



DIRECT FORUM

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* * * * OCTOBER 2008 * * * *

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 ARE EMOTIONS IMPORTANT NOT ONLY IN FUNDRAISING BUT ALSO WHEN YOU ARE SELLING ANY PRODUCT OR SERVICE?**
- 2. TAKE MY 'WORD' FOR IT**
- 3. THREE WAYS TO GUARANTEE THAT THE APPEAL YOU SEND TO YOUR LOYAL DONORS WILL WORK**

WHY ARE EMOTIONS IMPORTANT NOT ONLY IN FUNDRAISING BUT ALSO WHEN YOU ARE SELLING ANY PRODUCT OR SERVICE?

Logic is important because it helps us make sound decisions including most of our buying decisions.

For example, if we need to get from our house in the suburbs to our office in the city, logic tells us that we may need a car.

However, the kind of car that we choose, whether we buy, a Cadillac or a Porsche has little to do with logic. Here the decision has to do with a variety of factors from affordability to perception, our feeling about a certain product, how it matches our personality and how we may be perceived in the eyes of others.

Here emotions, not logic, control many of our selection choices.

Even one of the most important decisions we make has nothing to do with logic—I am talking about the act of falling in love. It has little to do with reason. We don't coolly calculate or weigh the pro and cons as to why we are attracted to one particular person.

Emotions really lead us to buy certain brands for two important reasons:

One - we perceive them as being better for us.

Two - they make a statement about us.

Almost everything we choose makes a statement about us – our homes, the kind of furniture we select, our friends, our clothes, even the charity we support.

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

Sure logic is important but people generally give because they are moved, not because you have rationally presented a flawless argument.

Donors like to feel good. They like to feel warm or proud. They like to feel that their help has played an important part in what matters to them, be it the environment or saving children's lives.

For the donor, writing that cheque is an act of love.

Research has shown that emotions account for more than three-quarters of our decision processes.

That is why all retail sales check out counters are stocked with impulse buying items that range from candy to magazines.

Many of our major buying decisions are based on two other very important factors:

- The external need to be sold on a particular product or service. There is a variety of different ways this happens including a recommendation from a friend (word-of-mouth), being convinced by a sales person, the opinions of others, effective advertising or just coming to the conclusion by oneself.
- We need an internal justification for our own purchase decision. We all need to satisfy ourselves that we have made a wise choice. We need to read or hear positive things about the product or service we have selected to assure ourselves that we have indeed made a sound decision.

So, a direct marketer's job is to sell to the donor or the reader and give them reasons why they are making the right choice in supporting your charity or buying your product or service.

Good writing in our business is not academic writing but persuasive writing. Forget what you learned in school about good grammar; direct marketing or fundraising copy should sound like someone talking—like a conversation with the reader.

Naturally the reader will raise objections and have questions. Anticipating and frankly answering possible objections in your materials helps the reader make a decision in your favour and also slowly builds trust and helps close the sale.

Write from the heart; sit down with a piece of paper and honestly tell your story about your product or charity; use human interest and storytelling techniques.

Forget about using a formula at the start such as “Make sure you ask for the gift at least three times . . . remember to balance emotionality with rationality . . . use the word ‘you’ more often than ‘I’ . . .etc. etc”. All that is secondary and can come later after your final draft.

TAKE MY ‘WORD’ FOR IT

How do you convert dry facts or descriptions into compelling headlines or sentences?

It has to do with the selection of the words you use. Here are a few techniques:

1 - FIND THE RIGHT CONNOTATION

Connotations count as much as denotation. While denotation of a word is its strict dictionary definition, its connotations are the shades of meaning that surround it. So while ‘smile,’ ‘grin’ and ‘smirk’ all denote similar things, each has a different shade of meaning.

Another example: “Childish” and “childlike” sound similar, but which one would you rather be called?

2 - CREATE AN IMAGE

Imagery is appealing to any one of the five senses: sight,

touch, taste, hearing and smell. Good writing lets the reader use his or her imagination to feel one or more of these senses as they read the words.

Example: The difference between the word 'cook' and 'simmer' is that the reader imagines more with the latter word. 'Simmer' evokes the sound of bubbling plus a lingering smell while 'cook' just sits there'

3 - ESTABLISH COHERENCE

Hooking your paragraphs together allows your sentences and ideas to connect to each other, and prompts the reader to read on. As you write each sentence, keep the previous one in mind. Write the next line in response to the one before it. A seamless flow creates coherence and unity.

