

Psephology Today

Campaign Secrets, Hot Tips & How-to Strategies for Winning Candidates

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Psephology (see-fol-oh-gee) *noun* - The study of political elections



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If They're Good Enough for Fundraising...

Dear Winner's Circle Member,

I've been asking this question for, like, forever: If a 4-page letter is good enough to ask someone for a contribution, why isn't a 4-page letter good enough to ask someone for their **VOTE**?

The answer is: It is. Such letters could be very effective for all kinds of reasons. Here are just two:

- 1.) No other candidates are doing it, so you'll stand out from the crowd.
- 2.) If you're a relatively unknown candidate, the old adage that "the more you tell, the more you sell" holds true.

Of course, the same rules that apply to fundraising letters also apply to vote-raising letters - headlines, compelling, benefit-driven copy, P.S., call to action, etc. Which means you can't just slap 4 pages worth of gobble-di-gook on a letter and expect to make a splash.

But a well-written, professionally-produced appeal for votes in a standard 4-page letter could be very effective. And to give you an idea of exactly what I'm talking about, I've enclosed a copy of one I recently mailed in this month's package Winner's Circle packet. Onward and rightward...

Dr. Chuck Math

Professor of Psephology
(Homeschooled)

Why send donor receipts right away? What's the rush?

By Jeff Brooks/*Future Fundraising Now*



Among the problems a nonprofit might have, "We're getting so many donations we're having trouble keeping up" would have to be one you'd prefer over most.

That's the problem a certain organization faced recently. They were growing fast (because they had retained the services of TrueSense Marketing, thank you very much), and they were struggling to process and receipt all the donations quickly.

They wanted to know: Can you quantify the value of quick vs. slow receipting? Is sending receipts out within 24 hours better than sending it without 48 hours? Is two days better than two weeks? If it will cost us 20% more to cut the time in half, will it be worth the investment?

Interesting questions. And I don't know the answers. I've never done or seen tests on the impact of receipt timing on subsequent giving. Who would run such a test?

But I do know these things:

1. Sloppy organizations with slow receipting usually have very poor donor retention. (Of course, sloppy organizations usually have other problems as well, like haphazard fundraising, messy data, and a general inability to communicate clearly.)
2. Recency is the most important predictor of likelihood to give. If a donor is stuck in

processing mode for a month or two after giving, their most-likely-to-give period can easily pass without an opportunity to give a subsequent gift.

3. One of the most common reasons donors give for stopping their support for a given charity is "They didn't need my gifts." Nothing signals your gift doesn't matter quite so loudly as taking a long time to acknowledge it.

None of that knowledge directly answers the question. It just tells us that quicker receipting is probably better than slower.

We kicked the question around for a while. Then one of my colleagues gave another reason for quick response to donors: Politeness.

You receipt as quickly as you possibly can for the same reason you sent Grandma thank you notes for giving you gifts: It's the polite thing to do. That's how you treat an important person like Grandma.

I'm sure if there were studies on such things, they'd show that kids who promptly write thank-you notes to their grandmothers do better at holidays and birthdays than the kids who don't.

But that's not why you do it. You do it because you love Grandma. She matters to you.

That's also why you should acknowledge your donors as fast as you possibly can. If you're doing some kind of math that basically asks "How little can I get away with thanking my donors?" then something's wrong with your thinking. You don't love them -- and you're probably going to make all kinds of response-crushing mistakes beyond taking forever to say thank you.

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Are you treating your donors right? The quiz.

By Katya Andersen/Non-profit Marketing Blog

So do you treat your donors well? To figure it out, take this quiz.

And remember the rock bottom, bare minimums when it comes to donor stewardship!

1. **ALWAYS THANK YOUR DONORS:** Always. No exceptions.
2. **THANK THEM EARLY:** You should thank your donors within a few days of their gift.
3. **THANK THEM OFTEN:** Thank your donors several times, over time, and keep reporting back on the difference they have made.
4. **THANK THEM ACCURATELY:** Make sure you have correctly spelled the donor's name, stated the amount and date of the donation, included appropriate language for taxes and carefully noted if the gift was made in honor of someone else.



If I had a dollar for every charity that didn't do these four things when I gave...

How to avoid the 2 killer mistakes of fundraising

By Jeff Brooks/*Future Fundraising Now*

Nonprofits have to navigate their way between the Scylla and Charybdis of fundraising: The two errors in thinking that can sink your fundraising effectiveness.

1: Hating everything that's been done before

You'd rather do anything than direct mail fundraising. It's just so old hat, so tired. Email, which in marketing terms has yet to come in to its own, and is growing at explosive rates -- to you, it's dead already. Even Facebook is a tired old steam locomotive.

If you think this way, you miss the big opportunities. Because the big ones are the older ones. You're also an easy mark for con-artist consultants who prey on your particular attitude by offering half-baked, exciting-sounding schemes.

2: Needing guaranteed success for everything you do

You can't do a thing unless there's an iron-clad performance pro forma and documented best practices. You're not so much a late adapter as a never adapter.

No innovation is possible if you insist on guarantees. Every successful thing ever done started as a risky, unproven idea. If you never innovate, you find yourself in an ever narrower hole, less and less able to keep growing.

Either extreme is bad. But there's something worse. Some organizations actually embrace both of these destructive tendencies at once. They hate to focus on the old stuff they're tired of, yet they're terrified of actual innovation.

So they end up chasing the latest fad: Red Cross raised millions via text messaging during the Haiti Quake; suddenly, hundreds of organizations were crying "Get us some of that text-to-give!" Same thing happened with the famous yellow wristbands; after that cultural phenomenon, literally hundreds of nonprofits tried to get on the bandwagon with other-colored wristbands of their own.

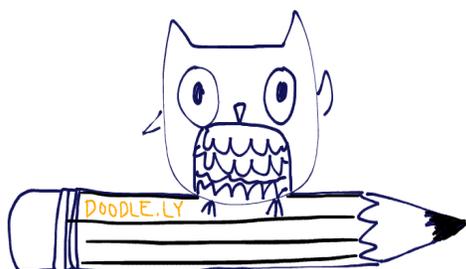
The smart path between these two attitudes is this:

If lots of people are doing something, that's a good indication that it's been tested and refined and it works. If you aren't exploring it, you are probably making a costly mistake. If a fundraising approach has been around for a long time (like direct mail), that doesn't necessarily mean it's old and tired. More likely it means it's powerful.

