



# DIRECT FORUM

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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. Here's scientific proof that Direct Marketing works.**
- 2. How to write a successful fundraising letter**
- 3. Now, for a unique way of fundraising**

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## Here's scientific proof that Direct Marketing works

We all know that direct mail can touch people and raise millions for charities and generate big profits for the business community.

Mail is tactile and offers fantastic opportunities unmatched by any other medium; it can carry product samples, 3D items, inserts, company brochures, coupons, BREs, buck slips and even items that can evoke more of the senses — smell, taste, etc. — to enhance response.

Direct mail has the ability to bring content to life with imagery and colour that leads to a more stimulating and engaging experience.

Now a study, using neuroscience experiments, supports the theory that direct mail creates significantly longer-lasting impressions on certain areas of the brain compared with digital marketing and could therefore have a bigger impact on the recipient..

The study conducted jointly by research firm **Millward Brown, Bangor University** and the **United Kingdom's Royal Mail** is very revealing. Its results show that a physical piece of direct mail is significantly more multi-sensory than an online version. This is due to the increased number of senses which are triggered by

**\$5.2 billion** The estimated amount in charitable fundraising raised in 2010 in the USA.

**3.6%** The percent by which the Direct Marketing Association (USA) expects all direct mail spending to rise each year between 2010 and 2014.

*P.S. It is difficult and expensive to access Canadian Statistics but I think the above figures give you a sense of the size and scope of direct marketing.*

simply holding something physical, rather than seeing it on a screen.

They used eye tracking and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) in their studies to learn how the brain reacts to various media.

Three main areas of difference were determined with regard to how study participants' brains processed direct mail and digital messaging:

- The first area of difference was the degree to which the emotional centers of the brain were activated, with direct mail generating more or deeper emotional processing than the digital messaging.
- Second, the brain saw the physical material as more real than the digital material.
- Third, there was more activity in the areas of the brain that are connected to introspection when people viewed the direct mail.

This suggests that **physical material is more “real” to the brain**. It has a meaning and a place. It is better connected to memory because it engages spatial memory networks.

The findings suggest that the brain is more emotionally engaged and is potentially more likely to respond when viewing direct mail versus a digital message.

I am not suggesting that you substitute direct mail for digital messaging but that using **direct mail as part of an integrated campaign** can prove to be very valuable.

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## **How to write a successful fundraising letter**

**Here are five sure-fire ways to improve your next fundraising letter.**

### **1. INVOLVE THE READER — Emotionally**

**Bring your reader along with you into the world you are about to describe. Show them what is happening right now, how it is impacting people and what needs to be**

done. Tell a story and let your readers imagine they are right there with you.

Just like a great novel, movie, play or documentary, a great story can transport your reader right into the thick of things.

Here's an example of the beginning of a fundraising letter that I think is brilliant and involving. It was written by Father Bruce Ritter, founder of Covenant House. He managed to bring readers into his world and introduced them to the plight of children living on the street.



**Father Bruce Ritter**

Friday, 10:40 PM

Dear Friend,

A lady should never get this dirty, she said.

She stood there with a quiet, proud dignity. She was incomparably dirty – her face and hands smeared, her clothes torn and soiled. The lady was 11.

My brothers are hungry, she said. The two boys she hugged protectively were 8 and 9. They were three of the most beautiful children I'd ever seen.

Our parents beat us a lot, she said. We had to leave. The boys nodded mutely. We had to leave, one of them echoed. The children did not cry. I struggled to manage part of a smile. It didn't come off very well. The littlest kid looked back at me, with a quick, dubious grin. I gave him a surreptitious hug. I was all choked up.

I would like to take a shower, the lady said.

Seventeen years ago, I did not know that there were thousands of runaway, abused and abandoned children like these in this country.

I learned the hard way.

One night, in the winter of 1968, six teenage runaways knocked on the door of my apartment where I was living to serve the

poor of New York's Lower East Side. Their junkie pimp had burned them out of the abandoned tenement they called 'home.' I took them in. I didn't have the guts not to.

