

Helping your donors to love what you send them through the post

Project 11b. Direct mail

Craig Linton, Stephen Pidgeon, Ellie Topham, April 2017

For senior management and trustee boards, this project will:

- Help the charity's leadership understand the fundamentals of direct mail and its role in a successful fundraising programme.
- Explain why it is important for the board to have oversight of data compliance and data policies.
- Show why emotion is the key element of successful direct mail.
- Introduce them to a range of techniques that will help them assess the quality of the fundraising creative produced by their team.

For donors, this project will:

- Increase the opportunities for donors to be inspired, engaged and entertained when they hear from a charity through the mail. Content will be more emotional and better presented.
- Increase the opportunities for donors to feedback on the mail they receive and give them control over the frequency and content of fundraising mail.

Overview

Everyone who works for a charity does so for the sake of the beneficiary – we provide help where it is needed. Whether it's our elderly neighbour, a sick child, a struggling farmer overseas or an abused animal. But right now our shouts for support are drowning each other out, and ultimately only the beneficiary will suffer.

How can we plan better as a sector to avoid individuals being inundated with our communications and ensure that that our messages get the attention they deserve rather than all being lost in such a crowded space? How can we plan better within our own organisations and across affiliated causes for net gain for our beneficiaries?

Are we leaning on technique too hard to the detriment of freshness and sincerity? Do all of our communications feel the same to our supporters? What would letters from charities look like if they were truly donor centric? How do we go about creating mailings that supporters look forward to as a means to stay in touch with a cherished cause? And is it true that if you don't ask, you don't get?

What must we do differently in direct mail communication with supporters to create an environment in which we can change the model we work with, to reflect the above? Is a better direct mail experience inevitably a more costly one? Are we too afraid of the pressures of return on investment (ROI) from within our organisations and from the public, to dare to make a change?

Right now, direct mail is a cost effective and valuable key point of contact with supporters and potential supporters. What can the sector do to counter the public perception of 'junk mail and begging letters'? How can we shine a light on direct mail as a crucial provider of funds for beneficiaries?

The body of this report is split into two parts.

- Part one is authored by direct mail specialist Stephen Pidgeon. It offers practical guidance and advice on how to plan and deliver high quality direct mail that will delight and inspire supporters.
- Part two is the result of a workshop attended by direct mail specialists from a wide range of fundraising specialists. It provides advice and examples of good direct mail that fundraisers can consider on how they can improve the donor experience for supporters.

There is also an appendix that features a case study from World Vision.

Summary recommendations

1. Understand direct mail and its role in the wider organisational and fundraising strategy

Direct mail is arguably the most tested form of fundraising. There is over a century of evidence of what works and doesn't. A good starting point is: <http://sofii.org/the-main-areas-of-fundraising/dm-door-drops-and-household-deliveries>. Understand the 'rules' that exist and use these to deliver inspiring mail to supporters.

However, rules are there to be broken and if overused then the impact can be diminished. For example, the original Amnesty International pen pack (see <http://sofii.org/case-study/amnesty-international-the-pen-pack>) was a powerful appeal about torture. The endless copycat mailings that followed and blindly inserted a pen without context (as it slightly boosted the initial response) is one example of how fundraisers neglected the overall, long term supporter experience for techniques to drive short term results.

Work to break down internal silos. Communicate with other departments.

- Ensure all stakeholders/supporter services staff are fully briefed when a mailing is sent so that any feedback from the public can be directed to the right team and an appropriate response given.
- Share your direct mail experience across your organisation – demonstrate how great direct mail can be used in other types of fundraising and communications other than individual giving e.g. corporate, community, marketing.
- Look at models outside the sector to better understand how they combine direct mail with other marketing channels, such as online or e-mail.

Appoint a trustee or board sub-committee to take overall responsibility for data compliance and policies. Make reporting on data compliance a regular agenda item and be clear on the supporter and financial impact of opt-in versus opt-out for direct mail fundraising.

2. Measurement and data

Measure the performance of all your direct mail and use data to provide a better experience for your supporters.

- Work towards a segment of one – understand supporters through their actions and feedback. Use this insight to treat them accordingly.
- Implement measurement around supporter engagement and lifetime value. Do not focus solely on short term return on investment (ROI).
- Review your key performance indicators (KPIs) for direct mail - look at the metrics that commercial and digital marketing use to measure customer satisfaction and sales and see if they can be adapted for your fundraising.
- Ensure there is not a difference between the messages and creative you use for recruitment and retention.

- Before any mailing make sure you screen your supporter or cold list against a death-screening service, the mailing preference service (for cold mail) and your own internal suppression list. Further information can be found in appendix 2 of the project 11 summary.
- Be ready for the new General Data Protection Regulation (this comes into force in May 2018) and the impending Fundraising Preference Service. Ensure your permission and data handling statements are up-to-date and easily available to supporters.

3. Creative

Be relevant. Few fundraisers write fundraising copy that can truly move donors to give their support. Most resort to the obvious, which is to describe the wonderful work of the charity. Many describe it in great detail and they do it with the rich energy of the enthusiast who knows the work achieves wonderful outcomes.

But they forget that nobody is interested in the work...only in the outcome of the work. And actually, most are mainly interested in the outcome that has been made possible by their own kind gift.

Be emotional. Nobody gives ordinary donations RATIONALLY, they give EMOTIONALLY. So when you are telling a story, it will be much more successful if the donor is drawn into the story and emotionally engaged before the story starts.

The concept and offer. Think of the concept as the connection device, in essence, the thing that GRABS attention. There are a myriad of connection devices.

Some of them are physical, like the flag in the Royal British Legion mailing that will be taken across the Channel and planted on Sword Beach with the donor's good wishes, seventy years after the D-Day landings.

Or the piece of string, just like the string that connects a child of four undergoing radio-therapy, when his mother has to be the other side of a lead door. A tug from each encourages both and the child remains still throughout the treatment.

Other classic fundraising offers can be found on SOFII. Three of our favourites are 'make a blind man see', 'buy a mosquito net' and 'sponsor a child'.

Remember, an appeal is about the donor not about the charity. The concept is delivered in words and images, and connects to the reader's emotional core. Once you have the concept, then you can start writing.

Be distinct. You should develop a unique reason to give that is clearly articulated in your direct mail.

