



# DIRECT FORUM

VOLUME 5. ISSUE 9

\*\*\*\*\*

\* \* \* \* NOVEMBER 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. WHY DO MARKETERS LEAVE THEIR BRAINS AT THE DOOR WHEN THEY CREATE THEIR WEBSITES?**
- 2. TWO MORE WAYS OF GENERATING INCOME VIA NEWSLETTERS**
- 3. IT'S TIME WE LEARNED A VALUABLE LESSON FROM ADVERTISING**
- 4. STARTING ON THE WRONG KEY WILL PRODUCE A FLAT NOTE**

\*\*\*\*\*

## **WHY DO MARKETERS LEAVE THEIR BRAINS AT THE DOOR WHEN THEY CREATE THEIR WEBSITES?**

I still remember a powerful fundraising appeal that inspired me. I can clearly recall where I was when I first heard it and how it moved me to take action at once.

It was **Live Aid** the multi-venue rock concert held on July 13, 1985 organized by **Bob Geldof** and **Midge Ure** to raise funds for famine relief in Ethiopia.

Their '**Do they know it's Christmas**' Live aid concert was broadcast and watched by 2 billion viewers. It touched an emotional cord in a lot of people and I for one, immediately went to a record store and bought a copy of the song.

The point I am trying to make is that sound and visuals have the power to touch people emotionally as also demonstrated by movies and powerful commercials.

Over the years the fundraising community has seen the importance of using sound and visuals to capture people's attention and have used them in asking for money in their PSA's.

**So, why do marketers leave their brains at the door when they create their websites?**

**Especially fundraising.**

Among the many thousands of charitable websites, I only see a handful who have used the power of words, sounds and pictures to tell a story or to create a website.

All of them just have the same old impersonal; **'please donate now'** button predominantly plastered on their websites.

It's not that charities don't know how to produce good videos, indeed many have hired excellent outside experts or agency professionals, judging from the PSA's they produce. But none of them use these powerful devices on their websites to express the passion and conviction of their appeals.

With all the new technology, surely producing a compelling video cannot be that hard. **Even my students have done this successfully and raised a lot of money for small charities.**

I don't think the fundraising world has understands how to use their websites effectively. Fundraising online need not be one-dimensional. It should combine sights, sounds and copy to work together. It should be possible to create a compelling video that rivals and exceeds anything their PSA has to offer.

Even my website: [www.designersinc.ca](http://www.designersinc.ca) has a PSA that is watched by more then half the 200 people on average who come to it every week.



Part of the problem is that fundraisers assume that people only come to a website once they have decided to give. If that is true then give them one more reason to do so with a powerful video. If they are coming to the site to find out if they should give, definitely give them more than just cold hard informational facts. Turn them on!

Here's a link to the video that inspired me. Just key in: **[Do they know it's christmas Live aid 1985 london](#)**

**Enjoy!**

\*\*\*\*\*

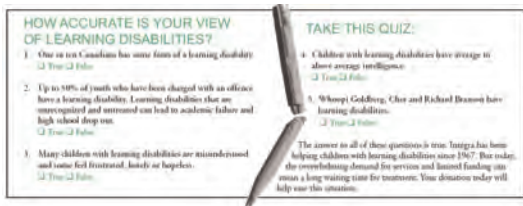
## TWO MORE WAYS OF GENERATING FUNDS VIA NEWSLETTERS

Last month I demonstrated how to write a news story in your newsletter. Now let me show you two ways to generate funds via your newsletters.



This story was about Paul Badali, staff member and founder of the “Mindfulness Martial Arts” at Integra and how he helps children and youth with learning disabilities.

**Method 1** – Charities need to use the power of their stories in their newsletters. These stories can be about beneficiaries, about front-line staff who have made a radical difference in their beneficiary’s lives or indeed anyone who can tell a story with passion, conviction and purpose. Putting these stories in your newsletter creates great content and compelling messages for prospective and actual donors.



**Method 2** – Charities should engage first and fundraise second. Use many tools to engage people first – through storytelling, quizzes and interactive games. Once people are engaged they can be more easily persuaded to donate to your charity.

\*\*\*\*\*

## IT’S TIME WE LEARNED A VALUABLE LESSON FROM ADVERTISING

It’s called reach and frequency.

Advertising works because the same message is repeated again and again for months.

We watch the same commercial, view the same billboard on the subway and see the same ad in the magazines we subscribe to for months on end.

Unfortunately, we cannot duplicate this method in direct marketing. We cannot send our prospects the same letter again and again.

Even though the writer **Stephen Pidgeon** used this gimmick once. He simply sent a carbon copy of the original letter with a note commenting that since the post was so unreliable, the recipient may not have read the earlier letter.

