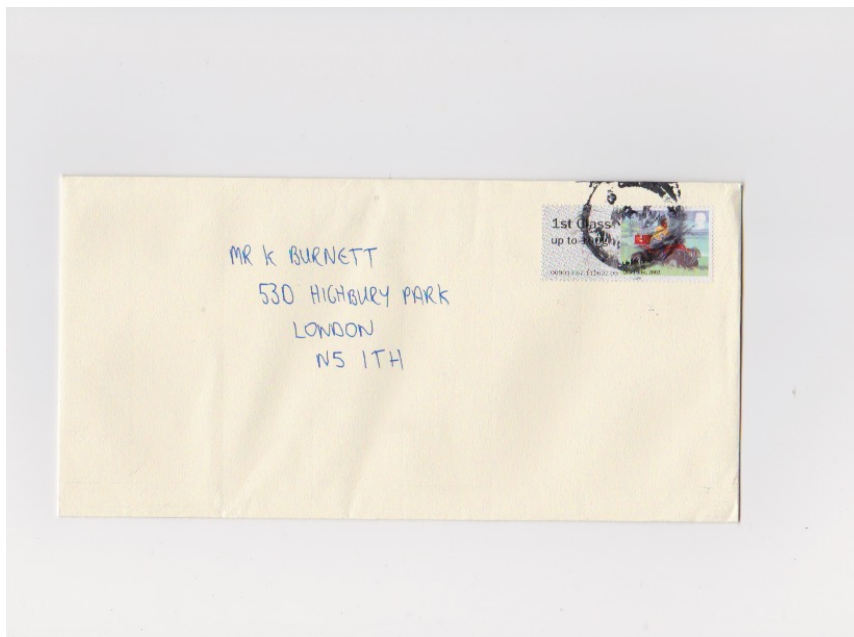


SOFII letters to look out for, #3 late Summer 2018

The fundraiser's best friend

A personal view from Craig Linton

The outer envelope, once again hand-addressed with a real stamp, this time followed by four pages that focus on how lone fundraisers in small organisations get valuable support and information from sofii.org. The letter then explains why fundraisers need to be change-makers and angelic troublemakers and goes on to take new fundraisers to some surprising places. Read on here...



The Showcase of Fundraising Innovation and Inspiration

The SOFII Foundation, 53d Highbury Park London N5 1TH, UK. Tel: 020 7226 7140.
Reg. Charity No 1124743. www.sofii.org.

SOFII is my best friend in fundraising. She's helped me through some tough times, stopped me from acting stupid and saved me wasting money at the charities I've worked for.

I will be forever grateful. How I wish she'd been around when I started my career. I could've learned a lot from her. Instead I had to figure out certain things for myself.

You'll realise, I'm sure, why that's just not good enough for today's young, ambitious fundraisers. Today's fundraising needs changemakers and angelic troublemakers, who to be effective need to be constantly inspired and superbly well-equipped. Amazingly, you can now help them to be just that.

September 2018

Dear Ken,

I cringe when I think of some of the mistakes I made in my early career, simply because I didn't know any better. Thank-you letters so devoid of emotion that even Scrooge would find them cold. Sending a direct mail letter with no response form or reply envelope. Failing to develop strong relationships with major donors *before* asking them for money.

If SOFII had been around then to guide me, I'm sure I would've avoided many of these rookie errors.

Which brings me to my reason for writing to you today. SOFII has been there for me many times over the last decade. What about you? **What's your SOFII story?** Has she ever helped you? A colleague? A client? I'd love to hear your SOFII story.

And what about the start of your fundraising career? What mistakes did you make? What essential fundraising 'truths' do you wish you'd known, back then? How could SOFII have helped you?

I'd say fundraising was easier when I started in 2000. No social media. No excessive press scrutiny. Cheap and plentiful donor recruitment.

A donor stops giving? We'll just buy another one. 'Shooting

Continued...

fish in a barrel' is how some people described the 90s and early 00s for mass-market, direct response fundraising!

And now? Things are much tougher. We have to work harder than ever to recruit new supporters. The donor experience matters. We can't merely pay lip-service to it. We can't get away with the things we used to. There isn't a plentiful supply of people to replace those donors who we don't inspire to keep giving.

Frankly, I think it would be much harder starting out today than back then.

SOFII: the new fundraiser's friend

And because it's much harder, we need to give fresh fundraisers all the support they need.

Which is why SOFII is so important. Where else can a new fundraiser access the treasure trove of fundraising inspiration and innovation that SOFII holds?