Don't be afraid of failure. Be aware of best practices and past experiences, but don't be afraid to try new things. Take risks in ways that limit your exposure in case you fail -- which you will, more often than not.

"The direct mail fundraising copywriter's job is to write a letter so persuasive that our reader - whom we've never met - will send a contribution back in the mail and receive nothing specific in return except a promise that some good will be accomplished with the donation. ... The direct mail fundraiser must primarily appeal to the side of the reader's brain that wants to be generous, that wants to do good for others. This is no easy feat." - **Benjamin Hart**

**How to Boost your Fundraising
by Changing One, Single Word**
By Jeff Brooks/Future Fundraising Now



Writing fundraising copy poorly is pretty easy. Writing it well is hard. Getting it from bad to good is devilishly difficult.

But here's one way, from Karen Zapp, to make not-so-good copy into pretty decent copy. And it's easy: What SINGLE change can improve any fundraising appeal?

Here's Karen's one change: Change the word "we" to "you." And here's how it plays out:

We sent 220 volunteers to Joplin to help them rebuild. Ten families are now living in their homes again. This is just one example of what Acme Charity has done in this past year.

Yawn. But change we to you, and you get:

You helped send 220 volunteers to Joplin. Ten homes were rebuilt and families are living in their homes again. This is just one example of what Acme Charity has done in this past year.

There's still a lot more that could make that paragraph stronger -- but that simple change transformed it from organizational navel-gazing into genuine donor-connecting fundraising.

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NOTE: Your **Campaign Doctor** is scheduled to speak on **Tuesday, June 19 at 1:45 pm**. Topic: *"Winning Nonpartisan, Local, State and Judicial Elections. You're not running for President. Find out here the tools you will need to make your campaign run on your budget at the local level."*

Hope to see some of you there!

What Makes or Breaks a Fundraising Event?

By Kevin Gentry

What are the specific ingredients for a successful fundraising event? From a big-picture and structural standpoint, *what makes or breaks a fundraising event?* Here's my "Top 10" –

Do your donor prospects have the capacity to contribute? This might seem like a no-brainer, but it is an important starting point. If your event attendees are capable of writing \$10,000 checks, then you might receive some \$10,000 contributions. But if your guests really only have the ability to contribute in the \$100 range, well, you're not going to get many \$10,000 checks. Taking this a step further, we know in direct mail that if we mail \$5+ donor lists, we'll be lucky to get an average gift above \$15; if we mail \$100+ lists, the average contribution might hover around \$125; and wow, shock of all shocks, if we mail \$1,000+ donor lists, the average gift might be... around \$1,000.

Are your donor prospects philosophically aligned with your point of view? Perhaps another no-brainer, but you might be surprised at how many well-intentioned hosts believe your powers of persuasion will provide a Road to Damascus conversion to their most politically polar-opposite next-door neighbors. I'm not saying this task is impossible, but I would suggest you stick to hunting where the ducks are.

Have your donor prospects shown a propensity for giving? Okay, now we're getting into a tricky area, but I think this is one of the most important yet frequently overlooked points. We are creatures of habit. If you already contribute multiple gifts to charitable causes every year, you're an excellent prospect to give again. But if you haven't yet developed this behavior, you're unlikely to start at a fundraising reception. Years ago I met with the founder of a major catalog retailer. How did he build his customer base? "Mailing our catalog to the merchandise buyers of the other major catalog retailers, of course," he

"A study from GI Direct, reported in the Talon Newsletter, found that over 70% of adults surveyed said they are 5X more likely to respond to properly personalized direct marketing mailings vs. non-personalized mailings."

- Copywriter Bob Bly

said. *Of course!*

Can your host build a sufficient crowd? There is a tremendous tendency to overpromise here, to optimistically believe you'll pack 'em in. But achieving a significant turnout requires really hard work. And just having your event in a nice, big, beautiful home might not do the trick. Remember the first time you mailed invitations to an event and were disappointed that 100% of your invitees didn't say yes? Depending on the circumstances, you might be lucky to get a 15% acceptance rate. You mailed forty invitations? That sounds great. But gulp, only six couples said yes? What might be important to you might not seem quite as important to your prospective customer. How do you help make the offer irresistible?

Are you clear about what problem you're trying to solve, or the threat you're working to address? Do you believe your prospects consider this problem to be relevant to their everyday lives? Do your prospects see this problem as a credible threat to their well-being? In Ludwig von Mises' model of Human Action, he suggests the importance of creating a restless discontent. Are you doing this with your non-profit, your cause or even your political candidacy? It's amazing how often this indispensable element of Fundraising 101 gets overlooked. If there's no imminent

threat, then who really cares about your activities – other than, of course, because you’re a wonderful human being.

How is it that you’re proposing to solve this problem? Do your prospects view your proposed solution as effective, reasonable and credible? Here’s where your host steps in. Her key role is as a certifier of your incredibly important work. Will your host’s guests accept her endorsement and trust her recommendation? This is analogous to the signer of your direct mail prospecting package. Or the celebrity spokesperson you’ve chosen to hawk your cause. Years ago a dear but silly aunt of mine had purchased some cheesy product she’d seen promoted in a television infomercial. I asked her why. “Because Tennessee Ernie Ford (an American recording artist) told me to – I really like and trust him, and I’d do pretty much anything Tennessee Ernie Ford told me to do.” Oh well.

Will your prospects view you and your organization as the best means of addressing this problem? Do you have a smart plan? Does your strategy make sense? Is it logically organized and well thought-out? Does your plan provide a budget and timeline to help you achieve success? Sara Rainwater used that wonderful expression about separating the wheat from the chaff. Well, here’s where you make the difference between a \$100 feel-good-contribution made by a guest to please the host or a \$5,000 save-the-world contribution that the prospect believes will help you make a difference. Now that’s getting down to business!

Is there an urgency about your efforts? You want your donor prospects to quite literally pull out their checkbooks and hand you contributions for the maximum amount they can give. Right then and there. On the spot. The problem-solution framework is so time-sensitive that action must be taken **now**. You absolutely cannot let them go home to think about it. Well, you can, I guess. But nine times out of ten you’ll never hear from them again. Back to Tennessee Ernie Ford and the

infomercial. Ever wonder why they say things like, “Order before midnight tonight,” “Call now, operators are standing by,” “This is a limited offer,” etc., etc. You’ll never hear them say, “I’d respectfully ask that you consider this valuable offer, sleep on it, talk it over with your family, and call our toll-free operator back in a couple of weeks if you think you might be interested.”

