

What makes a great photo?

I'm often asked what makes a photograph great – and how to take a picture that's worth a thousand words.

And that's where the old adage 'practice makes perfect' comes in.

Practice, practice, practice – and more importantly learn from what you're doing right, and wrong.

Thanks to digital photography those 'boo-boos' cost you nothing! And all the time you're getting better at your art.

The next piece of advice I give is to think before you take the photo. Consider whether the background is ideal – or too messy. Are you close enough to your subject? Do you need to use the flash?

All considerations which add up to getting the right shot. It may even take a bit of pre-planning – setting up the ideal picture. But now down to some 'nuts and bolts'.

Camera settings and quality

If you're using a digital camera make sure you have a memory card which holds at least 256MB. Many people have smaller cards, which means they are forced to set their camera on a low resolution – so that they can take more pics.

My advice is to always set your camera to take the best quality photograph – which in turn means the size of each photo file will be larger.

Why? Because should you wish to enlarge a photo which has been taken on a low resolution setting, the quality will rapidly deteriorate to the point of being unusable.

And if your camera uses film, use a 400ASA film, which copes with varied light conditions and produces good quality prints.

Composition

Another word for the way you place objects in the photo. If you're taking a picture of a person, why not go close up? So often I see photos which are taken from a distance – ideal if you're wanting to show the

background, but not great if you're actually trying to show the person's face, or what they're doing.

If you're taking a photo of your facility or building, choose a pleasing angle. The first temptation is to stand in the parking lot and snap the shot. Why not incorporate a foreground of flower beds, or 'frame' the photo with the hanging branches of trees?

And if you're photographing a group of people, avoid placing them in a straight line, and rather arrange your subjects in a tight group. Once again, give some thought to what you would like your photo to look like, before pressing the button.

Lighting

I always keep my camera's flash on, whether indoors or outside. The flash helps to fill in unsightly shadows – under people's eyes, in shady spots and generally helps to brighten up the photo.

Also, when shooting outdoors, never take a photo facing into the sun. Chances are your subject will come out in shadow, or you'll suffer from a case of lens flare – the result of sunlight shining into your camera's lens, which produces a series of bright spots on your photograph.

If necessary, take the photo at another time of day – early morning and late afternoon have the best available light.

If you're photographing people indoors or at night, use the 'red eye' setting to avoid your subject's eyes coming out bright red.

Focus

Finally a last word on focus. Make sure your photographs are 'in focus' and make sure your picture has a central focus. Too often pictures are just too broad – they try to include everything in a scene, when it could in fact be a single child in a soup kitchen queue which you should be focusing on.

Richard Solomon is the creative director at Downes Murray International. ■

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Downes Murray International

Downes Murray International are fundraising consultants, working with non-profit and non-government organisations of all kinds, to increase their fundraising effectiveness.

We offer feasibility studies, strategic planning workshops, direct mail fundraising, mail/phone, corporate and capital fundraising campaigns, Internet fundraising and website design, church fundraising and bequest promotion programmes. In addition, Downes Murray International has close links with a number of fundraising consultancies across the globe, and represents DVA Navion International Consultancy in Africa, enabling us to keep a finger on the pulse of international trends and techniques. For more information contact your nearest office.

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“Reprinted with acknowledgement to ...”

Fundraising Forum prides itself on keeping South African fundraisers right up-to-date with developing attitudes, trends and techniques, both here and overseas. We are grateful to the following international publications, which are regularly quoted and highly recommended:

- *Successful Fund Raising*, PO Box 4528, Sioux City, Iowa, 51104 (12 issues per annum \$149) website: www.stevensoninc.com
- *The NonProfit Times*, 190 Tamarack Circle, Skillman, NJ08558 (\$129 per annum) website: www.nptimes.com
- *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, PO Box 1989, Marion, Ohio, 4335-1989 (24 issues – one annum at \$95) website: <http://philanthropy.com>
- *Mal Warwick's Newsletter* – Successful Direct Mail, Telephone and Online Fundraising, Strathmoor Press Inc, 2550 Ninth Street, Suite 1040, Berkeley, CA 94710-2516. Free subscriptions online at www.malwarwick.com

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Fraudsters target charities

Fraudsters are becoming increasingly creative in an attempt to rob charities of funds. Their artistry also extends to copying well-known company logos in a bid for credibility, reports Downes Murray International copywriter Marisol Gutierrez.

It seems there's no end to the ingenuity of fraudsters. Criminals have set their sights on charities, using both elaborate and simple schemes to defraud money from non-profits.

