



The Newsletter that Actually MAKES You Money!

My Promise for Every Issue

“You will get at least one idea that will either (a) raise you more money, (b) get you new donors, (c) get bigger donations, (d) get more repeat donations, or (e) save you money...guaranteed!”

You MUST Show Donors Your “Path to Victory”

In political fundraising, the key isn't in telling donors how you're going to vote IF elected, but how you're going to get enough votes to GET elected.

No matter how much a prospective donor might agree with you on issues or your qualifications, unless they believe you have a reasonable chance to actually WIN your race, you don't have much of a chance to get them to open their wallet.

A Fishy Story

Nancy Bocskor is a bona fide international communications and fundraising guru and author of *“Go Fish: How to Catch (and Keep) Contributors.”*

And in one of her newsletters, Nancy highlighted something every good marketing expert knows and every winning candidate needs to learn: The power storytelling...

“I recently traveled to Russia to speak at the Inaugural Storytelling Festival at the Moscow School of Humanitarian Studies where I premiered a presentation called ‘Tell Me a Story.’

“Incorporating stories in your presentations - whether it's fundraising, public speaking, written materials - is key to making an emotional connection with your audience.

“Why is storytelling so critical to your success? Research shows that listeners will remember 65 to 70% of the information shared through a story, but only 5 to 10% of listeners will remember information conveyed by facts and figures.”

Indeed, telling the story about how you finally decided to run for office is perhaps the most important story you’ll tell during your entire campaign, as it gets to the heart of your true motivation in answering the #1 question in the minds of voters and donors:

“Why are you running?”

Conquering Your Fear of Fundraising

Many first-time candidates, and even seasoned veterans, have a natural and understandable fear of asking for money – unless they’re already in a sales-related job.

So if fear of fundraising is keeping you from raising the money you need to win your election, consider the following by Jeff Brooks of Future Fundraising Now...

- **“Fear that donors will complain.** This is the killer. I don't know how many times I've seen organizations say a campaign was a massive failure because nine people complained. Out of 100,000 pieces you sent and that brought in several thousand positive responses. If you do anything at all, someone will complain. It won't kill you.”
- **“Fear that your fundraising will cause donors to abandon you.** Maybe they won't bother to complain and just walk away. Sounds reasonable. But what really kills donor retention are two things: 1. Irrelevant communication -- usually fundraising that doesn't really ask or asks for things donors don't care about. 2. Under-communicating. You are far more likely to lose donors because you only connect with them a couple times a year than you are from communicating too much.”
- **“Fear of failure.** Failing is a sign of trying. It's inevitable. Have you noticed that you always recover from failure -- especially when you take calculated risks? Failure is a necessary part of success. And it's often the doorway to success.”
- **“Fear of being embarrassed.** People you know and respect -- but are not donors -- can really let you have it about fundraising. It's easier to be influenced by their opinions than by actual donor behavior. After all, you value these people. But they are almost always wrong, and their opinions shed no light on the effectiveness of your fundraising.”

Why a Donation of “Just” \$1 is Worth a LOT More than \$1

A lot of candidates and political activists may look at all those fundraising emails asking for “just” \$1 and wonder why it’s even worth the trouble. Here’s why...

Darin Spindler of Magnetic Marketing wrote about how the 2020 Trump campaign used a lot of data to fuel the president’s re-election campaign. And here’s something they discovered...

If you donate even \$1, there’s a 90%+ chance you’ll vote on Election Day.

And psychologically speaking, someone who has invested in your campaign – even if it’s “only” one dollar – is FAR more likely to vote for YOU.

Still think “just” \$1 ain’t worth the trouble?

In my “Fearless Fundraising Formula” special report, I explain how asking for “just” one dollar from people will help you get over any anxiety or hesitancy you might have asking for money.

If you haven’t read it yet, go to: campaigndoctor.com/fearless. It’s free.