What about social proof? If you haven’t read Professor Robert Cialdini’s *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* at least ten times, then you’re still not ready for real marketing! As you surely must know, crowd dynamics are very powerful. This is what Cialdini calls social proof. It’s the power of laugh tracks, standing ovations, and mad dashes on Black Friday after Thanksgiving. If you’ve greased the skids a bit for a few folks to step forward and start pledging in the \$5,000 - \$10,000 range, then you’ll very likely get other checks of that magnitude. If the checks start at \$100 - \$250, the same goes. And if a crank steps forward and really poo-poops what you’re doing, well, you might be out of luck.

And what about reciprocity, authority, commitment & consistency, liking and scarcity? On this closing note, if you don’t recognize the reference, then you’ve just proven to me you haven’t properly studied Cialdini’s important work. If you’re able to integrate *all* of these key principles of persuasion into your meet-and-greet and pitch-for-funds, then you’re going to have to get a Brinks Armored Truck to deliver the event’s proceeds back to your office.

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Dr. Chuck Muth, PsD

Muth's TRUTHS

Grabbers that Grab

There's a good chance you've never heard the term "grabber," but there's also a pretty good chance that you've received one in the mail without even realizing it.

A grabber is something usually attached to the front of a fundraising or sales letter that "grabs" your attention as soon as you open the. Thus the term "grabber."

Ingenious, no?

Just about anything could be a grabber. Perhaps the most popular grabber throughout direct marketing history has been, not surprisingly, money. Indeed, the "dollar bill letter," in which an actual dollar bill is clipped to the top of a letter, is a classic. That almost always will get your attention - and unless you almost immediately get your recipient's attention, your entire letter campaign could be a colossal waste of time and money.

If a dollar is too rich for your blood, maybe you've seen letters with pennies taped to the top of the letter. Or a quarter. Or a dime.

But a good grabber does not have to be money. It could be a postage stamp. A gift certificate. A tiny bag of sand. Peel-and-stick self-addressed labels. The sky's the limit. The only qualifier is that whatever you use should ideally somehow tie into the message of your letter. Here, let me give you an example.

Let's say you're writing a letter to raise funds for your campaign. And a key part of your campaign

is your proposal to alleviate the headache associated with filling out your tax return every April 15. As such, you attach one of those little packets of aspirin at the top of your letter and open up with something like this:

"As you see, I've attached a packet of aspirin to the top of this letter. Why have I done this? Because I have a plan to help end the headache we all face on Tax Day every year, and I thought the aspirin was a particularly appropriate way to grab your attention. Here's what it's all about."

Get it?

Now let me share with you a pretty cool grabber I'm using right now to promote ticket sales to our annual Conservative Leadership Conference in Las Vegas June 8-10 (www.CLC2012.com).

Our targeted audience is, as you'd suspect, pretty darned conservative. That means the vast majority are staunch gun rights supporters.

In addition, another rule of marketing/sales is that "celebrity sells."

As such, a darned good grabber for us would be a hunting rifle autographed by rock-and-roll legend Ted Nugent!

Alas, the ATF would have a problem with us attaching a hunting rifle to the top of thousands of letters. In addition, at several hundred dollars each, it would be cost-prohibitive for us to attach a hunting rifle at the top of thousands of letters. Not to mention the understandably impossible odds of

getting Ted Nugent to personally autograph thousands of hunting rifles. So...

We did the next best thing.

We were able to get one high-quality hunting rifle donated to our event. And we were able to get Mr. Nugent to autograph the stock of that one hunting rifle. And then we printed up a couple thousand RAFFLE TICKETS for a raffle of the gun that will be held at our event.

Now, the cost of printing the raffle tickets is pretty much nothing. Dirt cheap. You could print your own up on your laser printer just using some good card stock.

And while we priced the tickets at just \$10 each, we easily could have bumped the perceived value up by setting the raffle ticket price at \$25, \$50 or even \$100 each.

So to grab attention and take advantage of Mr. Nugent's "celebrity," I included a FREE (powerful sales word!) raffle ticket with the letter inviting folks to attend this year's event (which, by the way, simultaneously triggered the Law of Reciprocity - see page 20).

This grabber definitely grabs attention, especially considering the nature of the audience we're targeting. And it certainly tied into the subject material of the letter. And it had a high perceived value in the eyes of the recipients.

Now, one word of caution: Many, if not every, state, has laws governing the operation of a raffle. LEARN THE LAW in your state before employing this particular tactic. That said, by giving away the raffle tickets as complimentary gifts rather than actually selling them for cash puts you in a safer position. And the additional money you'll likely receive in donations to your campaign/organization or ticket sales to your event will more than make up for the cost of printing the raffle tickets, as well as the cost of the great prize you'll be raffling off.

By the way, I've included one of the tickets with this month's newsletter. It's real. So fill it out and mail it back to me ASAP and maybe, just maybe, YOU'LL be the winner of the autographed Ted Nugent hunting rifle!

30 Ways to Get a New Donor/Voter

Marketing expert Dan Kennedy relates in his book "The Ultimate Success Secret" a question a very successful doctor is often asked by other doctors: "How can I get 30 new patients this month?"

The doctor's response: "I don't know one way to get 30 new patients, but I know 30 ways to get one new patient and I use every single one of them."

Kennedy recalls how Reverend Robert Schuller dealt with massive cost overruns in building The Crystal Cathedral. "Confronted with a need for ten million dollars, he made a list of ten different ways he might raise that money. Then he went to work on all ten simultaneously."

Ditto getting new donors and/or voters. There is no one way to get all the money or all the votes you need to win.

On the fundraising front, there's direct mail, events, one-on-one solicitation, email, website, dialing-for-dollars, etc. No one fundraising method is going to get you the dollar figure you need to fund your entire campaign budget. But if you use all of those methods and add 'em all up in the end...bingo!

Same goes for getting votes.

There's no one "magic issue" that will attract all the votes you need to win. Instead, you need to attract voters of a variety of issues and add 'em all together for a winning total. You're not going win the election just with, for example, pro-life votes. Or pro-gun rights votes. Or anti-tax

(continued on page 16...)

