



# DIRECT FORUM

VOLUME 3. ISSUE 8

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\*\*\* AUGUST 2007 \*\*\*

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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!

This month's topics include:

- 1. WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT DIRECT MARKETING?**
- 2. THE LONG AND SHORT OF WHAT REALLY WORKS CREATIVELY. PART FIVE**
- 3. HOW TO FATTEN UP FACTS**
- 4. TESTED & TRUE**
- 5. A SURPRISE & DELIGHT**

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## **WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT DIRECT MARKETING?**

The great thing about direct marketing is that it can be anything you want it to be.

Unlike other media – print, television, websites and posters – there are few constraints on how you can present your idea I've sent brass keys to marketers to sell Fiberglas, cardboard to prospects to dramatize the plight of the homeless and packages of sugar to make a point about the cause of obesity in our children.

Another great thing is that direct mail is interactive; in fact it is the original interactive medium.

And talk about branding, it can be three-dimensional and tactile. It is the ultimate vehicle to enhance brand experience in a way no other medium can match. It involves all your targets' senses.

No other form of marketing allows you to test to find the best solution. No other provides so much data that can be used in the future to get the best results and ROI.

Isn't it the greatest when you get a loved-filled letter from your son or daughter, grandchild, a sibling, parent or

even a friend?

Letters have magical powers. They give us joy on special occasions like weddings and births; strength when we are dealing with sadness; hope when we are weary and delight when we hear from a long lost friend.

Often it is the best way to show we understand the needs and aspirations of our customers, one at a time, not to some amorphous mass.

As a copywriter I enjoy direct marketing because letters contain words and can produce as striking a visual image as any storybook. And the child in me still loves stories.

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## **THE LONG AND SHORT OF WHAT REALLY WORKS CREATIVELY. PART FIVE**

### **How to talk to different segments using different bits and bites?**

Why do so many direct marketing charitable solicitations fail to get the desired result?

Part of the problem is that many know how to write but don't take into consideration who they are writing to.

Let's start by looking at who reads our charitable letters.

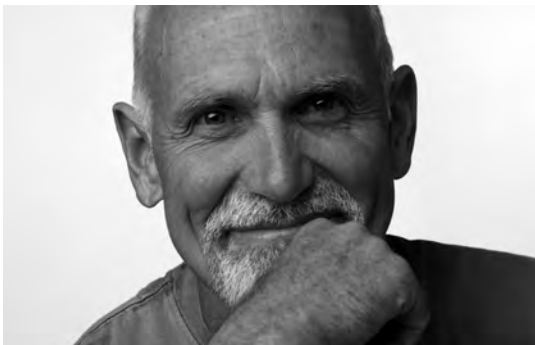
### **DONORS BORN IN THE DEPRESSION & WORLD WAR II BABIES**

Once considered as ATM machines for charities, they read our pleas and gave trustingly but there are fewer of them today.

### **BABY BOOMERS,**

They grew up in businesses that required accountability and transparency. They think charities should be no different. They see their donations as investments. So don't patronize them. You need to draw them in not just emotionally, but also rationally. If there isn't a logical reason for them to get involved, they won't.

They are not ready to retire and though they might be



getting close to 60 they see themselves as 40 something. They have been quick in adapting to new media.

Finally, they want choice. This group takes their time deciding when, how and how much to give. Past giving patterns aren't automatically relevant. My experience has been that when you give them choices, you increase response.

### **GENERATION X.**

Communication means electronic to them. These young people and families grew up on television, the medium that is a passive form of reading. The TV actually turns the pages for them.

Issues that matter to them have more to do with their immediate surroundings and circle, so don't just talk about your cause alone. Show them how their actions will affect others.

I remember writing a letter for an environmental group. In it was a story about how a river was polluted by a large corporation. To make my case I mentioned that the pollution was hurting baby bears who were getting sick feeding on the fish from this river.

When we surveyed young readers during a focus group, one of the younger women couldn't remember the name of the river or the organization that was polluting the river. She said, "*All I remember is the little helpless bears getting sick. I am a mother and I can relate to that and that's why I gave.*"

### **BOOMLET DONORS:**

This new generation is hardly a donor much less an avid reader.

They do however play a key role for charities as volunteers or by getting involved with events. But that's another article for some other time.

**As I mentioned in my last newsletter, segmenting our audience is more important now than ever before.**

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### **HOW TO FATTEN UP FACTS**

One way to enliven your facts is to involve the reader.



*An example:*

For a package for Prostate Cancer I wrote this line for the front of the envelope:

**PROSTATE CANCER IS THE #1 CANCER THREAT TO THE HEALTH AND LIVES OF ONE OUT OF SEVEN MEN**

At the back it continued:

**WILL IT THREATEN YOUR FATHER, YOUR BROTHER, YOUR UNCLE, YOUR COUSIN, YOUR NEPHEW, YOUR FRIEND, YOUR NEIGHBOUR, YOUR SON OR EVEN YOU?**

*Another example:*

Front of envelope:

**LAST YEAR THERE WERE 17 DAYS OF SMOG IN TORONTO.**

Back of the envelope:

**IF YOU THINK THIS YEAR WILL BE DIFFERENT, DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH.**

Another way to make an impact is to keep it simple so the reader feels that you are talking to him or her.

For example, a program for children and mothers exposed to women abuse that involved many charitable organizations was simply called: **HERE TO HELP**

Where the acronym **H.E.L.P** stood for:

**HEAL  
ENCOURAGE  
LOVE  
PROTECT**

It was so successful that five years after I created all the materials for this program, I still see the poster hanging at many charitable organizations.

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**TESTED & TRUE**

Testing the reply coupon

While in premium packages circling or highlighting gift amounts continues to work, new tests for some



organizations have found the following:

- The circle depressed response by 3% and the slight rise in average donation didn't make the circle test successful vs. no circling.
- In another test, placing an asterisk beside the gift amount depressed the average gift from \$42.66 to \$40.51. It also lowered response rates.
- In a house holiday card mailing the circling of the gift amount depressed both average donations and response.

Note: While these test results were true for the charities that we tested, others might fare differently. So, test, test, test for yourself.

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## **SURPRISE & DELIGHT**

Last month I got a call from Margery Taylor, a teacher at George Brown College. She called me because she had stumbled on my website by chance:

[www.designersinc.ca](http://www.designersinc.ca).

She was so taken with my work and called to tell me so and ask if I might speak to her class as a guest lecturer. How could I refuse after all those flattering words and besides, I love to teach, so I agreed. Margery teaches Event Marketing and the work I do for charities is a good fit.

It was a delight to meet her and the reception from her students.

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### **OPT IN, OPT OUT, OPTIONS:**

- To unsubscribe, send me an e-mail simply saying, "Please, remove".
- To participate, send me an e-mail with your suggestions.
- To post a comment, please include your name, e-mail address and your thoughts.

**Let me remind you again that your name and/or e-mail address will never be shared, sold, circulated, or passed along to anyone else.**

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