*Here's an example of a few paragraphs of copy **Tom Gaffney's Covenant House** letter:*

Dear Friend,

She came to our front door Tuesday morning, dressed in dirty rags, holding a little aluminum paint can in her arms.

From the second she stepped inside our shelter, she mystified us. Whatever she did, wherever she went, the paint can never left her hands.

When Kathy sat in the crisis shelter, the can sat in her arms. She took the can with her to the cafeteria that first morning she ate, and to bed with her that first night she slept.

When she stepped into the shower, the can was only a few feet away. When the homeless girl dressed, the can rested alongside her feet.

"I'm sorry, this is mine," she told our counsellors, whenever we asked her about it. "This can belongs to me."

"Do you want to tell me what's in it, Kathy? I'd ask her?"

"Um, not today," she said, "not today."

When Kathy was sad, or angry or hurt – which happened a lot – she took her paint can to a quiet dorm room on the 3rd floor. Many times on Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday, I'd pass by her room, and watch her rock gently back and forth, the

can in her arms. Sometimes she'd talk to the paint can in low whispers.

I've been around troubled kids all my life, (over 41,000 homeless kids will come to our shelter this year!). I'm used to seeing them carry stuffed animals (some of the roughest, toughest kids at Covenant House have a stuffed animal). Every kid has something – needs something – to hold.

But the paint can? I could feel alarm bells ringing in my head.

Note: If you want to read the complete letter just email me at: designersinc@sympatico.ca, and I will send it to you.

Next month I will provide more techniques and examples, so stay tuned.

THREE WAYS TO GUARANTEE THAT THE APPEAL YOU SEND TO YOUR LOYAL DONORS WILL WORK.

A mailing to your loyal donors need not be hard to create. Remember you are talking to people who know and like you, so don't load the appeal with information about your charity or its importance. You risk burying your reminder that you need funds somewhere at the end of the appeal.

The three elements to consider that will ensure success are:

1- USE URGENCY

Even donors who have been contributing to your cause for decades will respond more readily to an urgent plea rather than an ongoing request for continuing help. If your organization has any unforeseen need, or if issues that affect your organization are in the news, this is a good opportunity to appeal for help from loyal donors.

2- BE SPECIFIC

Tell your donors specifically why you need the funds now. State the amount of money you need to accomplish a specific goal. This way you'll entice more donors to make an extra gift to your cause.

3- SHOW THEM THAT THEY ARE IMPORTANT

Let your loyal donors know why they are important. Appeal copy, like acquisition copy, needs to inspire donors to take action and to give them a sense of accomplishment if they respond.

As **Dale Carnegie** said, *“One way we feel important is when we feel we’ve made a difference, by making a gift to an organization we feel part of.”*

Here’s an example of an appeal that I created that generated a 40% response.

Mr. Joe Sample
123 Main Street,
Any city, ON 1A1 A1A

Dear Mr. Sample,

As we wind down the year, I wanted to say thank you once again for being such a loyal supporter of Integra.

We’ve had a good year doing even more of what we always do and are eagerly awaiting January when we start up our new program of Assessment and Early Intervention. Watch for a report on it in our next newsletter.

Though you have already been very helpful to us this year, we have an urgent request right now. We need donations to help us reduce the waiting period for children with learning disabilities, which is now at an unacceptable period of one year. Any donation dated December 31 or earlier will be tax receipted for the current year.

The enclosed little picture frame is to say thank you and wish you the best for the holidays. After you’ve read the note, remove the picture and use it for a photo of someone you love. And let the frame remind you that you helped Integra’s kids in their pursuit of becoming able, independent and contributing members of our community.

As the caption on the enclosed photo says, *“One in twenty kids in Ontario has a learning disability.”* When you do the math, that’s over 100,000 children and youth.

However, only one organization in Ontario specifically addresses the mental health need that so often accompany those disabilities and that’s Integra.



This letter along with a small magnetic picture frame was mailed to 125 loyal donors at a cost of \$218. It generated a 40% response and netted \$17,525

Thanks for your commitment to helping us stay vital and effective.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,



Ellen Nichols
Director of Development

I have just finished creating six more fundraising packages for five charities. I will share the results once I have them.

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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