- Try to sum up your proposition in 7 words.
- Imagine your communication without a logo – what about it makes it uniquely yours?

Be interesting. Only communicate if you have something to say. Surprise supporters - tell them something new and unexpected. Make it relevant to them.

Take a step back and be critical, in fact be brutal. Before you send anything ask yourself - Is this new information? How is it relevant to the person I'm sending it to? Does this excite me? Am I proud of it? Would I be excited to talk to someone about this over dinner?

4. Compelling copywriting and designing for response

There is a list of ‘do’s’ and ‘don’ts’ of copywriting and design in the *Direct mail that works* appendix. Additionally, further reading and resources to help you write and design compelling appeals that raise lots of money are listed in the body of the report.

It is important to remember that the majority of respondents to direct mail fundraising are over 60. Fundraisers should write and design their appeals accordingly.

To improve the supporter experience, all fundraisers should be aware of the work of Professor Voegelé on how people read direct mail (see a brief overview on the Happy Donors blog: <http://happydonors.com/?p=333>) and Colin Wheildon on design and readability (see Ken Burnett’s summary on SOFII: <http://sofii.org/article/sorry-but-youre-just-not-my-type>).

Additionally, free tools such as the Hemingway app <http://www.hemingwayapp.com/> can be used to give an indication on how readable and accessible your writing is.

5. Listening, feedback and outstanding customer care

Be a good listener. Try not to *assume* too much about supporters. Listen to feedback and ask for supporter’s opinions

- React to what donors are telling you - speed is key
- Talk to supporters before taking big actions.
- Make it a relationship and a conversation
- Have a strong complaints handling process. Encourage supporters to tell you their gripes and encourage feedback. There is lots of evidence that successfully resolving complaints increases loyalty and retention.

Be human. Offer a personal connection to the cause, introduce supporters to the individuals within the charity that they may deal with.

- Give named contacts in your direct mail so supporters know who to ask about any queries or to make a donation over the phone.
- Look for opportunities to get non-fundraising staff and volunteers to speak to your supporters. For example, some charities hold ‘thanking days’ where everyone is encouraged to call or write a thank you note to supporters.

Be open, honest and transparent.

- Share the impact of donations – both successes and failures.
- Be clear on campaign objectives – both internally & with the recipient.
- Be ready to share information on data you hold.

Part one: Direct mail that works

Introduction

In 1996 George Smith, the legendary fundraising writer and thinker published a guide to fundraising creative that is still, by far, the best encouragement to the development of appeals that work. Appeals that move the donor to support a project, knowing that, by doing so, they have had a small impact on the life of just one or two people. That book is *Asking Properly – the art of Creative Fundraising* and in an early section, George rails against the need for a list of writing rules. And if you can write as beautifully as he did in this next piece, then of course, you have no need for any guide.

‘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 direct roads. He died before we reached the hospital.’

But most of us do not have these gifts and the evidence of the last twenty-five years is that comparatively few fundraisers write fundraising copy that can truly move donors to give their support. Most resort to the obvious, which is to describe the wonderful work of the charity. Many describe it in great detail and they do it with the rich energy of the enthusiast who knows the work achieves wonderful outcomes.

But they forget that nobody is interested in the work...only in the outcome of the work. And actually, most are mainly interested in the outcome that has been made possible by their own kind gift. A great deal of fundraising is still based on a description of the charity’s work and the ask is for a gift to the charity to carry out the work.

This misguided path is further compounded by the current fashion for ‘story-telling’. Anyone who truly understands the task of story-telling, knows that a story simply doesn’t work unless the reader or listener is absorbed into it, emotionally. Just think of George’s lyrical piece above; as you read it, you were in that jeep, bouncing along the road. That is because it is beautiful writing.

But in the last five years, donors have been subjected to a plethora of appeals starting, ‘Hello, my name is Jane and I’d like to tell you about my wonderful son, Jack...’. And the story unfolds. But the story is told from the point of view of the charity. The story is about what the charity did for Jack. And few people are interested in either Jack or what the charity did for him. Why should they be? That arrogant assumption is based on the belief that the charity is important to the donor. And rationally, the charity may be important, though probably not. Nobody gives ordinary donations **RATIONALLY**, they give **EMOTIONALLY**.

So when you are telling a story, it will be much more successful if the donor is drawn into the story and emotionally engaged before the story starts.

So many charities make a hash of direct mail appeals, and they do so consistently, that it’s time for some basic ground rules to be established.

Some basics

Who gives in response to a direct mail appeal?

In short, older people. The supporter lists of most traditional charities have largely been built over many years using paper-based recruitment techniques.

Government wealth statistics show that, of the ten groups by which they segment the British public, the three wealthiest are defined as; couples with both members over state retirement age, those with one over retirement age and couples with non-dependent children. Older people have more money.

Older people are also likely to be retired so they have more time. And the absence of dependent children makes them more inclined to look outside for opportunities to influence. Giving to or volunteering with a charity partly satisfies that need to influence. So, in writing a direct mailing, bear in mind that the majority of donors you write to will be in an older generation, probably a lot older.

Fundraisers will know of the classic reasons people give when asked why they donate to a charity – sympathy, empathy, social justice, social norms, guilt and a large dose of self-interest. They enjoy the pleasure of giving, and so they should. Fundraisers may not be aware of the ‘identity’ research by Professors Sargeant and Shang of Plymouth University¹, and particularly their work in increasing donation values in campaigns to support local public TV and radio stations in the States.

Jen Shang found that, when talking to a supporter about their donation, quoting the value of a ‘higher than average’ gift from ‘another supporter’ just before making the ask, meant that the donation achieved was increased in value. There were limits to the size of the gift quoted, it couldn’t be too big for instance. Describing another donor’s (higher) gift was a clear influencing factor and worked both in direct mail and on the telephone.

But the cynical response might have been to ascribe that increase simply to the naming of a higher than expected value. And Jen showed that giving is much more complex than that. As well as outlining the gift value, she named the giver and in doing so, revealed the gender of the donor. Where the gender of the named donor was matched to that of the supporter, the value then given was around 25% higher than where there was a mis-match of genders.

Giving, it was concluded, and this has been confirmed many times since, is part of the donor’s identity, part of what makes them ‘tick’. Donating is not a transaction, and nor is it about money. The value of the gift is simply a product of the wealth of the person at the time.