The Four D's of Marketing

By Bob Bly

[Editor's Note: This column has been adapted and edited slightly solely for the purpose of focusing the attention on a political campaign as opposed to a business service, product or opportunity.]

You know that for your marketing to work, it must tap into a powerful emotion the buyer (or voter) is experiencing.

The emotions most commonly targeted in copy: greed, guilt, fear, and exclusivity. Of course there are many others: love, hate, envy, joy, empathy, benevolence.

I've identified 4 other emotions that work for a wide variety of offers: They are desire, dissatisfaction, disappointment, and despair. I call them the "4 Ds." There are many similarities between the Ds, but subtle differences, too:

1-Desire

Promising the fulfillment of the prospect's prominent desire is a powerful way to entice him to pull the trigger and invest in your product (or campaign).

2-Dissatisfaction

Countless individuals slog through life, unhappy and dissatisfied with their lot. They want something better, but are often unclear on what that would be or how to achieve it.

Dissatisfaction is a potent emotion to tap into. Dissatisfaction is emotional pain.

People act mainly for two reasons: to attain pleasure and avoid pain. Of these, the avoidance of pain can be stronger than the attainment of pleasure. Another way to put it is that people act for only two reasons: to gain reward and avoid punishment.

3-Disappointment

What's the difference between dissatisfaction and disappointment?

Dissatisfaction means the prospect has a problem he has not solved or a situation he cannot resolve - for example, he wants to own a BMW but can't afford it.

Disappointment is more specific. It means the prospect has tried to solve the problem or resolve the situation - and it hasn't worked out.

The disappointed prospect is wary of marketing claims (or political promises). That makes him highly skeptical and difficult to sell.

It's far easier to market to prospects who have had some degree of success solving their problem and want more help.

4-Despair

Despair means the prospect's situation is so dire, it is emotionally painful. The prospect feels no one can help him and there is no hope.

The best approach here is to prove that what you offer does in fact work and has worked for many of your customers (or voters/donors).

Testimonials, case studies, and YouTube videos are three obvious marketing tactics for proving your claims.

You may think the 4 Ds -- desire, dissatisfaction, disappointment, and despair - are too negative. But negative marketing can work. Fear is a powerful motivator. It's not universally right for every marketing campaign. But next time you're formulating your promotional strategy, see if you can build a message around one of the 4 Ds.

5 Signs Your Fundraising is in Trouble

By Steve Thomas, Oneicity

5 signs that your fundraising might be in trouble (it was hard to do only 5):

1. You mail all your donors in every impact. Direct mail is highly efficient and can have astounding ROIs but only if you “get” the concept of targeting by giving patterns, gift sizes and seasonality.
2. You aren’t connecting your online giving with your offline strategies. If you’re not connecting email, websites and direct mail you’re missing out on income (plus it’s really easier than you think).
3. You don’t make it really, really easy for your donors to give online. Please don’t make me register to give a gift. Please . . . new donors probably aren’t going to go to the effort (and many current donors probably won’t either). And put your URL near every call to action and remind the reader that they can give securely and easily online to “help more quickly.”
4. Your donor acquisition strategies look different than your cultivation strategies. Acquire donors the way you’re going to cultivate them. Donors won’t respond well to bait-and-switch on offers, topics or design.
5. You’re not wrestling with ROI. If you’re not wondering how to fairly and accurately assign responses and ROIs, then you’re probably not integrating enough. You really ought to be having conversations about how phone campaigns fit with direct mail and Facebook. You really ought to be debating how donors acquired online compare with donors acquired through FSIs (free-standing inserts usually in newspapers). If you’re not, you’re probably not integrating strongly enough.

5 Tips to Better Radio Interviews

KTKK Radio host Linda Strasburg shared some interview tips for folks promoting themselves in radio interviews with copywriter Bob Bly. They certainly apply to candidates who might be invited as guests on political talk-radio programs:

1. Share with the audience unique, key tips and concepts to remember and use. The more unique and applicable to the listener's life, the more memorable your interview will be.
2. Use a landline, non-speaker phone for your interview and turn off the call waiting.
3. Do not have barking dogs, kids and other noise in the background during the interview; it will not project the professional image you want.
4. Listen for the commercials coming up that are indicated by lead-in music; you have 30 seconds to complete your thought when the music starts.
5. Near the end of the interview, you will have time to give your Internet address and any additional promotional information you want to share; the best Internet sites are easy to remember.

7 Ways to get better response rates to your e-mails

By Katya Andersen, Katya's Nonprofit Marketing Blog

1. Have a subject line that makes you want to

read more. My friend Kivi Leroux Miller talks about bad subject lines being a wrapper (example: September Diabetes eNews) and good subject lines being the candy in the wrapper (example: 6 ways to manage your diabetes). Make it interesting, so people open the message in the first place.

2. Start with a story that's compelling and

relevant to the reader. Here is where Marla's organization is hitting it out of the park. Her newsletters are full of moving stories that are personal and highly relevant to the reader. But there are a lot of them! Which brings me to my next point...

3. **Say less. A lot less.** An e-newsletter needs to be far, far shorter than what you'd send in print. Anything over 500 words is really pushing it, in my view. If you must have multiple stories, just provide the first part of each and link to the rest. Remember, people tend to be in a hurry in their inbox and they skim more than they read. The newsletters Marla sent have great content - but so much of it, it's hard to absorb and unclear where to focus first. I'm speaking from experience. The number one compliment I get on this blog from people who subscribe via email is that it's short, with one main concept each time. (I

take this as a compliment!)

4. **Go easy on the eyes.** Just as you want to be short and sweet in email, you want to go easy on the eyes—go for uncluttered, easy to read messages. Too many articles and sidebars and buttons and images will overwhelm the reader and lower your conversion rates drastically.

5. **Ask for one thing.** Be clear about the purpose of each piece of email outreach. Is it a thank-you full of stories of change and transformation? Is it a fundraising appeal? Is it to inspire involvement in an event? You want your e-news to have a focus and one clear call to action. Tightly sticking to a theme and reducing the options for action to one (or at most two) will boost response rates. Too many options, just like too much information, really hurts conversion.

6. **Ask explicitly.** Are you directly and clearly asking for action? A Donate button off to the side isn't enough if the goal of the e-news is to raise money. Ask in the text too.

7. **Provide multiple, obvious links for the same action.** Make it incredibly easy for people to act by including links throughout the text and on buttons. The more obvious, the better the conversion.