A popular scam involves charities being contacted by a bogus employee of a well-known company. The caller claims that a large deposit has been made into the charity's bank account – but that too much was deposited in error. The charity is then asked to 'refund' a considerable portion of funds – and put under pressure since the caller claims to be at risk of getting into trouble from a superior.

Looks legal

The danger for an unsuspecting charity is that the deposit does reflect in the charity's bank account – thanks to the use of stolen and defrauded cheques.

The Association for the Physically Disabled (APD) has been targeted more than once. 'The latest conmen hid behind the name of a large supermarket chain,' said APD Director Dave Fox, in a report on IOL (www.iol.co.za).

The Nelson Mandela Children's Fund confirmed in the same report that their name was also being abused in a similar scam.

In yet another scam, charities are told that they are the beneficiaries of significant cash through an estate such

as the Edward Heath Foundation – which upon investigation, proves to be non-existent.

So, what's a charity to do? Simple. Do nothing – until you've thoroughly checked out the information you've been given. Any donor or corporate representative will understand – and probably appreciate – your vigilance.

Be wary of:

- Cell phone numbers and free Internet e-mail addresses, which are often used by fraudsters.

- Calls from 'employees' of companies who give you a cell number to reply to.

- E-mail or written correspondence from so-called attorneys, trusts or foundations. Any genuine notification will include legitimate names, contact numbers and address details – and will be easy to verify.

- People posing as workers or volunteers from charities – no matter what 'proof' they provide. One call to the charity concerned should be enough to check the person's claims.

Be willing to:

- Play detective. Check details and verify information.

- Suspect a plot is afoot if someone calls 'out of the blue' with a large donation. Although such philanthropic and generous souls do exist, there is valid reason for the saying, 'If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is'.

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Fresh new look for www.dmi.co.za

Fundraising case studies, useful tools for fundraisers and Terry Murray's Blog are just some of the features of the new Downes Murray International website, launched at the beginning of September.

Apart from containing essential information about the consultancy, its ethos, services and people, the site aims to provide inspiration and assistance to any NGO in search of fundraising advice.

'Sharing our knowledge and ideas is something we've always done through the participation of key staff members at various fundraising conferences and workshops.

'The website gives us the opportunity to share on an ongoing basis – and to invite others to join in through the daily blog,' explains co-owner and director of DMI, Jenni McLeod.

Although Terry Murray retired in 1999, he still maintains close ties with the company.

'Terry's fundraising knowledge is legendary,' said McLeod. 'We are delighted to have him tackle topical issues on our web log.'

Visit www.dmi.co.za soon and let us know what you think of our new site.

E-mail sheilamc@iafrica.com or richard@dmi.co.za

Love thy donor



Terry A Murray is former Chairman of Downes Murray International and recently retired president of DVA Navion South Africa.

One of the saddest things that I've ever heard in my visits to a wide variety of NPOs is staff complaining about donors and the demands of their direct mail programme.

The issues most often raised are the extra work involved in opening all those reply envelopes, receipting and banking the donations, thanking and replying to the queries of the donors.

Then, of course, there's the effort of providing emotive stories and pictures to create the appeals that bring in all that money.

It's often not the fault of the good folk who work within the organisation – but is rather caused by the fact that employees of NPOs are often not properly briefed about how the whole fundraising effort works. They're also often unaware that without donors and the money they provide, the organisation would be totally unable to do its

excellent work.

So, let's all begin to understand that donors are wonderful people who generously part with their money to causes in which they believe, and that the NPO is the catalyst which makes the good work possible.

Generosity

Donors give with a generous heart in response to a well constructed appeal and they will often stay loyal to a cause for 30 years or more – with many finally leaving a bequest to your cause.

Many donors in their senior years are seeking a relationship with the organisations they support.

That relationship becomes very significant in their lives when they are older and sometimes living alone – and it often shows in the form of long letters to the organisation.

Think of your donors as your organisation's family – they're the people whose loyalty is without question and who will often send you another gift at Christmas or on other special occasions.

They're also the ones who come to your rescue when a crisis or emergency strikes your organisation and those you care for.

I'll never forget when, some years ago, a loyal donor to the direct mail programme of one of DMI's major clients sent a donation of R189 000 in response to a mailing. The organisation was overjoyed and of course, thanked her warmly.

But the biggest surprise came three months later when they were informed that the same

donor had sadly died – but had left them a bequest of R16 million!

There's little doubt that the reason for this generosity was that the donor felt needed and appreciated by the organisation to which she had been contributing over the years.

She had also been warmly and promptly thanked, her queries had been answered and she had been invited to visit the organisation.