Donating to your charity is fundamentally important to your supporters, it is part of their ‘identity’. So, endless demands for money, particularly when accompanied by a marked absence of feedback on the progress achieved with their gifts, is rude. It is uncaring and your ultimate objective, securing their legacy gift, is blown out, big time!

¹ Sargeant A. and Shang J. (2010). ‘Fundraising Principles and Practice’. Jossey Bass, San Francisco.

The three key and separate steps to crafting a great DM appeal

Step 1: The proposition

The trouble with the pundits who imply that simple story-telling will deliver a campaign is that fundraisers then view the message from the donor's point of view. The proposition is the answer to the donor's question 'Why should I give to this appeal now?' and this forces the fundraiser to think about the donor.

Pauline Lockier, fundraising copy-writer extraordinaire, uses this simple nine point plan and completes it every time she starts to write an appeal. I recommend it as a way of answering the natural questions the donor will ask themselves.

What is the problem?

What dangers and threats are there to a person, in a country, to a philosophy or set of beliefs? How is this relevant to the donor?

Who are the bad guys/what is the barrier or enemy that causes the problem?

What wrong things have they done/are doing that impact on your hero/victim that will make the donor feel they want to support your appeal?

Who is/are the victims in need of help from this appeal?

What is happening to him/her/them that will make your donor feel empathy with them?

Who is the hero?

What have they done/are doing and what is it that is heroic and admirable?

Why should I care about these people and this cause?

This often allows you to connect with your audience.

What can I do and what difference will I make if I give a donation?

The most important part of the communication. In essence, the proposition.

Why do I need to act now? And not in three months or three years?

This drives urgency.

Why should I give to this charity and not another similar charity?

The reassurance of the values and worth of the organisation.

What happens if I don't act?

How will the situation get worse and what will that look and feel like?

If you have strong answers to these questions, you should now have the answer to the question, 'Why should I give to this appeal now?'

Step 2: The concept

Think of the concept as the connection device, in essence, the thing that GRABS attention. There are a myriad of connection devices. Some of them are physical, like the flag in the Royal British Legion mailing that will be taken across the Channel and planted on Sword Beach with the donor's good wishes, seventy years after the D-Day landings. Or the piece of string, just like the string that connects a child of four undergoing radio-therapy, when his mother has to be the other side of a lead door. A tug from each encourages both and the child remains still throughout the treatment.

Others are word connections. On the envelope for instance – WaterAid’s ‘Give water, give life, give £2 per month’. RSPCA’s picture of a kitten with the words ‘Please don’t throw me away again’. These concepts connect with the donor.

Or words contained in the Johnson Box, occupying the space above the salutation in the letter of an appeal, but below the address, and designed to grab the reader’s attention and deliver the key message of the whole pack.

The simplest way to ‘grab attention’ is to use the name of the reader or, at very least, the word ‘you’. Remember, an appeal is about the donor not about the charity. The concept is delivered in words and images, and connects to the reader’s emotional core. Once you have the concept, then you can start writing.

Step 3: The do’s and don’ts of direct mail appeal writing

This is a check-list, it’s neither definitive nor comprehensive. But if all charities implemented just these few points, the effectiveness of direct mail would improve immeasurably.

DO:

- Use the word YOU a lot, meaning ‘you, the donor’. Use it many more times than you use the words I, WE or the charity’s name. Make it clear that it is the donor who is going to achieve the change you are talking about, not the charity
- By no more than two thirds down the first page of the letter, you must have hinted at whatever it is you want the donor to do
- And before the end of the first page, you must have asked for money
- Write the donation form first, it is the simplest embodiment of the concept
- Use metaphor to dramatise small wrongs: ‘A combine harvester, used at the wrong time, is like an executioner’s axe to a corn bunting’

DON’T

- Don’t use any phrase along the lines of ‘Please give us a donation and we will...’. Because ‘people give to people’, not to charities. Every fundraiser knows that and nearly everyone ignores it. So, don’t say: ‘You can help a child’s family by supporting us today’. Say: ‘You can help a child’s family today’
- Don’t use the phrase ‘Can you imagine...’. Your job as a writer is to make them imagine by using good description, analogies and metaphor. And some situations are quite impossible to imagine; ‘imagine you’re blind’, ‘imagine living in a slum in South Africa’, ‘imagine being homeless
- Don’t let a colleague in the ‘service-delivery’ part of the charity write copy or even change your copy (other than factual matters). Their expertise is not in writing fundraising copy, as yours is not in their profession. And the fact they write copious reports or magazine articles or have a GCSE or, especially, a degree in English, probably makes them less likely to be able to ‘connect’ with your donors through written words. Beware of those on any copy sign-off schedule, fiddling with your copy. If they don’t like it, get them to explain why and you can decide whether you agree with them

- Don't use jargon: biodiversity, building capacity, psychosocial and educational activities, a regular gift. There are thousands, don't use them.

And some do's and don'ts of direct mail design

DO:

- Remember; a message, a picture or anything else you put on the envelope has only one task: to get the envelope opened
- Make sure everything in the envelope looks authentic. If there's a hand written PS, make sure it's in the same hand as the signature, make the signature strong and bold, print it in blue
- Use pictures with eyes looking straight at the reader, close right up on the face
- Vary the format and the content of letters you write; make the appeal look and feel different every time
- Use reminder letters, but only occasionally. The reminder letter will routinely bring in a further 50% of the main letter's income.

DON'T:

- Show pictures with over-designed borders and drop-shadows
- Use poor pictures, buy good ones from the multitude of library shots available
- Don't make your appeals look and feel the same every time, vary what you do. Your job is to delight and surprise your donors

Encouragement to use Direct Mail

For at least ten or twenty more years, direct mail will be an essential tool in the fundraiser's armoury. Beyond that, the techniques honed in direct mail strategy for the last thirty years, will endure in any medium, because they deliver 'connection'.

A letter is SO personal. You may not use the medium yourself but there are millions of supporters for whom a letter is a delight. They own a disproportionately high percentage of the country's wealth, and their legacy gift will arrive long before that of younger supporters.

Why would you not master the skills of direct mail fundraising?