The five words that made women give 20% more

By Katya Andersen, Katya's Nonprofit Marketing Blog

The philanthropic psychologist Jen Shang has a new fundraising study out with the public radio station WFIU in Bloomington, and it shows that five words tied to moral qualities prompt higher giving levels.

Here's how the study worked. During the station's pledge drive, the people answering phones thanked people for calling and randomly picked two of five words associated with moral identity to describe the caller: *caring, friendly, kind, compassionate* and *helpful*.

For example: People said, "Thanks for calling and becoming a kind and caring WFIU donor" right before they asked the amount the caller wanted to give. Female donors gave significantly more—21% more—when they heard those adjectives. Interestingly, with male donors, it made no difference.

Extreme Donor-Focused Newsletter Increases Revenue by 521%

By Bob Ball/MasterWorks.com

Over the years, I've seen a lot of different kinds of newsletters from non-profit organizations. Some simply report accomplishments. Others are nothing more than fundraising appeals, thinly disguised in newsletter clothing. Still, others are institutionally-focused pieces written for insiders.

One of the most effective types is the Extreme Donor-Focused Newsletter. It is aimed squarely at the donor. In fact, it is all ABOUT the donor.

This approach assumes donors give because they love to give and love to make a significant difference in the world. It combines reporting back about what the donors have accomplished, and offers them a clear opportunity to give again.

The extreme donor-focused newsletter is full of love and appreciation for the donor. ... We follow some simple principles as we created those winning newsletters. You can put them into practice with your own.

10 Principles to Create the Extreme Donor-Focused Newsletter:

1. WRITE to the Donor, For the Donor, About the Donor. This is NOT objective, arms-length journalism. This is NOT the organization talking about itself to organization insiders. This is a warm conversation with the donor about the things he or she is most interested in.

2. ENSURE a High "You" Quotient. The copy is written directly to the donor using the second-person singular. The most frequent word in the copy AND headlines should be "you."

3. TOUCH the Heart with Strong Emotion. The newsletter needs to stir the donor's heart. Make the donor feel something! Tell stories of amazing accomplishments that the donor's generosity helped make possible. Use vivid language with strong, active verbs and concrete nouns. Dra-

matic, emotional photos are worth their weight in gold.

4. SURPRISE AND DELIGHT! This is a newsletter, so it needs to have something new in it. Tell the donor something fascinating that he or she does not already know. The initial reaction of the donor upon first glance should be a big smile because his or her giving has made something wonderful happen.

Donors love to give, and the extreme donor-focused newsletter makes it easy and attractive to give again.

5. APPRECIATE the Donor. One of the major themes of the newsletter needs to be how important the donor is. "Look at what you have accomplished! With your help we can do all this. Without your help we will not be able to do it." Look for ways to use the words "Thank you!" over and over again. (This is not merely a report back about what the organization was able to accomplish. This is all about what the DONOR has accomplished through their generosity!)

6. DESIGN for Readability. Remove all unnecessary barriers to readability and comprehension. Use a large, readable SERIF font for body copy. All body copy should pass the "dollar bill test." (You should not be able to lay a dollar bill on any expanse of body copy without touching a headline, photo or subhead.) No large blocks of reversed out type. No busy backgrounds behind copy. Make the layout easier to scan with large photos, headlines, subheads and pull-quotes.

7. MOTIVATE Another Gift. Donors love to give and you should not be ashamed to ask them to give again. While most of the newsletter space is devoted to thanks and appreciation, the newsletter needs to give the donor a way to repeat their

(continued on Page 15...)

A quick case study on email subject lines

By [Rebecca Davies/101Fundraising.org](#)

Within two months of the Haiti earthquake of 2010, MSF Canada received over 50,000 new donors. 34,000 of them came online and designated a gift to the emergency.

After a series of stewardship emails, we set the groundwork to test an ask for conversion of our 34,000 new Haiti online donors to become monthly donors.

We prepared three email solicitations with distinct messages and subject lines, and sent them on March 4, 2010. The file was randomly split, and each of the three messages was sent to about 7,700 first-time online donors.

The email with highest open and click-through rates would inform the telemarketing script. The test, of course, was three variable messages regarding the case for unrestricted support:

Subject test line #1: *“From Haiti to Somalia, taking action together to save lives”* (highly institutional and **MISSION** focused):

- Open rate – 31.4%
- Clickthrough – 1.5%

Subject test line #2: *“Together, our swift response has made a difference in Haiti”* (would an

EMERGENCY message appeal to first-time Haiti donors?):

- Open rate – 35.1%
- Clickthrough – 1.9%

Subject test line #3: *“You’ve had a life-saving impact”* (this last variable copy was, of course, **DONOR**-centered...we even introduced a donor in the copy):

- Open rate – **42.3% (WOW!)**
- Clickthrough – **2.3% (YIPPEE!)**

(From Convio’s Nonprofit Email Benchmark 2010 – average fundraising appeal open rate: 18%; average fundraising appeal clickthrough rate: 1.76%).

No doubt about it, **“You”** was subject-line winner for both open and click-through rates, and beat industry averages quite handily. Our telemarketing script would take the donor-centered approach, not an MSF mission-based or emergency theme. The donors had responded.

Gratifying, isn’t it, when the data bears out on what we know to be true: donor-centered messaging works.

“When a story in a fundraising appeal doesn’t include the donor, it doesn’t compel action well. In other words, the fatal flaw in a story is making it about you - and your organization - but not the audience as well. Put the donor in the story. Do that by making them feel they are making a difference, that they are important, that they are part of a success and that they belong to a movement. Then you’ve got a tale that packs real power.” - **Katya Andresen**

Snail-Mail Still Packs a Punch, Great Bang for the Buck

By Dan Kennedy/DanKennedy.com

The other day USA Today wrote an article about how the U.S. Mail is changing as we know it. How more and more people are getting away from using mail and sending email instead.

Interestingly, the article happened to confirm what I've said all along...that there is no bigger bang for your buck than direct mail. While talking about using the mailbox as "an advertising channel" here's what they had to say..."It's an effective one; unlike commercial e-mail, almost two-thirds of Standard Mail is read or "looked at."