**The result:** The copy got half again as many responses as the original.

Make-A-Wish® Canada  
4211 Yonge Street, Suite 521,  
Toronto, ON M2P 2A9  
Tel: 416-224-9474  
Toll Free: 1-888-822-9474  
[www.makeawish.ca](http://www.makeawish.ca)

LB0326E



XX1234

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

A month ago I wrote to you about how I truly believe that giving hope and happiness to a child with a life-threatening illness has magical medicinal powers.

Granting these children their wish helps lift their spirits . . . It lets them fight their illness with more vigor . . . It adds a glimmer of hope to their eyes . . . It puts a smile on their faces that could light up the whole world. Granting a wish provides hope, strength and joy and leaves the children feeling much better.

The letter detailed how Make-A-Wish® has witnessed these moments of pure happiness thousands of times and how I continue to be deeply moved with the news of each wish we grant.

What the letter did not express forcefully enough is how important donors like you really are. You have helped to bring unbridled joy to thousands of ill children.

As one of our strongest supporters you have already demonstrated how much you care about children and how important you are to us as a friend. You know that some wishes just can't wait for someday. So what better time than this holiday season to share joy and happiness with children living with a life-threatening illness?

If you have already responded to my earlier letter then please accept my sincere thanks as our letters may have crossed. If however you set it aside to deal with later because you have been busy, please use the attached donation form today.

To children with a life-threatening illness, the news that their special wish will be granted, is quite possibly the best medicine they could receive. Thank you as always.

Sincerely,

Dave Strinton  
President

Make-A-Wish Foundation® of Canada.

P.S. This holiday season, help us provide that magical hope, which like a miracle medicine, does wonders for children with life-threatening illnesses.



Yes I want to make the wishes of children come true



Please direct my donation to help grant wishes:  
 In the area of greatest need  In my local chapter

Payment Options

Cheque (payable to Make-A-Wish® Canada)  
 I prefer to use my  VISA  MASTERCARD

Card No.

Expiry Date

Signature

Email

We are happy to provide your tax receipt electronically, if you prefer to receive your tax receipt via email, please provide your email address.  
Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$25 or more, unless requested.  
 J'aimerais recevoir ma correspondance en français  
 Please remove me from your mailing list

Thank you for your support!

Charitable Registration # 895201713 RR0001

## The reminder letter for Make-A-Wish Canada

Which brings me back to my original point of the importance of reach and frequency. There are many ways to do this and yet we seldom use them in direct marketing even though they have a multiplier effect and produce better results each time.

One way is to send people reminder mailings. A reminder piece I did for Make-A-Wish resulted in a bigger response than the original letter.

Another method is by using various media to send the same message. If the first communication is a direct mail piece, follow it with an email. Follow a magazine ad with a direct mail piece.

The important point is that the more often you can expose your target audience to the same message the greater the likelihood of a response. And isn't that what direct marketing is all about? And yet we seldom use this tried and true method to our advantage.

\*\*\*\*\*

## STARTING ON THE WRONG KEY WILL PRODUCE A FLAT NOTE

Just like music, starting on the right note is crucial. Yet one of the cop-out words that many writers often use is the word 'exciting'. They interject it in a sentence when they can't come up with anything else to say.

We have all read about 'exciting' new products, or 'exciting' approaches to product development, or 'exciting' additions to office furniture.

Even letters, emails or promotional pieces often start like this:

"Dear Mr. Smith,

I am writing to you today with some exciting news about paper clips..."

Do they envision that their readers will really turn around to a colleague and say, "Hey Joe, come take a look at this exciting new paper clip"?

## Not in a million years!

Using words like 'exciting' or 'important', 'astonishing',

'amazing', 'unique', 'surprising', 'fantastic' or 'revolutionary' is really chest thumping. It's emoting and not evoking. It is lauding something but not describing its value to the reader.

Instead of working hard to evoke the desired response from reader, these superfluous words often end up doing the opposite. They make readers get annoyed, bored, puzzled or even feel patronized, but rarely do they make them feel thrilled while reading about your exciting new paper clips.

As writers we must convert features into benefits for our readers. Calling something exciting does not do that.

**So here's a tip.**

The next time you catch yourself about to use a word like 'exciting' or any of those other hackneyed words, stop and ask yourself what adjective your product/service really deserves.

Sure, it's easier to fill your copy with superlatives, rather than point out the benefits. But if you really want to sell your product or service, remember people don't buy features, they buy the benefits they will derive from your product or service.

\*\*\*\*\*

**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.**

© **Designers Inc.**

1407-99 Harbour Square,  
Toronto, ON  
M5J 2H2

Tel: 416-203-9787

Fax: 416-203-3568

Email: [designersinc@sympatico.ca](mailto:designersinc@sympatico.ca)

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