Part 2: Output from the direct mail workshop

Right now, direct mail is a cost effective and valuable key point of contact with supporters and potential supporters. What can the sector do to counter the public perception of 'junk mail and begging letters'? How can we shine a light on DM as a life-source for beneficiaries?

These are some of the questions we asked in a half-day workshop attended by charities small and large as well as agencies across creative and planning.

On the day we had representatives from the following charities and agencies:

Breast Cancer Care, Parkinsons UK, Shelter, Marie Curie, Sense, Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice Care, RNLI, World Villages for Children, St Johns Ambulance, The Air Ambulance Service, Riding for the Disabled Associated, Watson Phillips Norman, Wood for Trees, Brightsource.

The purpose and format of the workshop was to:

- Discuss hopes and fears around the role of direct mail today, and to discuss the best way forward in light of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the proposed Fundraising Preference Service (FPS).
- To review in small groups the composition and content of good and bad examples of direct mail work (brought along by attendees) to agree what makes a great direct mail pack, and what is a real direct mail sin.
- In small groups to discuss how we plan direct mail activities (including integration) within our organisations and across the sector to agree a charter of promises to reflect how we could plan better
- To have a round-table discussion on what else we should be doing as a sector to create an environment that will allow us to change our models as necessary.
- To at the end of the day have a vote on the day's best ideas.

The following is a summary of some of the themes that emerged, together with some examples of direct mail to illustrate the point being made.

Examples of direct mail and recommendations to improve the donor experience

Recommendation 1: Send relevant direct mail

Send donors relevant communications based on why they got in touch with you in the first place.

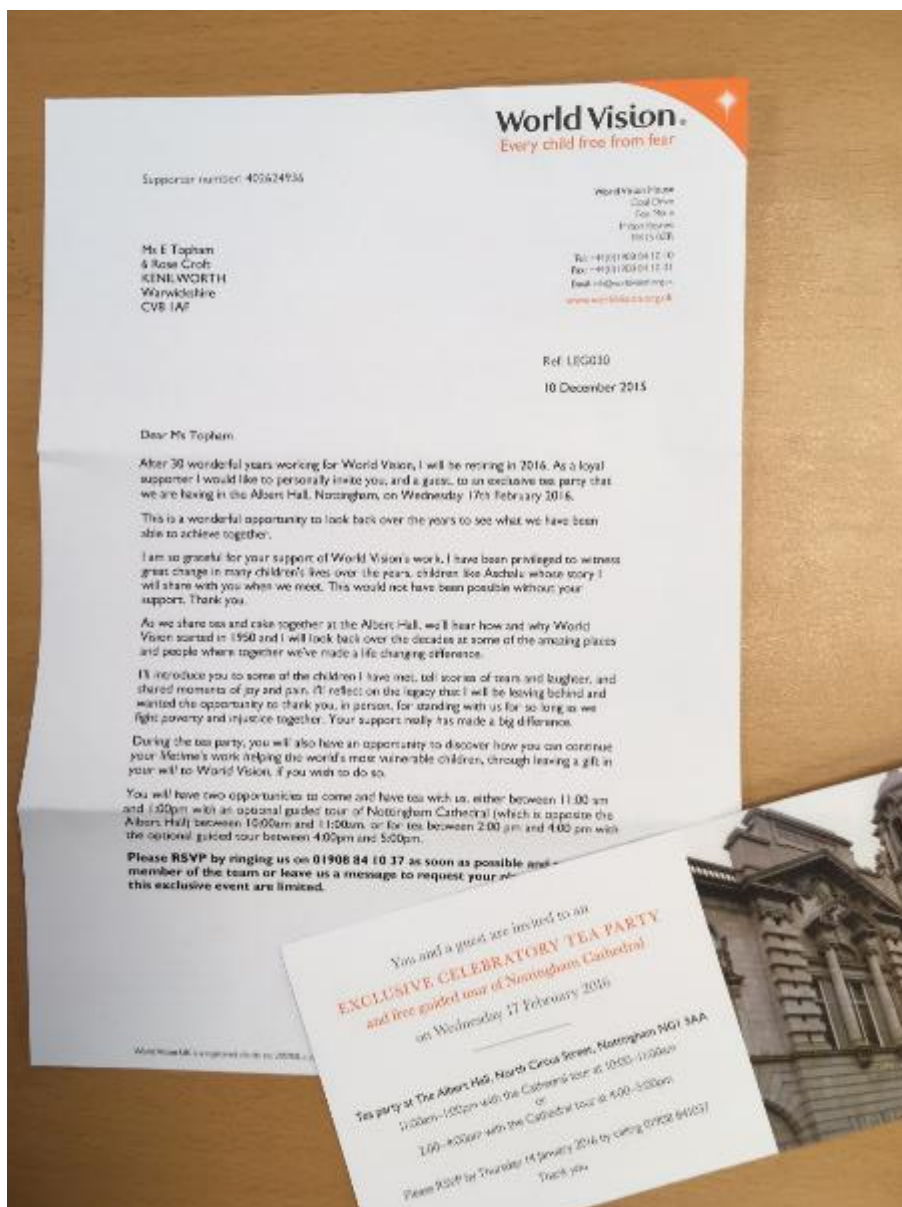
Example 1: British Heart Foundation

This letter includes an invitation to a Christmas remembrance event. People who couldn't attend were encouraged to write a message on a star in-memory of their loved one. This letter was sent to donors who had made a gift at a funeral.



Example 2: World Vision


Supporters were invited to an event to celebrate what had been achieved thanks to donor's support. The event included a section on legacy giving and was targeted at long standing donors of World Vision.



Example 3: Sue Ryder

This mailing was sent to a supporter who had made one donation at a charity shop. The group felt it was too hard hitting and reliant on guilt to be effective as a first communication. Whilst long-time supporters may appreciate the honesty, for someone who had simply dropped off a bag of goods at a shop, it was felt to be too much. There was also concern whether such an approach was sustainable i.e. you can only send a letter like this once.

Time is running out - please donate today



I don't have long

Dear Mrs Redmond,

My name's Richard. I'm 65 and I'm dying.

I don't have long to tell you about my experiences of Sue Ryder. About how nothing's ever too much trouble for the staff. Or how they came to see me at home when I was first diagnosed.

And now that I need them more, they never stop helping – at the centre, on the phone, coming to the house at 7am and managing my pain. All to make me more comfortable in my last days and months.