4 Quick Tips for Superior Fundraising

These fundraising hot tips come from veteran fundraiser Tom Ahern...

1.) Don’t be timid in asking

“Each year, scores of fundraising appeals written by newbies share a deadly habit: waiting to the end of the letter to make “the ask.” Big mistake; don’t wait to ask. In fact, ask early ... within the first few sentences. Ask often ... in the middle, repeatedly... and at the end, just before the signature. Then in the P.S. ask again. And on the reply device. And on the giving page of your website. Ask. Ask. Ask.”

2.) Arouse emotions

“In a contest between two appeals for the same charity, one logical and well-reasoned vs. one that’s packed with emotional hooks ... well, it’s not really a contest. The emotional appeal will bring in far more money than will the rational appeal. Every time. Guaranteed. ... (I)t’s your ability to touch my emotions that gets me giving. That’s why professional copywriters always lead with emotion in their appeals to individual donors ... and then drag in some reason; not the reverse.”

3.) Don't waste time "raising awareness"

This is a huge problem for most candidates. They spend a ton of time "educating" people about issues instead of motivating them to donate. "And now I'm going to explain to you how the gold standard works." Yawn. Check, please.

4.) Send the swiftest possible thank-you

"First-time donors who receive a personal thank you within 48 hours are four times more likely to give again. Yes, that's what the research shows. Thanking in 48 hours equals a 400 percent improvement in renewal rates. It makes sense. First-time donors are often ardent. But that ardor cools fast if you don't sustain it."

This is another huge problem for too many campaigns. They treat donors like ATM machines. At best you might get an auto-responder email or form letter in the mail. And that's only for big donations.

I send a thank you card to anyone who gives any amount. It's not only basic common courtesy, but good business. People who feel truly appreciated give again. And again. And again. And often with bigger checks.

Is Your Fundraising "Corny" Enough?

When it comes to writing fundraising copy in politics, most "experts" get it all wrong. Here's some great advice on that subject from Jeff Brooks...

If someone in authority tells you your fundraising message is corny, you should not take that to mean you need to revise it so it's not so corny.

You should tell that person, "Thanks for your astute observation! I worked very hard to make it corny, and your comment gives me confidence that I succeeded and that it is likely to do well."

(Okay, that's probably not the smartest thing to say to some people in authority. You might need to find a more diplomatic way to say it.)

Thing is, "corny" is not a bad quality in fundraising. It's a good thing nearly every time. Corny -- meaning old-fashioned, unsophisticated, goofy, hokey -- just works in fundraising.

Every minute you spend making corny fundraising less corny is time spent lowering your revenue. Don't do that!

Now if someone tells you your fundraising is sophisticated and businesslike, you probably need to reconsider, because you're sailing toward failure.

3 Quick Tips to Better Storytelling

Picked these up from Lori Jacobwith of Ignited Fundraising...

- 1.) Make your story about one person rather than a group of people.
- 2.) When telling a story verbally, shorter is better.
- 3.) Replace rational words with emotional words. For example...
 - Instead of “additionally,” use “there’s more”
 - Instead of “concerned,” use “worried”
 - Instead of “difficult,” use “hard” or “tough”
 - Instead of “immediately,” use “right now”
 - Instead of “perhaps,” use “maybe”
 - Instead of “superior,” use “better”
 - Instead of “terminate,” use “end”

How Long Should Your Fundraising Letters/Emails Be?

That’s a question that routinely comes up in my live seminars and workshops. And most amateurs and non-political friends advise candidates to keep their letters short. After all, nobody will read a long letter...right?

Wrong!

In short (pun intended), a fundraising letter CAN'T be too long.

But it can be too boring!

And that will inevitably happen if you mail the wrong letter to the wrong list of people. If you mail a gun rights letter to a list of home-schoolers...you’ve sent the wrong letter to the wrong list. Your letter could be just three paragraphs...and THAT would be “too long.”

