

DIRECT FORUM

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* * * * MARCH 2009 * * * *

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. HOW TO RAISE FUNDS WITH NEWSLETTERS.**
- 2. DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE REAL ART OF 'CLOSING-A-SALE' IS? I LEARNED A GREAT LESSON FROM SOME PROS.**
- 3. DARE TO BE OUTRAGEOUS?**
- 4. YET ANOTHER ANSWER TO THE QUESTION, "DO YOU KNOW OF ANY STUDIES ABOUT THE RESPONSE RATE FOR A DM PIECE WITH PAID POSTAGE BRE VERSUS NONE?"**

HOW TO RAISE FUNDS WITH NEWSLETTERS

Last month I promised I would expand on one other great source of fundraising – Newsletters.

One of the easiest ways to produce a good newsletter is to avoid the following pitfalls:

MISTAKE 1

Forgetting the age-old 'WIIFM' (What's in it for me?) question. Your donors want to know how important a role their donation played.

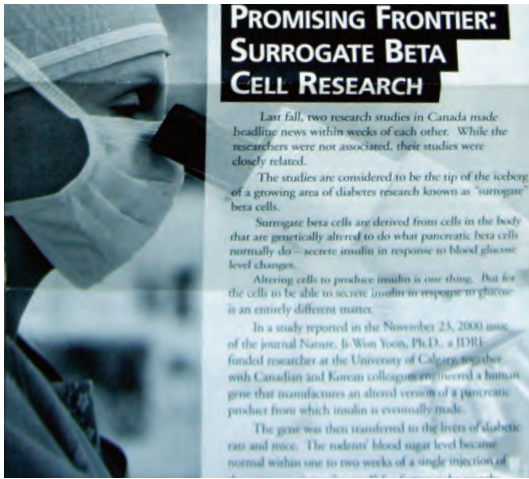
This is the most important thing to keep in mind while writing your newsletter copy.

Use the word YOU often. It has strange magical powers.

No other word, not we, us or ours attracts the reader like the word, you.

Treat your newsletter as if it's a form of direct marketing letter. Direct your newsletter copy at your donors.





MISTAKE 2

Forgetting that a newsletter should have news that is worth reading.

Many charities use this important medium to relay what is happening in their organization, e.g. what staff had children or who got promoted.

When you write for your newsletter, ask yourself: "Why would this interest the donor?" These are busy people. Is it any wonder that newsletters are the least read item you send them? It is estimated that only a handful of donors bother to even browse through a newsletter because it too often has little to do with them.



MISTAKE 3

Forgetting that, like a newspaper, the most read items are human-interest stories.

People give to events like tsunamis or disasters because they have been moved by the plight of the people affected.

People attend a funeral of an innocent victim featured in the newspaper because their hearts go out to the family of the victims.

People give to a charity from the heart and not from the head.

People generally *give to people*; always keep that in mind.

MISTAKE 4

Forgetting donors want to know what you did with their money.

Make your newsletter 'donor centric'. Remember people don't give *to* your charity, they give *through* your charity. They want to help the cause you are working so hard for — be it improving the environment or people's lives.

Rephrase that popular saying from Jerry McGuire: "Show me the money" to "Show me what you did with my money".

MISTAKE 5

Forgetting that your readers want to hear about your fiscal acumen.

They want reassurance that most of the money they donated went toward an important project and not toward administration, advertising or fundraising.

According to the Chronicle of Philanthropy, only 11% of donors think that the charities they support are doing a 'very good' job of spending money wisely.

The other 89% have their doubts as to how well the money is being spent.

To keep your donors on board, inform them as to how you spend their hard earned money. Merely including a pie chart with the breakdown of donations by percentage is really not enough.

MISTAKE 6

Forgetting your readers are all ready on information overload.

Readers want to be able to skim through your newsletter quickly.

We are all bombarded by over half a million dollars worth of commercial and media messages every day. As a result, today's audiences have developed a form of 'selective intake' mechanism.

Make it easy for the reader to skim through your material. Make your copy pleasing to the eye - capture their attention.

Cut down the number of words per sentence. Reduce the size of your articles. Learn from the free newspapers available to subway riders. Their articles never continue to another page.

MISTAKE 7

Forgetting to make your stories interesting.

Use headlines that capture the reader's interest. Just like they do in newspapers.

If your headlines aren't enticing enough to draw the reader's attention, your best article will never get read.



13 year old Jack Swadron arrived on Integra's doorstep after his Bar Mitzvah with a very large cheque. Instead of using his Bar Mitzvah money to buy things for himself, Jack chose to make a gift to Integra. Jack attended Camp White Pine for a number of years and had always watched across the lake at what was happening at Integra's Camp Towhee. When his parents asked what he planned to do with his gifts, he immediately said, "I'd like to make a donation to Camp Towhee."