Word of mouth traveled fast. (It does among street kids). The next day four more came. And kids have been coming ever since. It was these kids – with no place else to go – homeless, hungry, lacking skills, jobs resources – that compelled me to start Covenant House over seventeen years ago. Today our crisis centres help tens of thousands of kids from all over the country – and save them from a life of degradation and horror on the streets.

## 2. INVOLVE THE READER — Make it personal.

Here's the start of a great fundraising letter written in April 30th 1993 from the United Farm Workers in the USA, a union in perennial dispute with a vicious breed of landowners and bosses.

So vicious that the leader of the UFW, a Mexican immigrant called Cesar Chavez who had done much to publicize the plight of the migrant farm workers, had been murdered.

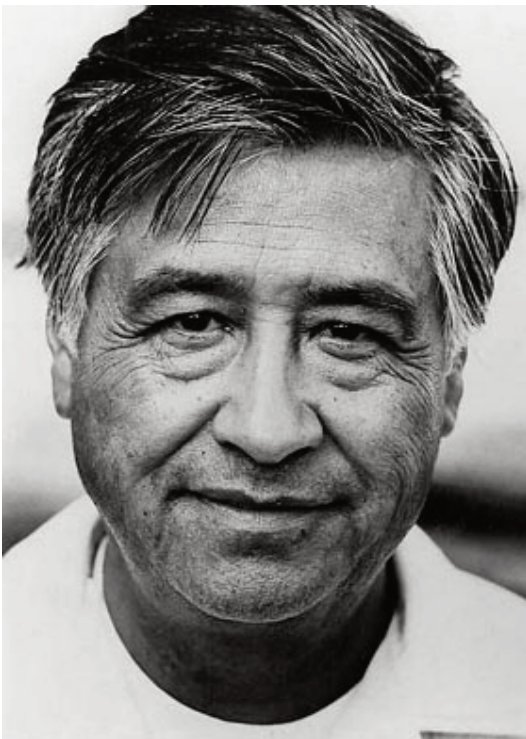
Dear Friend,

I buried my husband this afternoon.

Yesterday, thousands of us walked in funeral procession through Delano, the same little town where so many years ago it was only Cesar, only Cesar and a faithful few walking door to door with a dream.

I have never stopped being amazed by Cesar. Somehow, from those first lonely days in Delano, he managed to plant his dream into many, many caring hearts. He was the kind of cultivator, this compassionate sower, the gentle field worker, working in rocky soil where few believed justice could ever bear fruit.

I suppose I was the toughest one to



**Cesar Chavez**

organize. With eight children and only a beat-up '53 Mercury wagon, I wondered how far a dream would take us. But, with Cesar, if something was not worth giving your life for it was not worth doing. And in the end, he gave his last ounce of life to the beloved cause.

### 3. INVOLVE THE READER — talk to them one-on-one.



**Marcus Thompson**

**Here's an Oxfam letter written by Marcus Thompson, who turned it into a brilliant plea when he traveled to war-torn areas in Africa two decades ago.**

**If this sounds familiar to you today, it's because once again we are facing such crises in Africa.**

Dear Supporter,

Doesn't it upset you to walk among people who have lost everything? Doesn't it distress you to see small children dying in their mothers' arms?

**I am often asked these questions when I return from a disaster zone. Quite frankly, it does and it doesn't...**

It doesn't because I'm busy when I'm visiting the scene of disaster. I don't feel the helplessness you feel in front of your TV. Just the opposite, I have the privilege of being able to do something to ease the suffering.