They help my wife with practical things, counselling, reflexology sessions, coffee and chats. But because of the nationwide cuts in spending, they now face a shortfall in income. I can't bear to think of them cutting the number of people they help – or the extra services like counselling for kids who've lost a parent. It's awful.

But unless Sue Ryder raises more money by the end of the year, they'll face that difficult decision about what to cut. This isn't about me, it's about those who come after me.

That's why I'm making this appeal. As a supporter of Sue Ryder Leckhampton Court Hospice, [please make a donation today – before it's too late.](#)

Recommendation 2: Think about how donors FEEL.

Always come back to this. Map how you want them to feel at each point in your customer journey plans. Measure how it impacts loyalty over time, and generosity.

Then take the opportunity to talk and listen to your donors – use the phone, face to face meetings and surveys (on and offline) to ask them how you are doing.

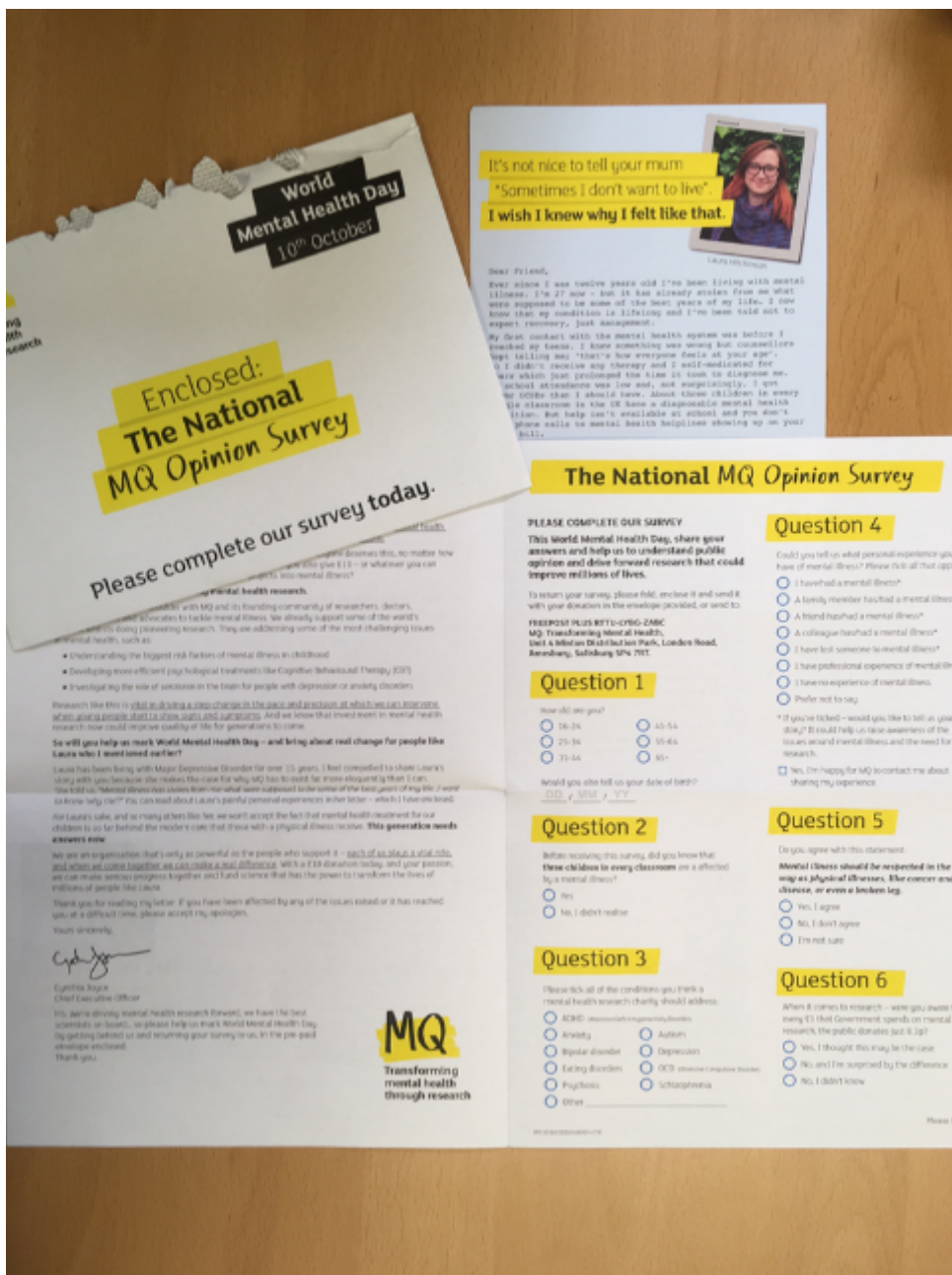
Example 1: The National Autistic Society

The NAS sent supporters this survey on autism and gave people the chance to provide feedback on their work and gather information on people’s connection to the cause (i.e. do they have or do they know someone with autism).



Example 2: Transform MQ

As a relatively new mental health charity, Transform MQ undertook a national survey to find out more about potential supporters. The charity were particularly pleased with the response they received from the 45-55 age group.



Recommendation 3: Be an ambassador, as well as a fundraiser

Use direct mail to engage supporters with your wider work and the difference they are making to your beneficiaries.

Example 1: Supporter newsletters

Newsletters can be a great way to keep supporters informed and inspired about your work.

Tom Ahern's *Raising more money than you ever thought possible from newsletters* contains a complete guide to writing great supporter- focussed newsletters.