On the other hand, if you mail a gun rights letter to a gun rights list; if you keep the copy interesting and actually have something to say, that letter could be 20 pages long - and your recipients would read every...last...word.

Let me give you an example from personal experience.

I was late joining the “Harry Potter” fan club. There were already three books out and the fourth had just hit the shelves before I read my first one. The new book, “Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire,” was a thick, heavy and intimidating 734 pages long. I took one look at that monster and said, “Too long. Don’t have the time. Thanks, but no thanks.”

Then I found myself at the airport in Las Vegas heading for D.C. one day...and realized I’d forgotten to bring anything to read on the five-hour flight. So I slipped into the airport bookstore and let my curiosity get the better of me.

I picked up a paperback copy of the average-sized and non-intimidating 309-page first volume, “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone.” I just wanted to see what all the hubbub was about. But once I started, I couldn’t put the book down.

When I was finished, I immediately bought Volume Two. Then Three. And finally, the 734-page Volume Four mamma-jamma.

When the Fifth Volume was released - the gargantuan 870-page “Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix” - I HAD to have it the first day it went on sale. And when I got to page 870...I was disappointed that it wasn’t even LONGER!

But if you’re not a Harry Potter fan and don’t care for that kind of fiction, the books could have been five pages each...and that would have been “too long” for you.

So you see, length is relative.

If you have the right subject and the right audience and can present your story in an entertaining and compelling way...length doesn’t matter. In fact, the adage of a true marketing expert is: “The more you tell, the more you sell.”

Miss Manners 101: How to Get Bigger Donations More Often

It’s far better to work on keeping existing donors than getting new ones, right? Well, here’s what Miss Manners would advise when it comes to thanking your donor friends:

- *Always address your friend by their given name. A thank you is not a form letter.*

- *Include a specific description of the gift your friend gave you. A thank you should be personal, and show the giver that you know them.*
- *Describe how you'll use the gift; let the giver know why you loved the gift so much.*
- *Use "I." The letter is coming from you; not from "we."*
- *Do not be rude and describe how you could've used more.*
- *Do not solicit your next gift.*

Now who's gonna argue with Miss Manners?

As an example, I once sent out a donation request for funds to help defend my non-profit organization from a lawsuit filed by the Nevada Secretary of State over a bogus campaign reporting requirement.

Every donor – even the \$5 one – received a personal, handwritten “thank you” card from me (just get a box of blank ones from your local office supply store or WalMart). Here's the simple message I wrote:

“Bob, I want to thank you for your \$250 donation towards our fight with Ross Miller! – Chuck.”

That's it....and it covers all of Miss Manners' bases.

I also included my business card with contact info in the envelope - but I did not include a reply envelope and request for another donation. I wanted it to be a simple, straight-forward sincere message of gratitude.

Now, for larger campaigns with lots of small donations...yes, you'll probably want to have a thank-you form letter sent out. But for major donors I highly recommend an old-fashioned, hand-written thank you CARD. Hardly anyone ever sends those any longer, so they'll really stand out in the recipient's pile of mail.

And it means the next time you DO send a new fundraising request, you're more likely to receive an additional donation...and maybe even a BIGGER one!

The Key to Finding Sponsors for Your Event

The secret key to highly successful – meaning, highly profitable – fundraising events isn't ticket sales.

It's sponsors.

And sponsorships should, ideally, account for half the revenue you raise from an event.

Sponsors are often businesses or major donors that usually receive some list of benefits for financially supporting your event in a big way: private meet-and-greet/photo op with speaker/headliner, listing in event program, free tickets/tables, VIP seating, recognition from the stage, etc.

So how do you find sponsors? Well, the best way is to create a “host committee.”

A host committee is different from a volunteer committee, which is established to handle all the logistics of putting on an event. A host committee should focus on one thing and one thing only: raising money.