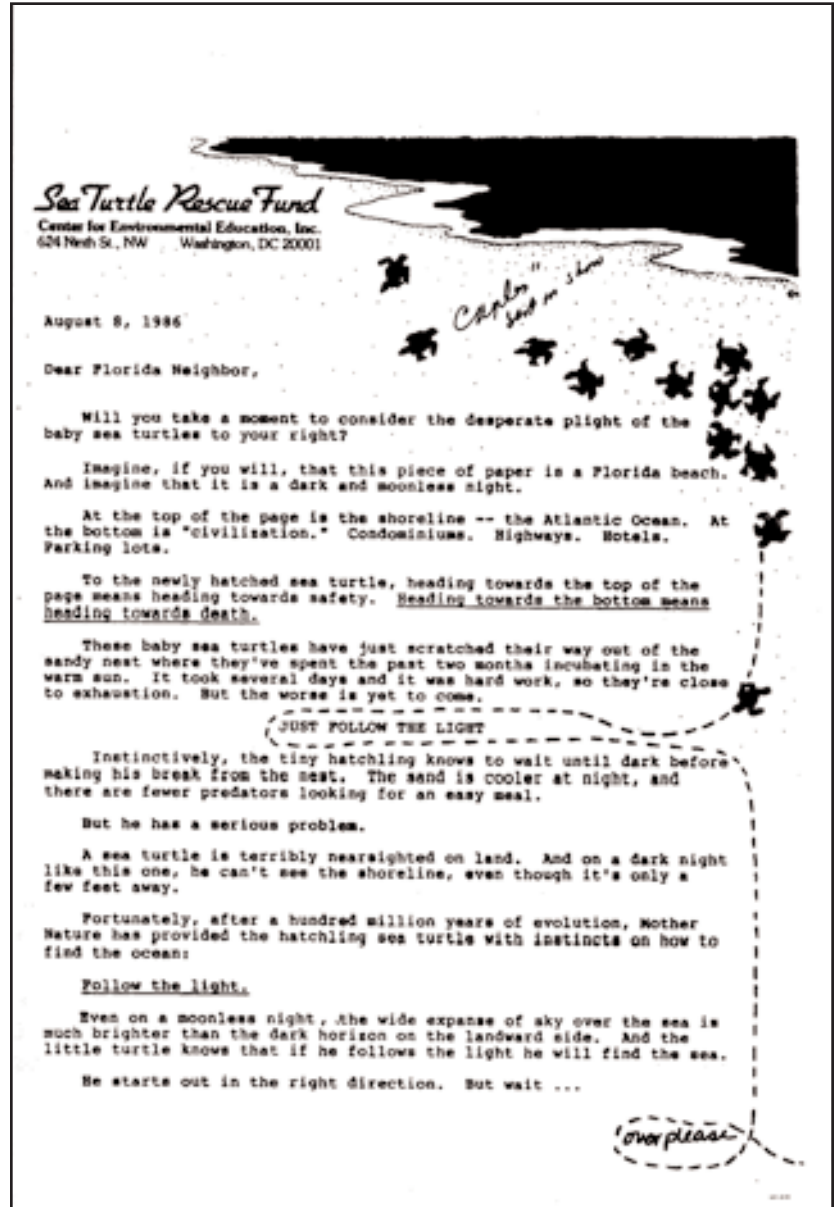
But of course it hurts when someone you've got to know dies.

In the civil war in Uganda, I was visiting camps for people fleeing the fighting. We picked up a very sick mother and her starving children to take them to hospital in Kampala. In the crowded jeep a little boy of five or six sat on my lap. We smiled at each other as the jeep bounced along the rough dirt roads. He died before we reached the hospital.

That evening I just dissolved into tears. I have a child about the same age.

#### 4. INVOLVE THE READER — Visually

Here is a brilliant 'Show and Tell' piece.



#### 5. INVOLVE THE READER — Physically

Here's a piece I produced for Education Wife Assault. The physical presence of the Band-Aid, not only intrigued the reader but it also acted as the springboard for me to relay a very important message:

#### BANDAGES ARE NOT ENOUGH

BANDAGES alone cannot cover the bruises, pain or the suffering that abused and battered women endure.



They cannot cover or hide the agony and emotional turmoil that abused women are subjected to constantly.

They cannot cover the terror in which women and their children live.

They cannot cover the expenses of educating women to take protective action for themselves and their children.

They cannot cover our shame as a society for letting this ever happen.

So, please give generously, your contributions will make a difference. Even a small token would go a long way to healing.

So, remember, the next time you're trying to figure out what to write in your fundraising letter, try any of the techniques above. You will be amazed at what it can do for your charity.

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## Now, for a unique way of fundraising



In South Korea they used a childlike robotic street fund-raiser called Dona. Every time someone placed money into its collecting pot it was programmed to respond with an appreciative bowing gesture. To watch the video go to: <http://www.thisisminsu.com/#!dona>

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