If you're doing the math, that is a 66% open rate compared to the 10% or so open rate that is more commonly seen in email. (MailerMailer shows a range of 7.1% to 17.6%)

This is interesting because as you know from all advertising, the trend seems to be to follow "what's hot" now. Right now, you hear a lot about social media and mobile marketing. And how email is the marketer's best friend because the cost is so much lower as compared to sending out physical mail. ...

USA Today discussed the decline of the mail system--showing that everyone is moving away from using it, which in effect makes a strong case for why you should use it.

Talking about the "mail moment" when people collect, sort and open their mail, USA Today said that people "love to receive mail" and then went on to describe why people love to get the mail.

One interviewee, Tamra Lindquist wrote, "To this day, I'm always a little hopeful when I open the mailbox!" Rather than following the herd to quickly dismiss direct mail and write it off as a dying breed, it makes good sense to look carefully at every possible opportunity for you to use direct mail in your business.

When you match your market and your message and wisely invest in the right media (and not just what someone is pushing in your face nor following the "latest trend"), you'll differentiate yourself from your competitors, make your marketing message stand out from the pack, romance prospects, clients and customers into opening more of your marketing and create higher profits too.

(...continued from Page 13)

charitable behavior. This means making a clearly stated offer that donors have supported in the past.

8. MAKE it Convenient to Give. The newsletter should include a response device and a return envelope. If online giving is possible, the URL for the giving page should be clearly presented in case that is the donor's preferred giving channel.

9. APPEAL to the Most Basic Donor Benefit. Giving is joyful. This key message should be explicitly stated: "Nothing feels better than when you help. When you give to accomplish XYZ, your heart overflows with gladness!"

10. REFRESH AND REENGAGE. By the time the donor is finished reading the newsletter, he or she should be energized and eager to do more.

“It is always best if you can find a way to be first and only at something. It may be something you don’t see right now or realize right now, but if you can be the first and/or only in your industry to do it it’s going to set you really far ahead.”

- Ali Brown, Ali International

(...Muth’s Truths, continued from page 9)

votes. Or anti-immigration votes. Or pro-defense votes.

You need to find a combination of multiple issues and voters who will support your candidacy and then add them altogether as a coalition to get the winning number. Capice?

Why Candidates Fail

Mary Ellen Tribby writes an e-magazine for working mothers and recently shared a tip that equally applies to candidates. So I’ve taken the liberty of reprinting it here with slight edits (changes in italics) to make it campaign-focused:

“Most *candidates* fail not because they don’t do the work but because they do the wrong work.

“When running a *campaign* it’s easy to get caught up doing busy work rather than *raising money*. But, the majority of your time starting out should be focused on bringing money in the door.

“Remember *donations* are what keep the doors open. Going out and buying that new computer or organizing your office is not going to make your *campaign* successful.

“Prioritize your tasks and focus on things that yield revenue first. You and your *campaign* will be better off, if you do.”

Do One Thing at a Time in Fundraising

“Don’t try to double up calls to action in fundraising,” writes Jeff Brooks of Future Fundraising Now, “except...” Here’s Jeff’s “except.”

It’s a huge mistake to try to accomplish two different things in one fundraising message. If you try to ask for a gift and also invite donors to an event or get them to inquire about planned giving -- you’ll end up accomplishing neither goal very well.

I know one cool exception to the one-thing rule in fundraising: the principle of contrast.

It works like this: Tell donors there are two ways to help: One is difficult, like sell everything you own, and join our staff as a volunteer hermit. The other is easy -- give a gift of \$62.

By showing two ways to take action, one much more difficult than giving, you make giving seem more easy, more reasonable, more do-able by contrast. (Of course, the difficult option must be real: you may get takers!)

Otherwise, only ask for one thing at a time. This is hard-earned experience talking.

Looking for “Open-Minded Moments”

If you are an accountant who does tax returns, what’s the best time of year to market your business? Exactly. The 2-3 months leading up to April 15. That’s when people who otherwise have no interest in tax preparation are keenly focused on tax preparation.

Ditto campaigns. When is the best time to market your campaign. Well, if you're in the general election in November, folks will start paying attention right after Labor Day. So if you're pitching them during the summer months, there's a good chance you're selling sun tan oil to Eskimos. Few, if any, have any interest.

Celebrity Sells

It pretty much takes a pretty healthy ego to run for office, but when it comes to "selling" your campaign, unless you are your own celebrity - like, for example, actor and former U.S. Sen. Fred Thompson - you should look for ways to add a little "celebrity" appeal. From marketing expert Dan Kennedy:

celebrity's photo, name and some brief statements can get more envelopes opened than would be opened otherwise, get an ad read by more people than would read it otherwise, stop and give a TV commercial a chance to sell to them when they would otherwise instantly click away, attract more to a tele-seminar or webinar than would otherwise come, flood a local event that would otherwise get ho-hum reaction - yet this is the least followed advice of all I provide."

Now, a "celebrity" doesn't have to be a famous Hollywood actor. It can be just about anyone with some name recognition, even if only locally. And it can be a sports figure, a business figure or, of course, a political figure. Bear in mind, it isn't necessarily the message itself that's the most

"What I can GUARANTEE you is this: Almost without exception, even a barely relevant

(Continued on page 23...)

4 things that should shake up nonprofit/campaign marketing

By Katya Andresen

I used the word "should" in the title of this post for a reason. These trends are shaking up our sector, but they're not yet shaking up our marketing. And they should be.

1. **The rise of mobile.** More and more people have smartphones, and that means doing good is at their fingertips, all the time. If we don't create opportunities to act easily via mobile, we are going to miss out on a lot. Multichannel works best – and multichannel means mobile too.
2. **The growth of peer networks.** People listen to each other more than us, so we need to stop viewing social media as another form of getting our message out. Its primary value is that it allows other people to get the message out, for us.
3. **The explosion of slacktivism.** It is not bad. It is promising. Clay Shirky once said "Activists are active but not everyone else is." We have to grasp that - and not write off everyone who isn't a zealot. And as I said on Mashable, it's a starting point for your cause. I'd rather have someone sign my petition than do nothing any day, because she or he is far more likely to take further action, later.
4. **The increasing personalization of everything.** We're in an era where marketing and communications are increasingly tailored to the individual. If we're still blasting out one message, we will alienate every last person. Make people a part of your cause and speak to their interests.

The old ways aren't working as well for a reason. Let's shake it up ourselves, so these tectonic changes work to our favor rather than rendering us irrelevant.