Motivation

Recently I was shown a truly wonderful letter from an overseas donor's family sent in response to a letter of thanks for a donation they had made. The thank you letter asked the question: 'I wonder what your thoughts were as you placed your cheque in the envelope and mailed it off?'

The donor's letter gave five different answers explaining their thoughts:

- The fact that they were moved by the needs expressed in the appeal letters;
- That they were concerned by the horrifying HIV/Aids statistics in Africa;
- And that they were grateful they could afford to help less fortunate people.

● Then one of the most telling reasons was that they'd begun supporting the organisation in place of the husband's two elderly aunts when they died a while back. This particular NPO was the

only charity that noticed when they had taken over the donations of the deceased aunts and had politely enquired after their well-being.

What this illustrates is the importance of paying close attention to your donor file and particularly to correspondence that often accompanies donations. In fact it indicates that having a staff person responsible for this task can often be very worthwhile.

- The fifth and final thought expressed by these dedicated donors was in a very moving quotation entitled 'You are blessed'.

So, the message is clear – make sure everyone in your organisation knows and understands the importance of donors and the money they provide.

Also ensure that they fully appreciate the necessity for running an efficient fundraising programme that provides emotive reasons for support, good feedback and warm appreciation of the commitment of donors to your cause.

After all – they're not only making it possible for you to do all the good things that you do for others – but they're also helping to pay your salary too! ■

"The message is clear – make sure that everyone in your organisation understands the importance of donors and the money they provide."

Making sure you select the right list

When a list broker presents you with some possible lists, how do you decide between two similar lists? What makes one list better than another?

Typically, a broker will send you a data card that describes the organisation, its pricing, and available 'selects' (limiting criteria such as gender, geography, etc). When reviewing a data card, I look for several clues as to the condition of the list and whether it's the right choice for my particular plan. Here are some of the things I consider:

List description

Is the mission of the organisation and its list market similar to the non-profit I represent? The closer the affinity, the more likely those donors will be interested in hearing my offer.

How were donors acquired?

Usually I look for donors who received their offer via direct mail and responded via direct mail. Event-attendee, prospect, and lapsed-donor lists don't tend to work as well as lists with active direct-mail-acquired donors.

Recency

Typically, list owners offer donors who have given within the past 24 months. If the file is large enough, the list manager may offer selects of donors acquired within the most recent 12 months, six months, three months, or even less. The more recently a donor has given, the more responsive that donor is likely to be.

Donation levels

In most instances, I'm hoping to find donors who have given single donations of at least R80. But you should be looking for donors similar to yours. So if you represent a cause seeking a lower ask as an entry point, you might choose lists that have lower giving levels.

List universe

If I'm going to invest in renting a list, I want to make sure I have plenty of names for future use. Assuming the list performs well, I want to

ensure that I have a big enough quantity to split the list across package variations. Also, I'll want to note how the list duplicates against others in the merge-purge process, since those with high duplication rates are more likely to be similar to my donors and thus better prospects.

Frequency of updates

How often is the mailing list updated, and are newly acquired names added into the mix?

Cost

Is the list appropriately priced? Does the list owner offer non-profit base rate discounts? More important, is the list available on exchange? Is the list manager willing to negotiate special rate discounts for first-time tests?

Usage

Many people like to look at the usage noted on the data card. In some cases, this is instructive, but you need to remember it's often used as a selling tool by the list manager. My preference is to ask my broker to counsel me on which lists are performing better for other users.

Offer

Did the organisation acquire its names with premiums, or did donors respond to a straightforward appeal? Again, choosing or not choosing these lists would depend upon how you were attracting donors. If I were mailing a calendar or address labels, I would want donor names that were similarly acquired.

Fulfilment

How expeditiously can the list be approved and processed? There's nothing more frustrating than wanting a particular list, only to find out you can't get it for your mailing.

These are just a few things to consider when approaching a list plan. When in doubt, check with your consultant and broker who can help you prioritize lists in conjunction with your specific acquisition goals. ■

Suzie McGuire is a Consultant at Mal Warwick Associates Inc. E-mail suzie@malwarwick.com

Selecting the right lists for your direct mail fundraising programme can be a potential minefield. Suzie McGuire offers some of her top considerations.

With acknowledgement to Mal Warwick's newsletter August, 2006

Visit www.malwarwick.com

New guide to online fundraising

Prolific author and fundraiser, Jill Ritchie has published a new guide to raising funds on the Internet.

Having monitored the advent of the Internet and its impact on fundraising over the past decade, Ritchie shares her findings and the input she has had from many fundraisers around the globe.