MISTAKE 8.

Forgetting to acknowledge your donors' support and hogging all the credit for your own accomplishments.

Your charity survives due to the generosity of people, organizations and government grants. They need acknowledgement. Need I say more?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE REAL ART OF 'CLOSING-A-SALE' IS? I LEARNED A GREAT LESSON FROM SOME PROS.

Ask any salesperson, "At what point in the selling process does the 'Close' take place?"

Eight out of ten will answer - at the end. To be fair, they are not totally incorrect but they are more wrong than right.

The actual 'close of the sale' takes place almost at the initial meeting and all through the interaction.

Dale Carnegie is best known as the architect of the 'Five Steps to a Sale' selling process and his success is largely due to the simplicity of his strategy.

He gave short, easy, clearly defined rules that are based on human psychology,

For instance, his first step is: "Talk to your customer briefly regarding something that interests them."

What does he mean and why is this important?

When salespeople meet customers for the first time, they need to 'get-to-know-them'. This is also called bonding.

Carnegie suggested: in your opening meeting with customers, the best way to get them to like you and trust you is to engage them in brief conversations about things they find most interesting.

I saw this beautifully demonstrated first hand, when I was hired by the US agency, Response Marketing Group of Virginia, to set up their operation in Toronto. They had been invited to come and pitch for the CIBC Credit card business.



After the initial formalities and introductions, the CIBC staff sat back and waited for us to show and sell them.

After a brief awkward silence, our main salesman, Jim Marous, simply said, “Oh, we came here today just to get to know you. We don’t even know what problem needs to be solved or what you have attempted in the past.”

For the next two hours the client spilled their guts, revealing in detail their problems and what needed to be fixed.

I felt that I had just witnessed a skillful doctor who explored carefully before giving a diagnosis

A week later we came fully prepared with our pitch and solutions and walked away with 2 million dollars of business that day.

DARE TO BE OUTRAGEOUS?

I just finished reading a book, **Bang! Getting Your Message Heard in a Noisy World** by Linda Kaplan Thaler and Robin Koval with Delia Marshall.

Just like Seth Godin’s book, **Purple Cow: Transform Your Business by Being Remarkable**, it too stresses that the key to success is to find a way to stand out from the herd—to be the purple cow in a field of monochrome Holsteins.

With one exception that this book, actually gives a great example of how The Kaplan Thaler Group was responsible for nearly doubling the annual sales growth for AFLAC insurance company by using a ‘duck’ as the spokesperson for the insurance company.

These days, getting people to notice you isn’t as easy as the book claims. The Information Age has morphed into Information Overload. Messages are everywhere: at the bottom of golf cups on the putting green, flashing on ATM screens, even posted over urinals.

The book goes on to explain how to make your advertising cut through the clutter and get people to sit up and take notice by being outrageous. The authors reject the notion of straight or linear thinking or using the traditional



approach but instead encourage you to side step logic to get the consumer's attention.

One of the examples they gave was that twenty-seven years ago, if you wrote a business plan on how to make money by selling water, you'd die of thirst waiting for the loan approval. Then along came Perrier and the rest is history.

Another insurance company that has had similar success with its outrageous concept of a talking Gecko or the caveman strategy is GEICO Insurance.

The advertising has firmly placed GEICO in the minds of consumers not to mention that Warren Buffet quickly snapped up the stock of the company when he first saw the commercial over a decade ago.

Similarly the iPod commercial took the market by storm by being radically different - no words, no sales pitch and no fancy slogan - just silhouetted figures of young people dancing with iPods in their ears.

The ideas of the authors may seem illogical, but then so is creativity.

**YET ANOTHER ANSWER TO THE QUESTION,
“DO YOU KNOW OF ANY STUDIES ABOUT THE
RESPONSE RATE FOR A DM PIECE WITH PAID
POSTAGE BRE VERSUS NONE?”**

Here is another email I received in answer to this query.

Billy,

Sherry Martin is a very experienced dm specialist and I do not doubt her experience... However we have had a number of different results...

Canada Post, in their infinite wisdom have made the BRE so electronic and impersonal looking that, RE's often perform better... I don't think it has anything to do with "weeding out qualified responses" in fundraising. The real question however becomes one of what is really important to test... BRE against RE is one of the least important tests...as our extensive client testing has revealed:
SO...



1/ Change is inevitable, so once you have tested EVERYTHING – test it for yourself – the results change from client to client.

2/ Remember that 1 dm piece does not mean overall data base health - renewal rates come from more people responding over a year...

So my recommendation would be... Go with the one that gets the most donors to respond every time – regardless of what a BRE or RE does...

Rob Wyers

P.S. Good articles Billy... Keep up the good work...

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