On the Bloomerang fundraising blog, (<https://bloomerang.co/blog/follow-the-domain-formula-for-donor-newsletters/>) Tom also explains the approach of the now defunct, North American fundraising agency Domain and their successful 'formula' for supporter newsletters:

- Page count: no more than 4 pages (in tests, adding more pages did not produce more revenue)
- Article length: short
- Write for skimmers (i.e., requires professional quality headlines)
- Include a separate reply device
- Don't get distracted: be fully donor-committed. Send only to your donors. You have to talk to a single target audience
- Make the voice personal (the word "you" dominates) rather than institutional; get intimate
- Focus on "accomplishment reporting" (tell donors how much they have changed the world through their gifts)

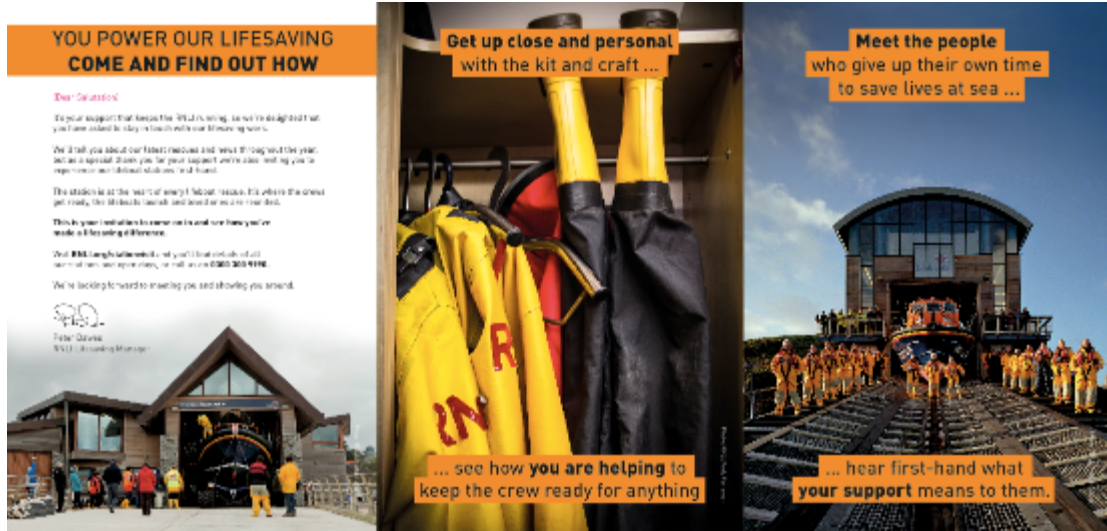
Here are a few front page images from UK supporter newsletters:

British Red Cross – LifeMatters



Example 2: RNLI invite to a lifeboat station

RNLI send a personal invitation to visit a lifeboat station. They do this as it gives them a chance to thank supporters and give them a chance to meet the crew and see first-hand the impact of their donations.



Recommendation 4: Be smart with data

There is an appendix to this report on using data correctly in individual giving. However, it is worth reinforcing the message that it is crucial to handle data in a compliant and sensitive manner. You also need to make sure you have transparent data policies in place and conduct internal audits on your data handling and use.

Example 1: ActionAid privacy statement

ActionAid have a jargon free data protection web policy and make it easy for supporters to contact them to update their preferences.

ActionAid privacy and data protection web policy

ActionAid respects your privacy and realises how important it is that your personal information remains secure.

We hope that this policy explains how we collect, manage and protect your details, but if you would like more information, or would like to change the way we communicate with you, please contact us here:

- **Email:** supportercontact@actionaid.org
- **Post:** Supporter Contact, ActionAid UK, Chataway House, Leach Road, Chard, Somerset TA20 1FR
- **Phone:** 0800 012 2038

Your personal data is protected by UK legislation, specifically the Data Protection Act 1998, and the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) 2003.

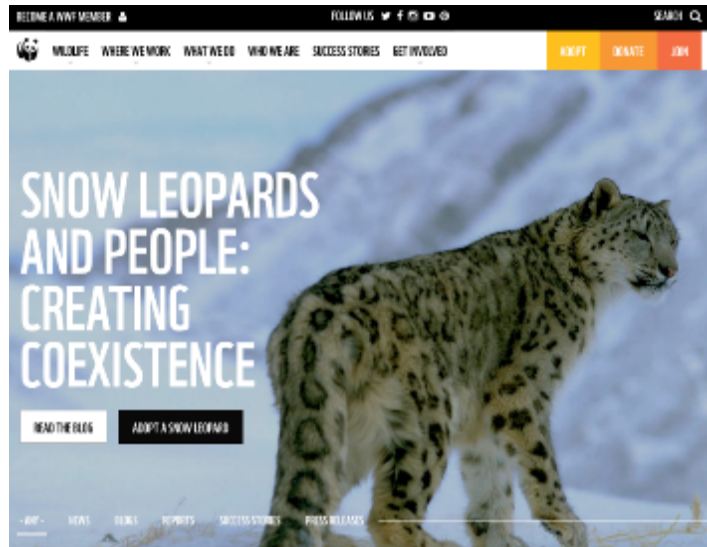
Consent

As a supporter, you're at the heart of everything we do. We'd love to keep you updated about our exciting work and the ways you can help, including campaigns and events that you might be interested in. We promise never to sell or swap your details and you can change your preferences at any time. To do so, simply call 0800 012 2038 or email dataprotection@actionaid.org.

Recommendation 5: Have a great offer and compelling reason to give

As outlined in the ‘Direct mail that works’ report having a great concept (also called fundraising offer or compelling reason to give) is essential for direct mail that people respond to.

Classic concepts include WWF’s ‘Adopt an animal for a monthly gift’:



The Friends of the Earth 'Bee Cause' campaign offered donors the chance to receive a 'Bee Saver Kit' in return for a gift of £15:

A Bee Saver Kit also makes a great gift for a friend

Donate £15 in the name of a friend, and we'll send them a Bee Saver Kit just like yours. It's a thoughtful gift for anyone who enjoys gardening, and a great way to save even more bees.



The Bee Cause folder •
 This useful folder is a great way to keep all your bee saving materials together, so you'll always be able to find what you need.

A guide to helping bees in your garden •
 This handy booklet is full of tips for transforming your garden into a haven for bees, so you can start saving bees today.

British wildflower seeds •
 Plant these bee-friendly seeds in your garden or flowerboxes and give hungry bees vital food and habitat.

Bee identification guide •
 With this guide, you'll soon be an expert at identifying the bees that are visiting your garden.

Bee-friendly garden planner •
 This garden planner will help you create a garden that is both beautiful and a bee-haven, providing wildflowers and nesting sites.

Your actual Bee Saver Kit may differ slightly to the image shown.

This CLIC Sargent pack was built on the insight unique to them – they use string to connect a child with their mother when they are undergoing treatments where they cannot be accompanied. The pack included a piece of string to bring this concept to life.



