

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 power of “standout” mail.

2. Two more PSAs worth watching.

The power of “standout” mail.

I recently got an email from one of my clients, who subscribes to a blog post.

The blog was entitled: **The power of plain in fundraising.**

It stated: “I can vouch for that. Plain-looking direct mail often performs best. I wouldn’t say fancy doesn’t work. It can. But plain, simple, boring direct mail is the winner much of the time.”

To me the argument should not be about whether a direct mail package should be plain or fancy.

It has a much bigger task to perform—it needs to be memorable; it needs to touch the reader.

It needs to leave a lasting impression in the mind of the reader; it must have something that separates it from all other packages.

I think Maya Angelou caught what I am trying to say with this quote: *“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”*

That's what every creative person who crafts direct mail should aim for.

Many of the examples that I show you in my newsletters subscribe to that theory. My benchmark of a good communication piece is: "Did it touch the reader? Will they still remember it a few days after they saw it?"

One of the pieces that I am proud of, that did achieve this mantra, was the story of Doug Bourgeault for **Special Olympics Ontario**.

The envelope is below and the first page of the letter is alongside:

THE DOUGLAS BOURGEAULT STORY

April 2012

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.

Doug with his medals

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.

Over the years Doug has amassed quite a few medals including: 1 gold and 1 silver in athletics in the Summer Games in Halifax in 1994; 1 gold in skating in Ottawa in 2000; 1 gold and 2 silver in skating in PEI in 2004.

In fact he loves to show his box full of medals. Each time he returns from any Game, he likes to go around town with his medals around his neck and the town's people greet him with a nod and a friendly smile.

The whole town is really proud of him. Even Mr. John Kouvelis of John's Restaurant displays Doug's

Yes, I wish to support athletes like Doug!

My payment option is indicated alongside.

If you prefer to receive your tax receipt immediately, please provide your email address and phone number below:

18 Wynford Drive
Suite 300
Toronto, ON
M3C 3S2

THE DOUGLAS BOURGEAULT STORY
(Read how donors like you have shaped it.)

2659743

One time Payment Option

Here is my one time donation of \$ _____

Monthly Giving Payment Option

I authorize Special Olympics to withdraw \$ _____ /per month

Method of payment #1:

I have enclosed a one time cheque payable to Special Olympics Ontario

I have enclosed a blank cheque marked 'VOID' for my monthly giving option.
(I authorize Special Olympics to withdraw the above amount on the 1st. of every month.)

Method of payment #2:

Please charge my credit card: VISA M/C DISCOVER

Card number: _____ Expiry date: / /

Name on Card _____

Signature _____

8326 postage paid envelope. confidentiality of your gift. We appreciate the support you can continue to provide a better quality of life to time. Special Olympics Ontario exchanges its donor list with other reputable non-profit organizations in order to recruit more people to our family of exchanged, please let us know. 18 Wynford Drive, Suite 300, Toronto, Ontario M3C 3S2. Tel: (416) 447-8326. Ext 229. Toll Free: 1-888-333-5515

NOTE: SEE REVERSE TO PLEDGE AIR MILES

CONTINUES ...

Page 2 of the letter is below.

medals — for a little while that is, until Doug reclaims them.

Doug was honored when he was invited to drop the puck at major hockey events in his hometown.

As his brother Michael and his wife Louise, told me: "Doug is a happy person who enjoys life to the fullest. He loves to sing constantly ...so you always know where he is. He has even earned the name 'Doug radio' from his teammates. He trains hard and is always confident! When asked which race he might win he answers 'all of them' and looks at us wondering why we asked such a question! When he does not win he simply shrugs it off saying, 'Oh well next time!'"

"Doug has a fantastic memory and his family considers him to be their walking encyclopedia. We refer to him whenever we seek an answer to trivia questions and he always surprises us. He is very shy with strangers, but once he decides that he likes you, you are a friend for life.

"He is witty and manages to keep us in stitches when we have family reunions. He is sociable and knows how to act properly in social situations. That is certainly a credit to his parents, now in their 80's, who have invested themselves wholly to ensuring that Douglas has a good life and is well mannered."

I asked: "What has Special Olympics done for him?"

Michael replied, "The whole journey to the Games is filled with beautiful experiences! It gives athletes so much pleasure as they prepare for the Games, from planning the trip, choosing the clothes, training, telling everyone and finally travelling and competing—something they all live for and look forward to doing.

"It gives the families who support the athlete a great opportunity to get involved in something so special...to see the faces of the athletes when they compete is priceless...it brings joy to our hearts and tears to our eyes. It is truly a unique experience that unites many people.

"It demonstrates the true spirit of sportsmanship."

I guess it is the same kind of inner satisfaction and joy one derives in helping those who face challenges in their lives. Thanks to donors like you for having made that huge difference in Doug's life.

Without your help, his story and that of each of our athletes would be different. So once again please consider making a donation of any amount you are comfortable with. You can make a single payment or help on an ongoing basis by joining our monthly giving program. As a monthly supporter you make smaller contributions that are more affordable but ensure a steady source of funds. You can change or cancel your pre-authorized monthly donation at any time with a written notice to us. **Thank you.**

Sincerely,

Glenn MacDonell
President & C.E.O.