The Art and Science of “The Ask”

By Jeff Schreifels/Passionate Giving

I was recently invited to sit in on a mock presentation in which the real presentation was to be made to a donor to request a sizable major gift.

The organization had been working on this gift for months. At the end of this presentation I was in awe - not just because the person delivering the presentation and the ask were amazing...though they were. No, it was the amount of preparation, thought, and hard work put in by several departments that had to come together to make this happen.

So, it got me thinking. How much effort and time do you really put into making a major gift ask to a donor? Here are some things to think about in preparation for “the ask” that you might find helpful as you review your strategic plan and begin to talk to your donors.

Before the “ask”:

1.) Do you have agreement from management and administration that, if you can secure funding for a particular program or project, it is actually going to come about? I know this sounds elementary, but this happens all the time. A donor might want to fund something, but program doesn't really want to deal with it. The donor gives the money and then NOTHING happens. You want agreement with all involved that this is definitely something everyone in the organization wants.

2.) Have you worked with program to make sure you have a solid, workable plan with a budget? Again, I know this sounds fundamental, but I've seen rogue MGO's promise all kinds of things to donors in order to get the gift, and only THEN go to program to see if they can pull it off. The budget is a very important element. Donors want to see not only how their gift is going to be used, but whether you have a long-term funding plan beyond the donor's own gift. You can easily say this project will cost \$5MM dollars over three years, but you need to show the proof. Also, don't forget to add the overhead to the project-make sure you add the program costs.

3.) Do you know the donor? Richard and I have talked about this repeatedly in different circumstances, but it is especially critical when you are preparing an ask. What are the donor's interests and passions? Does this ask really match who they are? How have the donors been cultivated for this gift? Are they going to be blindsided? How positive are you that the amount you are going to ask for is appropriate? The worst thing you can do is to have the wrong offer at the wrong price. If you know the donor, and you have cultivated them well, the “ask” will almost be a formality. The donor will be waiting for you.

4.) Don't forget this is an emotional decision. Yes, you have to have the facts, the plan, the figures and all the details, but you ABSOLUTELY cannot forget the emotional aspect of the “ask.” If a donor isn't choked up at the end of your “ask” presentation, then something is wrong. Your donor wants to help create change in the world, and you are offering them a way to do that. That is simply amazing and you need to present it as such.

“A list of 100,000 'friends' is unimpressive to me. I'd rather have 100 giving me money.”

- Dan Kennedy

(continued on next page...)

5.) Practice, practice, practice. I know you think you can wing this thing. Don't succumb to that hubris of yours. Practice your ask presentation with your colleagues. Pretend your colleague is the donor and speak directly to her. Have your colleague ask all the potential questions and find "holes" in your presentation to make sure you anticipate those in the actual presentation. Make sure you have all your facts and figures right. Make sure the plan is clear. Make sure you have a good story and that the emotional impact is there. Then, two days later, come back and do it again. You want to practice this to the point that it feels natural.

6.) Relax. On the day of the "ask" make sure you have all your materials, and that everyone is clear on their role. Then, sit down with the donor, relax and demonstrate how he or she can change the world. If you have done all your work, you will be fine.

7.) Be comfortable with the fact that all of this takes time. Why do I say this? Well, over and over again, Richard and I encounter MGO's that are in a huge rush to just "get to the ask". So they skip over all the steps I've written about above and then wonder why they were not successful. A good ask takes a lot of preparation. And a lot of preparation takes a lot of time. Be comfortable with that. Embrace it. Do it.

If you can prepare with these seven things in mind, your ask will be amazing and your donor will feel honored, known and cared for.

Now, go on and get ready for that next amazing "ask".

To get more done in less time, try setting a timer

When you focus your complete attention on one thing, you maximize your time by eliminating distraction.

Pick one task and set your timer for 20-30 minutes. During that time do not allow yourself to do anything else but the specific task you've chosen.

If things come to mind that would usually distract you, jot them down on a notepad or sticky. That way you can come back to them later and give them dedicated attention, too.

- Mary Ellen Tribby/Working Moms Only

The Law of Reciprocity

By Dr. Chuck Muth, PsD

If you want to be successful in politics and are serious about it, you MUST read *"Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion"* by Robert Cialdini, PhD.

Politics is all about psychology and delivering persuasive messages...just like any other kind of sales. You are simply selling your services as the citizens' representative in government. And with that in mind, consider this passage from Dr. Cialdini's book:

"A few years ago, a university professor tried a little experiment. He sent Christmas cards to a sample of perfect strangers. Although he expected some reaction, the response he received was amazing - holiday cards addressed to him came pouring back from the people who had never met or heard of him."

"The great majority of those who returned a card never inquired into the identity of the professor," Cialdini continued. "They received his holiday greeting card (and) they automatically sent one in return.

"While small in scope, this study nicely shows the action of one of the most potent weapons of influence around us - the rule for reciprocation. The rule says we should try to repay, in kind, what another person has provided us.

"If a woman does us a favor, we should do her one in return; if a man sends us a birthday present, we should remember his birthday with a gift of our own; if a couple invites us to a party we should be sure to invite them to one of ours."

Think about it. That's absolutely true, isn't it? The beneficiary of a gift, invitation or favor feels "obligated" to return the favor. Thus the saying, "much obliged." After all, nobody wants to be labeled a moocher, ingrate or welsher, right?

Some specific examples of how this plays out from Cialdini's book:

1.) A subject, "Joe," in a study left the room during a break and returned with a bottle of Coke for himself and the other person in the study. In the next study, he took the break but did NOT bring a Coke back for the other person. The situation was repeated over and over again, alternating between bringing the other person a Coke and not getting the other person a Coke.

Now here's the thing: Later on, "Joe" asked the other person if he would buy some raffle tickets from him.

"Without question, Joe was more successful in selling his raffle tickets to the subjects who had received his earlier favor (the Coke)," Cialdini reports. "Apparently feeling that they owed him something, these subjects bought twice as many raffle tickets as the subjects who had not been given the prior favor."

Cialdini also notes this was the motivation behind the Hare Krishna practice of giving people a flower before asking them for a donation.

So, how does this translate to politics?

"At the top, elected officials engage in 'logrolling' and the exchange of favors that makes politics the place of strange bedfellows, indeed," Cialdini writes. "The out-of-character vote of one of our elected representatives on a bill or measure can often be understood as a favor returned to the bill's sponsor.