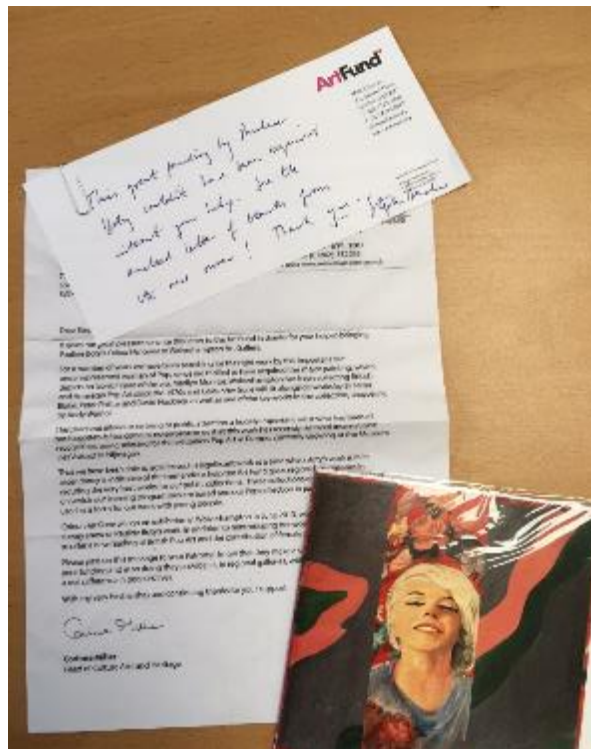
Recommendation 6: Thank properly and great customer service

Thank personally and quickly. As project 6 on emotion recommends, fundraiser's should aspire to be 'famous for frequent, fast, fabulous feedback'.

However, great thanking is not enough by itself. It needs to be accompanied by a charity wide culture of listening, respecting supports and providing outstanding donor care. As a minimum, you should have a clearly articulated fundraising 'promise' to supporters.

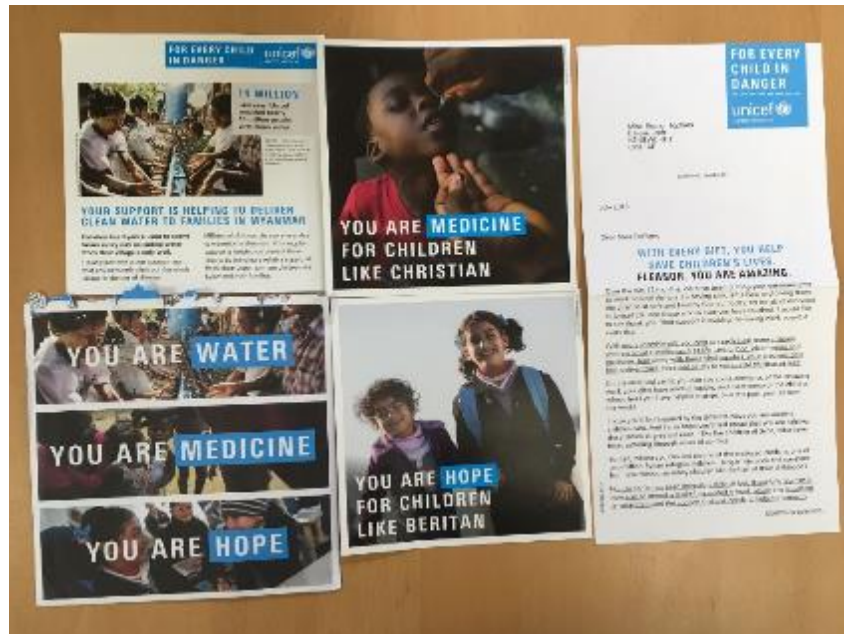
Example 1: The Art Fund

The Art Fund directly passed on a thank you letter sent to them to donor with a personal note saying this was possible thank to the (donors) generosity.



Example 2: UNICEF

UNICEF use personalisation in their thank you letter to directly connect the donor and beneficiary.



Example 3: Friends of the Earth

The media storm that blew up after the death of Olive Cooke, wrongly alleged to have been hounded to committing suicide by charity communications, prompted Friends of the Earth to hold internal discussions as to how they should respond, even though they weren't named as one of the offending organisations. They decided to get in touch with their supporters by email and letter to acknowledge the negative coverage, ask for feedback on the supporters' experience of Friends of the Earth communications and offer them a chance to comment freely on the charity's practices.

Find out more here:

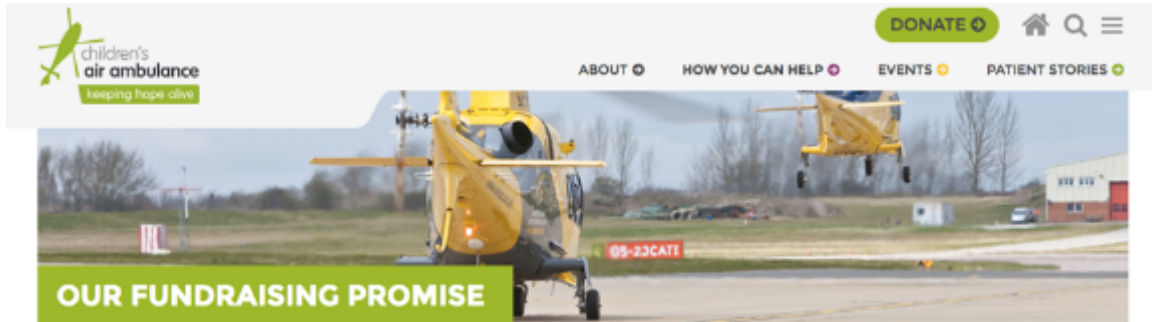
<http://sofii.org/case-study/friends-of-the-earth-steadying-the-ship-looking-after-your-supporters-when-a-media-storm-hits>



Example 4: Fundraising promises

Below are examples of fundraising promises from the children’s air ambulance and Princess Alice Hospice. There is also a mailing pack from Alzheimer’s Research, which includes a clear statement of ‘Our promise to you’.

Children’s air ambulance



We do not receive any government funding, and rely entirely on donations made by the general public. Our helicopters are literally lifted in the air by the kindness of people like you. Thank you.

