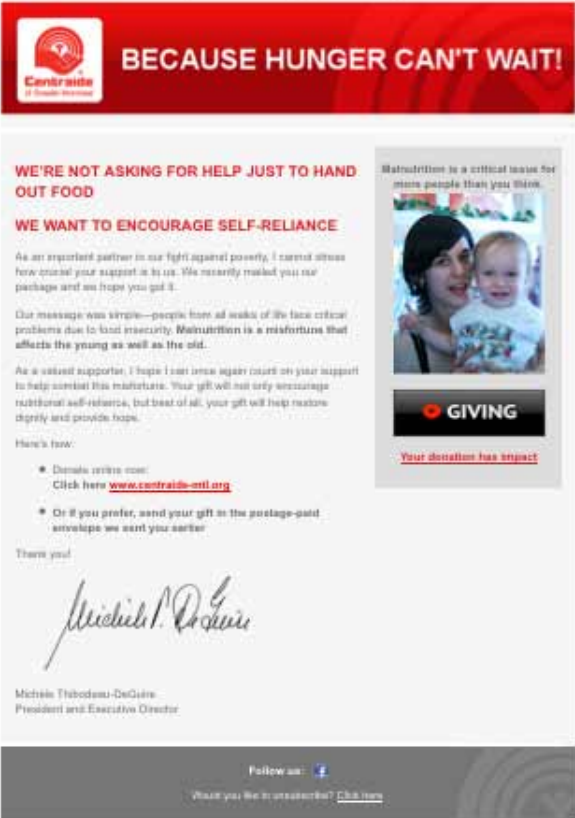
Or how the music can lead to a stronger economy—how every dollar spent on the arts puts \$14 back into the economy.

- In addition to your letter, you should consider a Lift Note. This could include a testimonial from someone who benefited from your organization's work.

Or you could even have pictures showing what you've accomplished. If the letter you write is more emotional, the lift note can be more logical, and vice versa. So if I wrote about a poor child with nothing to eat, the lift note might include a budget of what it costs to provide food to a child for a week.

- Finally don't forget to ask for specific amounts based on their last gift, it is a great way or generating repeat gifts and don't forget to tell the donor what you accomplished with their last gift.

If you cannot read this page, [please click here](#)



BECAUSE HUNGER CAN'T WAIT!

WE'RE NOT ASKING FOR HELP JUST TO HAND OUT FOOD

WE WANT TO ENCOURAGE SELF-RELIANCE

As an important partner in our fight against poverty, I cannot stress how crucial your support is to us. We recently mailed you our package and we hope you got it.

Our message was simple—people from all walks of life face critical problems due to food insecurity. Malnutrition is a malnutrition that affects the young as well as the old.

As a valued supporter, I hope I can once again count on your support to help combat this malnutrition. Your gift will not only encourage nutritional self-reliance, but best of all, your gift will help restore dignity and provide hope.

Here's how:

- Donate online now: Click here www.contraids-mtl.org
- Or if you prefer, send your gift in the postage-paid envelope we sent you earlier

Thank you!

Michèle Théodora-DeCaire

Michèle Théodora-DeCaire
President and Executive Director

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The Value of Direct Mail

Besides creating appeals for my clients I also help design Annual Reports, newsletter and many other items for some of my clients that all help raise money for these charities.

Recently, while designing an Annual Report for one of them I learned that last year they raised 30 million via fundraising.

Since, I do the lion's share of their direct mail, newsletters and online appeals, I wondered how much of it had I helped raise?

Was it 50%, 30% even if it was just 10%, it would be a lot.

According to **Giving USA**, over the past 50 years the four primary sources (and contribution levels) of nonprofit fundraising revenue has been: 75% is giving by individuals; 14% by foundations; 6% by estates; and 5% by corporations and corporate foundations.

A large proportion of giving by individuals is still generated via direct mail.

Sure, direct mail, or "snail mail" may have lost much of its luster over the past few years, but keep in mind **Canada Post** still delivered 140 million pieces of mail last year.

If it seems counter intuitive that direct mail could possibly still be relevant while there has been a mass rush towards digital methods of fundraising, then here's two good reasons not to abandon it 'like the baby in the bath water.'

- 1. One of the upsides of less mail in the box is less competition for the reader's attention. Consider in contrast the volume of spam email that shows up in most people's inbox each day that goes straight to the trash box.**

For a variety of reasons, we are still more inclined to open a piece of physical mail and give it a cursory glance rather than its digital counterpart.

- 2. It is still the bread and butter way for charities and many other sectors to raise funds,**

91%
of people still open their mail
(Sources: BMRB, Ebiquity, TGI of UK)

generate sales, or inform people.

Did I mention that Canada Post still delivered 140 million pieces of mail last year?

Other logical reasons to include direct marketing to your communication mix are:

- **You can target different customers with different messages based upon income, age, profession, location, and buying behaviour**
- **Direct mail offers different packaging options – letter, postcard, brochure, etc.**
- **Results are easy to track with promotional codes.**
- **The ability to personalize addresses.**
- **Unaddressed mail provides an inexpensive way to test market prices, offers, and specific audiences.**
- **Mail provides a physical connection. We are much more likely to retain a mailed coupon or accept an offer rather than to print one out sent online.**

Think about the coupons included in that “new neighbor” package you were thrilled to have when you moved. Or when your grocery stores hands out coupons based on purchase history. It's not random when you receive a coupon or premium from a major retailer either.

All these coupons are targeted and delivered to a customer with a predetermined likelihood of interest (it's called direct marketing) and the sender has a good idea of your interests before sending them to you.

No, I am not suggesting or even advocating dropping multi-media messaging in favor of direct mail but many companies that once moved away from direct marketing are beginning to revisit the process and I for one am happy because I am now busier than ever.

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email address and your thoughts.

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or e-mail address will never be shared, sold,
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