"Political analysts were amazed at Lyndon Johnson's ability to get so many of his programs through Congress during his early administration. Even members of Congress who were thought to

Continued on page 22...

What is Your Biggest Campaign Problem?

Do you have a campaign problem that's giving you a headache, especially one where you're getting 15 different suggestions for fixing it from 15 different people.?

Need a referee to relieve your pain once and for all.

Then shoot your question to The Campaign Doctor and let us help you solve almost any campaign-related problem on our monthly Q&A calls - yet another benefit of Winner's Circle membership.

These FREE problem-solving, tele-class sessions are can only field a limited number of questions, so get yours in ASAP.

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Resource Directory

Campaign Websites

www.CampaignSiteBuilder.com

Campaign Literature/Signs

Dottie Ward

M2M Strategies

980 Lakes Parkway"

Lawrenceville, GA 30043

(678) 942-8416

dward@m2Mstrategies.net

Voter Contact Mail

Jim Bieber

Bieber Communications

3609 W. McArthur Blvd.

Santa Ana, CA 92704

(714) 210-3630

info@biebercommunications.com

www.biebercommunications.com

Automated Phone Calls

Jerry Dorchuck

P.M.I., Inc.

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<http://www.facebook.com/TCBPoliticalConsulting>

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be strongly opposed to the proposals were voting for them.

“Close examination by political scientists has found the cause to be not so much Johnson’s political savvy as the large score of favors he had been able to provide to other legislators during his many years of power in the House and the Senate. As president, he was able to produce a truly remarkable amount of legislation in a short time by calling in those favors.”

Cialdini notes that in reverse fashion, Jimmy Carter was generally a failure since he “campaigning on his outside Washington identity, saying he was indebted to no one there.” But, alas, no one was indebted to HIM either!

So how can this Law of Reciprocity translate to the local level?

“At the grassroots level, local political organizations have learned that the principal way to keep their candidates in office is to make sure they provide a wide range of little favors to the voters,” Cialdini continues, noting that “During the 1992 presidential primary campaign, actress Sally Kellerman was asked why she was lending her name and efforts to the candidacy of Democratic hopeful Jerry Brown.

“Her reply: ‘Twenty years ago, I asked ten friends to help me move. He was the only one who showed up.’”

Hello? Are you starting to get the picture of just how powerful the Law of Reciprocity can be in your campaign yet?

Doing a potential voter a favor that has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with the office you’re running for can very well result in a captured vote on election day.

So how might the power of this unwritten law of human nature work to your advantage in fundraising? Glad you asked...

“The Disabled American Veterans organization reports that its simplest mail appeal for donations produces a response rate of about 18 percent,” notes Cialdini. “But when the mailing also includes an unsolicited gift - gummed, individualized address labels - the success rate nearly doubles to 35 percent.

“How many times have each of us received small gifts through the mail - personalized address labels, greeting cards, key rings - from charity organizations that ask for funds in an accompanying note? I have received five in just the past year...”

Me, too. Bet you have, also, right?

“In each case,” Cialdini concludes, “there was a common thread in the accompanying message. The goods that were enclosed were to be considered a gift from the organization; and any money I wished to send should not be regarded as payment but rather as a return offering.

“If we look past the obvious tax advantage, we can see a reason why it would be beneficial for the organization to have the goods viewed as a gift instead of merchandise: There is a strong cultural pressure to reciprocate a gift, even an unwanted one; but there is no such pressure to purchase an unwanted product.”

Attaching or enclosing a relatively inexpensive gift - such as the mailing labels - clearly pays for itself and then some in more and larger donations.

Also, sending potential donors an obligation-free invitation to attend a really cool campaign event at no charge whatsoever could easily result in a contribution after the fact because the attendee feels this sense of obligation to reciprocate.

The Law of Reciprocity is a powerful tool at your campaign’s disposal if/when used responsibly and not merely to “rip off” or take advantage of people.

Use it wisely, Grasshopper.

Famous Last Words

“One has to wonder how much greater American would be as a nation, in all respects, if the best and brightest were also the most persistent.” - **Author/ marketer Dan Kennedy**

“No one would ask a youngster with a new video camera to shoot 30-second television ads for a campaign, but volunteers with some coding knowledge and a little campaigning knowledge are being asked to create websites for many campaigns.

Considering that the average viewer sees a TV ad for 30 seconds and stays at a website for 8.5 minutes, it is amazing that serious candidates would let this happen even now.” - **Emi Ireland & Phil Nash,**

Winning Campaigns Online

“When sending e-mail messages to mobile devices, make sure the font sizes are larger and the targets big enough to easily hit. Include extra space around buttons and links to accommodate ‘fat fingers.’ (The average adult finger pad is 0.4 inch.)” - **Bob Bly**

“Communication is about do you get me (the voter) or do you not? Anecdotes are the easiest for anyone to remember. When you want to persuade by understanding what it is like to BE your audience...and if you characterize it by using an anecdote, it makes it 10,000 times easier for that voter to repeat to someone who's never heard you.” - **Jennie Blackton**

...continued from Page 17

important part of communications in your campaign.

“The mistake most people make with advertising and marketing,” Kennedy writes, “is endlessly trying to improve the message to boost response instead of working on boosting readership, viewership or listenership of an effective message.”

Indeed, what if I told you this advice actually came from the late President John F. Kennedy (it didn't) instead of Dan Kennedy? Do you think more people would stop and pay attention to it? You betcha.

Beware of Non-Readers of Your Emails

While there is an obvious and tremendous benefit to being able to send a LOT of emails for practically no cost, there is a downside to the ever-lower “open” rates to your emails, even if they don't cost you much money to send.

These days if just one in ten people on your email list opens your email, that's generally considered a “success.” However, as spam filters get ever more sophisticated, it's becoming possible for you to be labeled a “spammer” even if no one is reporting you as a spammer. The mere fact that large numbers of people on your list aren't opening your emails is fast becoming a red flag.

“As spam filters become harsher and more able to tell how people are interacting with your messaging, a user ignoring your e-mail is actually worse than a user unsubscribing,” says Dan Atherton, a consultant at Chapman Cubine Adams + Hussey.

Like so many things in life, bigger isn't necessarily better - including the size of your email list. Despite the low cost to “email everybody,” campaigns soon are gonna have to begin culling unresponsive recipients from their email lists just like they do their snail-mail fundraising lists.



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