Our fundraising promise to you:

- We will never share your data with any other organisation.
- We promise to provide information about our lifesaving work and our finances - so you can see how your money is being spent and the difference you're making.
- We promise to acknowledge any donation you make.
- If you tell us that you don't want us to contact you in a particular way, we won't.
- If you sign up to give us a regular monthly gift by Direct Debit, we won't ask you to increase that monthly gift for at least a year.
- We work to best practice (including safeguarding vulnerable people), and will take appropriate action promptly if we fail to meet our standards.
- We promise to check at the start of every conversation, on the phone or in person, that you're happy to speak to us.
- We will answer your questions. You can reach us from 9am - 5pm on 08454 130999* or email us at enquiries@theairambulance.org.uk

Our fundraising approach

Our fundraising costs

75% of the income we need is generated through fundraising from our local community

For every £1 donated:

- 85p is spent on delivering care and support
- 11p is spent on fundraising to secure further donations
- 4p is spent on management and administration

For every £1 invested in fundraising we return £5.48

Use and management of supporter data

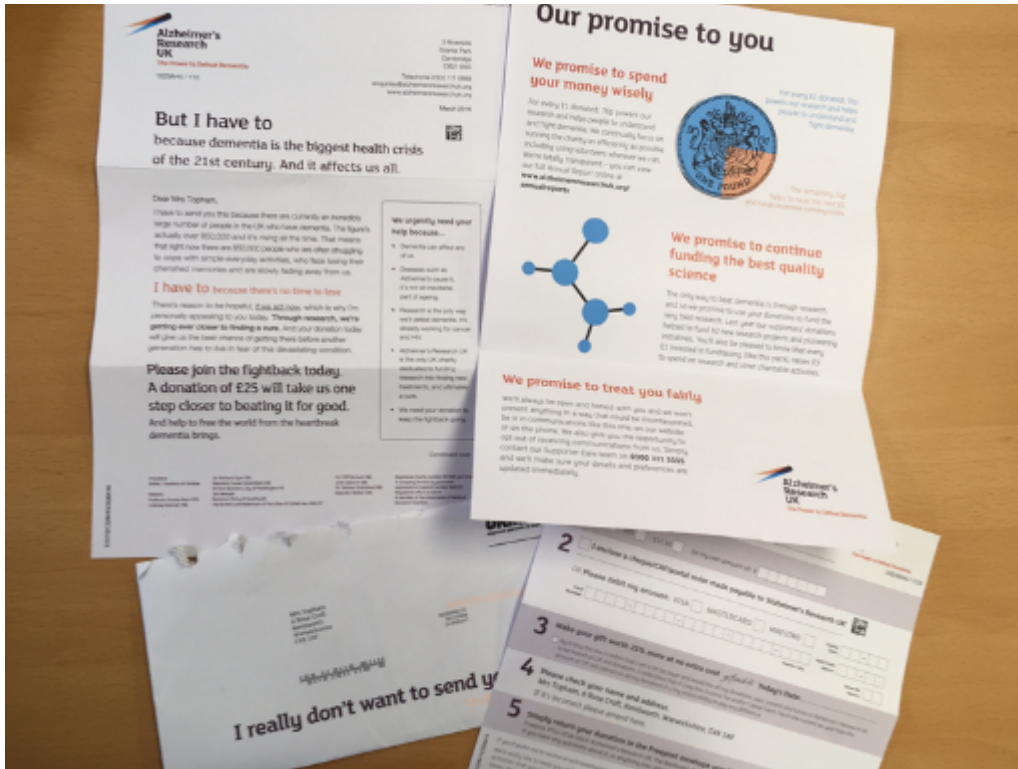
When we collect data from our supporters we allow them to make decisions about how we can contact them. They can opt out of receiving any future communications via mail or telephone and they can opt in to any communications via email and text message.

In addition we have recently introduced a more flexible way to allow our supporters to tell us what they want sent to them. The seven options they can choose from are:

- Events marketing
- Fundraising appeals
- Hospice news / newsletter
- Memorial appeals eg Light up a life
- Princess Alice Hospice shop news and offers
- Raffles and lotteries
- Volunteer news and opportunities

We record these preferences on our database and use them whenever we select data for marketing purposes. You can let us know your preferences by filling in our [Communication Preference form](#) and sending it to us at supportercare@pash.org.uk

Alzheimer's Research



Appendix 1: Additional income plus cost savings from a digital print strategy - a direct mail case study from World Vision

A change in strategy in 2012 has meant that World Vision has been able to reverse a significant downturn in direct mail income, as well as making clear cost savings. The case study centres on the birthdays of the children supported by kind sponsors in UK.

These birthdays provide pivotal fundraising opportunities, but the process of sending out a blank card to the sponsor, getting them to sign and return it with a donation, then landing it on the child's doorstep in time for the birthday, took up to four months and required significant additional staffing six times a year. Staff had to make data selections, organise print through one agency, and through another, co-ordinate the emails arriving both on the same day as the letter and a reminder two weeks later. Six times a year, around 18,000 people needed contact.

And nobody wants to think about somebody's birthday four months before the date. Donation responses were going down.

A new strategy based on the digital printing of all letters and emails was devised. Every week, the database finds the sponsors of children whose birthdays are 2 months away and fires this data off to the agency Brightsource, along with information about the child whose birthday is coming up. It does that automatically, with nobody looking at it.

A database at the mailing house picks up that data automatically and, from rules given to it, decides the type of card the child might like and the extra asks that World Vision wants to make of the supporter. The system then sends the right information to the print production line to create the personalised mailpack for that supporter. It also sends similar information to an email system to create a personalised email that lands on the same day as the mailpack, with a reminder two weeks later. And, it creates a personalised web page based on the information, with a personalised URL to access it.

When the supporter gets the mailpack, they simply fill in the card and donation form and send them back. Or they can go online to their own web page, choose the design of their card, enter their message and make a donation. That information is then sent to the print line which prints the card, sending it to World Vision for despatch to the field.

This 'lights out' process keeps running with no human intervention and the impact on results has been significant. The downturn in income has been dramatically reversed with higher response rates and donation values. Workflow at World Vision has been smoothed and cost savings achieved. The sponsors have a better product at a more appropriate time and each child gets a card on their birthday.

Information kindly supplied by Mark Dibden, Head of Supporter Experience, World Vision