The Wikipedia of fundraising relies on an army of fundraisers to contribute to her unique library. She also needs an occasional helping hand and a few quid from successful fundraisers like you and me.

To see how vital that help can be, for a fledgling new fundraiser, I'd like now to introduce you to my friend Grace.

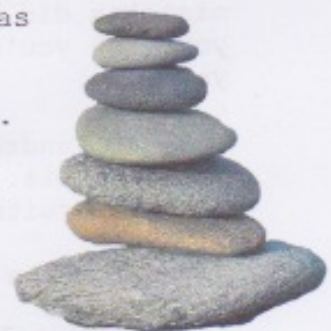
Help Grace learn the fundamentals of fundraising

Grace has just started a new career as a fundraiser at a small, regional charity. She studied marketing at university and has done voluntary work in the past. She's bright, hard-working and cares passionately about the cause.

She asks her boss if she can go on a course to learn the basics of fundraising. Sadly, there just isn't the budget. She is feeling a bit lost and doesn't really know where to start. Is this really the career she wants? Perhaps it was a mistake?

At this point, many people give up on fundraising. For Grace, just when she's about to throw in the towel, a ray of hope emerges. She stumbles across a group on Facebook for fundraisers.

She asks a couple of questions and gets some useful advice. A kind, fellow fundraiser tells



her about SOFII. Grace is directed to SOFII's section on starting out in fundraising.

The first exhibit she reads is **Lisa Sargent's before and after thank-you letter surgery**. She thought the letters she was sending were a bit boring and she immediately re-writes the standard thank you on her database.



She's a bit unsure whether it will work but she trusts SOFII. Just two weeks later she's delighted when she bumps into a supporter at an event. The supporter tells Grace that it is the best thank you she has ever received and it made her day reading it.

Grace feels amazing! Inspired, she goes back to SOFII. She reads **the 34 fundamental foundations of fundraising**. She looks at the reports from **The Commission on the Donor Experience**. Eager to write brilliantly to her donors she delves into the step-by-step **direct mail tutorials of Jerry Huntsinger**, America's dean of direct mail. She disappears down the rabbit hole of SOFII's 700+ case-history exhibits. She watches the **'I wish I'd thought of that'** videos and measures her good intentions against the **32 lightbulb moments** short video series.

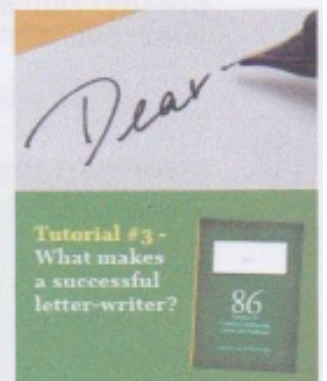
Grace is inspired. Her brain is whirring. Before you know it, she has 79 ideas to improve fundraising in her small charity!

The generous and loyal supporters who fund SOFII have saved the day! A talented and enthusiastic fundraiser is not lost to another sector.

SOFII is needed more than ever

In this new era of responsible fundraising and improved supporter experience, SOFII is needed more than ever.

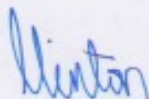
Please help her to keep inspiring new fundraisers like Grace around the world. As Howard Luck Gossage (another SOFII favourite) said, 'Changing the world is the only fit work for a grown woman or man'.



Let's help fundraisers like Grace to be the change makers and angelic troublemakers of the future.

With grateful thanks and appreciation.

Yours sincerely,



Craig Linton,
SOFII Trustee

PS. This is the third in a series of letters to look out for, from SOFII. The next letter – from Thailand – will be with you in four to six weeks' time. If, in the meantime, you'd like to know more about SOFII and how you and your colleagues can help her to keep delivering the constant stream of innovation and inspiration that fresh fundraisers find so useful, please contact Sue Kershaw at the address below. She'll be happy to explain the many benefits that come with being a SOFII business partner. Or, please contact me by email at craig@fundraisingdetective.com – particularly if you've got your own SOFII story that you can tell me about.



Craig Linton loves helping charities improve their supporter experience. He has run his own consultancy and recently joined Donor Voice as their managing director for Europe. He blogs at www.fundraisingdetective.com and has written numerous articles and advice on fundraising. His book, *Donors for Life: a practitioner's guide to relationship fundraising*, written with Paul Stein, was published in 2017. In addition to serving on SOFII's board he's also a trustee at Thames Hospice, Windsor and on the advisory panel at Rogare – the fundraising thinktank based at Plymouth University.

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