

SEPTEMBER 2009

What Do You Hope to Find In Your Stocking?

Creating Compelling End-of-Year Appeals

Tips from the "Nevo Trio"

In order to create a compelling year-end appeal, begin with the elements of a good appeal. This may sound simplistic, but the truly profound points in life, and fundraising *are* simple.

Fundraising pieces are not created equal and pieces that stay with the elements of a good appeal, prove their value in how well they earn for the organization.

We have attached a checklist to help guide you when developing your year-end appeal.

QUESTION #2

Should we buy a list?

In this economy, your development resources are best spent on cultivating current donors rather than acquiring new ones. Focus on current and potential donors that already have your nonprofit in their radar (volunteers, friends of donors and volunteers). If you are a small organization with very few donors, focus on building your mail list with the help of your board and volunteers before you develop a comprehensive end-of-year appeal. If you do choose to buy a list, we recommend buying one only if your name already has some recognition in the community AND you have clearly identified your best target market. And, remember, only buy lists from reputable sources.

TOP QUESTIONS:

1. How do we compete with all the other appeals?
2. Should we buy a list?
3. How do we get a donor to open the envelope?
4. What is the best time to mail your appeal?
5. What's the latest ePhilanthropy trend?

QUESTION #1

How do we compete with all the other appeals?

If organizations don't maintain regular year-round contact, but pull out all the stops for their end-of-year appeal, they simply can't expect large returns. Staying in contact with regular print or emailed newsletters throughout the year will keep you fresh in people's minds when it comes to holiday giving, which can provide a huge advantage. Having additional documentation of your successes available on your website will also make you stand out from the crowd – the more donors can see what you have accomplished (and where their funds have gone/are going) the more likely they are to donate to your organization over another. So be prepared with your annual report, pie charts, and success stories online to supplement your mailed appeal.



QUESTION #3

How do we get a donor to open the envelope?

The envelope needs to be as compelling as the letter and/or to come from a highly recognizable source. If you have volunteer resources, do something to the envelope that will stand out i.e. actual labels rather than imprinted addresses from a mailing house. I like to add holiday postage by hand. Or you can skip the envelope altogether. Consider one of the following:

- mail an end-of-year appeal brochure with a detachable donation form and direct people to the website for additional information
- mail your annual report with a donation envelope attached inside

When properly created, either of these pieces can have all the traditional elements found in a direct mail piece i.e. letter, case statement, success story etc.

Tips from the "Nevo Trio"

If you are using a challenge to inspire donors to give (i.e. a matching gift challenge or an inter-team challenge), give people an opportunity to track your goal online – you can set up a webpage specific to the challenge that includes a static or interactive graphic that visually shows the progress toward the challenge amount. Make the graphic professional looking (not cheesy!) to keep in line with your brand image! In your newsletters, report the progress you are making and link back to the website for details.

QUESTION #4

What is the best time to send your appeal?

Mail between the 3rd week of November and the 2nd week of December if you will be contacting your donors only once during your end-of-year appeal. You may also want to try a multi-pronged approach by sending out your initial appeal in a printed, mailed format and then an additional appeal in an email format designed to "remind" donors who have not responded to the mailed appeal. In this case, it's best to send your 1st appeal close to November 1st to give people time to respond before sending out your 2nd email appeal close to December 1st.

QUESTION #5

What is the latest trend in ePhilanthropy?

Using Social Networking to raise funds is the latest trend in ePhilanthropy. Before jumping on the bandwagon, attend our luncheon next month for some truths about Twitter and other social networking outlets!

THE NEVO TRIO

Catherine Spear
Stacey Clinesmith
Julie Damon



JOIN US IN OCTOBER

To Tweet or Not to Tweet:

What can social media do for you?

For more information, email sclinesmith@nevotraining.com



Ninety Minutes of Practical Know-How for Your Nonprofit

Annual Appeal Checklist		Boy, and how!	Kind of, Sort of	Not so much	N/A
1	Does the title or opening sentence grab your attention?				
2	Does it appeal to “heart” and “mind”, in that order?				
3	Is there a good, succinct, one sentence call to action?				
4	Is there a defined tone and theme for the piece?				
5	Has the donor been given a problem to solve? Does he/she understand how his/her gift will help?				
6	Has a strong case for support been made?				
7	Has it been made easy for someone to make a gift? Is there a donation envelope included or a web address where donations can be made?				
8	Has it created a sense of urgency by detailing the consequences if no action is taken? Does it encourage the donor to give by a certain date?				
9	<i>For campaigns with multiple components: Do all the pieces fit together? [Think about everything: outer envelope, response devices, enclosures, website, e-mail campaign, etc.]</i>				
10	Does it tell a compelling story?				
11	Is the length of the appeal reasonable?				
12	Is the focus on the people served [as opposed to programs]?				
13	Is it written from one person to another? Does it use “I” and “You” – but mostly “You”?				
14	Does it use testimonials?				
15	Does it focus on benefits that a donation will bring to the organization, the community and the donor as opposed to simply listing the needs of the organization?				

16	Is it formatted in a manner that is easy to read [with clearly defined paragraphs, plenty of white space, bullets, and highlighted items]				
17	Can you understand the message and what is being requested simply by skimming?				
18	Does the piece mention association with a “credibility enhancing” organization like the Wise Giving Alliance or Charity Navigators? Does it include their logos?				
19	Has it been personalized for the donor in any way -- other than just their name? For instance, does it include recognition of past donations?				
20	Does the letter include a statement of gratitude?				
Number of times checked					
Multiply by		3	2	1	0
Points					
					T O T A L



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