Ideally, host committee members should themselves make a large enough donation to the event to qualify as a sponsor. But it’s OK to include and recognize individuals as members of the host committee providing they do, in fact, sell a bunch of tickets and/or find, solicit and get sponsors.

Putting someone’s name on your host committee just to have a “big name” on your host committee without that person doing what a host committee member is supposed to do – raise money! – is of very little value (except to the ego of the individual you’ve listed as being on your host committee even though they didn’t contribute or raise any money).

Now, when it comes to businesses – *IF* your state allows corporate sponsorships (check and be sure!) – there are two things to keep in mind...

- 1.) Some businesses sponsor political events from funds set aside for political campaigns or causes. Sometimes that money comes from a PAC (political action committee).
- 2.) Others may sponsor events out of their advertising budget if, in fact, the business gets legitimate advertising exposure from the sponsorship.

Keep this in mind: Regardless of what cookie jar the money comes from in the business, it spends the same for your campaign or organization. You don’t really care. Just make sure you explain the two options to businesses you approach and let them make the decision that’s best for them.

How to Find Auction Donations for Your Next Fundraising Event

Fundraising events aren’t so much about having FUN as they are about raising FUNDS. That’s why it’s called “FUND-raising” and not “FUN-raising.”

Live and silent auctions can add a significant amount of extra revenue from an event; however, many campaigns find obtaining auction donations to be both time-consuming and frustrating.

Joe Garecht of Garecht Fundraising Associates has some suggestions for alleviating your pain...

- 1.) Start by asking members of your event's host committee and campaign supporters/volunteers to personally donate items and/or ask for donations from their employer, clients, family, friends or neighbors.
- 2.) Send out a letter requesting auction donations from local businesses – including “restaurants, spas, jewelers, gift stores, museums, theme parks, theatres, sports teams, etc.”

Start small – maybe 100 to 200 businesses. Your letter “should briefly explain what your organization does, give the details of the event (when and where it will be held), and make a direct ask for an item to auction off at the event.”

Most donations will be small items in the \$25-\$100 range – including gift cards. But that's OK. Every little bit helps.

- 3.) Follow up with phone calls about a week or so after the letters have been sent.

Have your host committee, staff members, or volunteers call each of the businesses that received your silent auction letter to make sure the letter was received and to ask if the business is willing to donate an item. These calls shouldn't be long... just a simple check-in to boost the response rate on your letters.

The follow-up phone calls are the key. They can boost participation by anywhere between 20-50%.

Many folks who receive your request will put it aside or get distracted and won't reply immediately. A phone call reminder will move many of them off the fence.

A Simple Change You Should Make on Your Online Donation Forms

The sweetest sound to a donor's or voter's ears is...their name.

Actually, that's true of all human beings. And is why you should use someone's name as often as appropriate and possible in your communications.

But when I get an email or fundraising letter addressed to “Charles” – my given name – it’s as off-putting as if they didn’t use my name at all.

Why? Because for over 60 years now I’ve gone by the name “Chuck.” Even by my own mother! So anyone who uses “Charles” is telling me they don’t really know me.

But here’s the problem:

In order to process an online contribution, we ask people to provide us the name on their credit card – which is usually their legal name, not the nickname they go by. As such, follow-up contacts to our customers and supporters are to a name that has the opposite effect of the one we intend.

Well, a couple years ago I discovered something that a blind, gourmet coffee-maker in rural Nevada does that’s so mind-numbingly simple I can’t believe everyone isn’t already doing it. He simply added one additional field on his online donation form...

“Friendly Name.”

So I typed in my nickname, “Chuck,” in that box.

Then typed in my legal name as it appears on my credit card in the “First Name” box.

Now my payment will be processed with no complications. But when Blind Dog Coffee writes to me in the future, they’ll simply mail-merge my “Friendly Name” into the document.

If your payment processor for online donations doesn’t allow the addition of this field, contact them and ask for it. This slight, little change can be worth its weight in gold in follow-up donations. Onward...



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