P.S. Every December Michael spends hours making an ice rink on the lake by his property so that Douglas can play hockey and skate while at the family get together at Christmas.

As Michael explained, "This activity is Douglas's favorite, after gifts of course! Douglas is at the heart of our family. We always support and cheer him on and constantly brag about him to anyone who wants to listen! He loves his birthday and Christmas; Doug is still a child at heart!"

Are you an Air Miles collector?

Help Special Olympics Ontario Athletes by pledging some of your Air Miles Reward Miles to Special Olympics Ontario.
 YES, I would like to pledge _____ (please specify amount)
Air Miles to Special Olympics Ontario

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Collection Number (if known): _____

Please Credit the Air Miles Travel Miles indicated above to Special Olympics Ontario

Collector Signature: _____ Email: _____



The Air Miles Reward Program is proud to be a National Sponsor of Special Olympics Canada and Special Olympics Ontario. Air Miles is a registered trademark of Air Miles International Holdings N.V., used under license by Loyalty Management Group Canada Inc.

Please return this form to Special Olympics Ontario in the enclosed postage paid envelope

The reason why this simple story worked was largely because it touched many readers, as witnessed by the overwhelming response we got to the mailing.

A sample of just one of the emails sent to the client:

Hi Louise

Thank-you for sharing the great story about Doug. I'm sitting reading this crying. He has touched my heart and made an impact on my life.

Angela

What followed next was quite exciting too.

We received two very touching notes that arrived with donations from two readers as shown overleaf.

April 22nd., 2,012.

Attention: Glenn MacDonell

While I have been supporting the Special Olympics for some time, imagine my surprise at getting your letter regarding Douglas Bourgeault. His life experiences and birth are very like my older brother Jim. Jim's brain was damaged with forceps at birth and he has suffered Epilepsy as a result. That may have slowed him down mentally, but I'm always amazed at how well he copes. He has even been elected President of the Masons, like my father before him. One of his proudest achievements I'm sure, although he is also highly involved in his church, part time work when he can get it and takes full care of his disabled wife who has Epilepsy and Rheumatoid Arthritis. They also have a small home in Hamilton.

I have always admired Jim for the way he has coped, and also for his pleasant personality like your friend Douglas. You're welcome to share this note with Douglas if you like. He might be interested to hear how someone who had a similar rough start is handling his life! Let me wish you all every success in your Special Olympics.

Yours truly,

[Redacted signature]

Joby Mackenzie.

TO THE FAMILY
OF DOUGLAS BOURGEAULT.

AS THE MOTHER OF A DEVELOPMENT
DELAYED SON I KNOW THE PAIN
& HEARACHE WE ENDURE

GOD BLESS YOUR SON.

I WISH I COULD GET MY SON
INTO THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS.
HE IS A GOOD SWIMMER.

MAYBE SOMEDAY.

REGARDS.

[Redacted signature]

We all know that response is the true barometer of any successful direct mail piece and this piece certainly achieved a great response.

CONTINUES ...

Two more PSAs worth watching.



#TeamRefugees: Champions against all odds

This PSA by UNHCR features 10 refugees who just competed at the Olympic games in Brazil.

Here is the link:

<https://youtu.be/-9y7oYW5lk>

Credits:

Advertising Agency: : Just So - Grey, London, UK
 Director: J&J
 Executive Producer: Richard Ascott
 Creative Directors: Jonny Madderson, Jono Stevens
 Producer: Matt Diegan
 Editor: Simon Hargood / The Assembly Rooms
 Directors of Photography: Charlie Goodger, Luke Bryant, Daniel Venosa, Dominic Bartels
 Score: Freddie Webb, Joe Farley / Father
 Sound Design: Iain Grant / Father
 Grade: Oisín O'Driscoll / The Mill
 Online: Brad Wood / The Mill
 Assistant Producer: Liv Proctor
 Researchers: Sophie Perrins, Gideon Berends, Flora Hamilton, Gretha Viana, Lucy Chapman
 Head of Content Production / Executive Producer: Jessica Ringshall
 Creative Directors: Andy Lockley, Pete Gatley
 Assistant Producer: Talia Shear
 Account Director: Justine Deighan
 CMO: Sarah Jenkins
 Head of PR / Communication: Veronique Rhys Evans

CONTINUES ...



The World's Biggest Asshole.

This PSA shows a guy peeing into a beer bottle while driving, throwing his urine-filled bottle out the window, grinning as it crashes and splashes on a car behind him. He's the creepy guy with a bumper sticker that reads "Caution! I can go from 0 to horny in 2.2 beers" tacked to the back of his pick up truck.

This new campaign for Donate Life from The Martin Agency features such a person, one enormous asshole, called Coleman F. Sweeney. In life, Mr. Sweeney, played by actor Thomas Jane, exhibits all of the worst

characteristics of a person. After he dies, one action amidst a lifetime of being a jerk turns him into a hero.

But how?

Here's the link:

<https://youtu.be/TeVlxcekEsw>

Credits:

Advertising Agency: :The Martin Agency, New York, USA

Director: Speck and Gordon

Production Company: Furlined

Head of PR / Communication: Veronique Rhys Evans

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Designers Inc.
1806-77 Harbour Square
Toronto, ON
M5J 2S2

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