WWW.Fundraising shows how many well-known and proven methods of fundraising and resource mobilisation can make a seamless shift to incorporate the Internet, and its value as a tool in your fundraising mix.

In an easy-to-understand style, Ritchie guides the reader through various methods of Internet fundraising, making sure you don't

spam potential donors, planning a website, marketing, donor research using the Internet, newsgroups and Internet chat and messaging.

The book also includes an analysis of 20 websites, and their strengths and weaknesses.

The book ends with a useful glossary of terminology to help you understand the mysterious world of Internet jargon.

E-mail papillonp@icon.co.za

● Downes Murray International recently launched a division dedicated to Internet fundraising. *DMI Online* offers a complete, specialist service for non-profits seeking to maximise their online income. Contact Sheila McCallum on (031) 764 5123 or e-mail sheilamc@iafrica.com ■

Launching a capital campaign? Be bold but realistic



When Grace Family Church set out to raise funds to build a new home for their church, Downes Murray International Executive Consultant, Justin Bradfield, was part of the capital campaign team. He explains some of the essential ingredients for success.

Working with Grace Family Church on the first phase of their capital campaign to build their new church home in Umhlanga Rocks, two sound messages from Pastor Mark Van Straaten – which are true for all capital campaigns – stand out.

‘Our appeal is not so much about a building, as it is about people.’ Pastor Mark had realised the first rule of capital campaigning, that is, the relationship with your past, present and future donors, is everything.

Raising large sums of money, often under tight deadlines, is no easy task. In Grace’s case, DMI was able to structure the campaign to fit the particular realities on the ground, and in this way tailor-make a strategy for fundraising success.

Capital campaigns require the correct planning, a bold but realistic fundraising strategy, and the correct method of engaging key donors at every level. Recognising that each donor should be asked in the right way, and by the right person, is – or should be – the ‘mantra’ of the capital campaign.

DMI was able to give Grace invaluable guidance through this maze, and support them against a set time frame that was grounded in the need to time the ‘asking’ in line with the progress of the building work.

Which brings us to the other reality that Pastor Mark grasped very early on: ‘We employed professional architects, plumbers, lighting specialists and landscapers to build our new church, but when it came to fundraising, the most important part of making our vision possible, we thought we could do it ourselves. How wrong we were.’

The added value that a professional fundraiser can give to your campaign may be the difference between the beautiful, well-equipped facility you desire, and the watered-down, cost-denuded and ill-equipped building you may end up with. ■



Grace Family Church's new home in Umhlanga Rocks.

Six Essential Components of a Capital Campaign

- **Feasibility study:** Before embarking on any campaign, ask yourself: what is the image of my organisation; do I have a donor base willing to support the capital campaign, and do we have the resources in place to make it happen? We suggest conducting an initial feasibility study to assess – or ‘test the waters’ – before leaping in head first with potentially disastrous consequences.
- **A clear fundraising strategy:** Should the feasibility study be positive, take the time to put together a clear and achievable fundraising strategy to guide you through the life of the campaign.
- **Articulating the case for support:** Have you put together a clear, emotive and compelling case for why your donors should support the campaign?
- **Potential donors:** Have you segmented your donor file correctly, making sure that major donors are asked by their peers, and medium and general prospects are asked in the right way too?
- **Supporting materials:** Do you have a case statement, budget, website, and visual representations to support your campaign and inform your donors of the need to give? Remember, donors will only give if they believe in the cause and trust you to deliver on their behalf.
- **Don't make promises you can't keep:** A capital campaign is a vast undertaking. Make sure your preparation and lead-in time are adequate, and that you don't alienate your donors by selling a vision that is not realistic or achievable. Experience shows that donors will not forget the promises you don't keep, nor their expectations which you have left unfulfilled. Once trust is lost, it's hard to regain.

Milestone Thinking

On-target observations in brief

Great listening also requires skill in asking quality questions, the questions that unlock the information we need in order to increase our donors' motivation to give and decrease or eliminate the obstacles preventing a joyful 'Yes'.

With acknowledgement to

Karen Osborne at the International Fundraising Congress

Reported in Mal Warwick's Newsletter

May 2006

Visit www.malwarwick.com

When you ask, ask with sincerity and make sure people fully understand how their money will be used.

With acknowledgement to

Keith Wolter

Chronicle of Philanthropy

June 29, 2006

The combination of your 'From' address and subject line is what will determine whether or not people read your e-mail.

With acknowledgement to

Rachel Allison, Senior Account Executive Donordigital

Reported in Mal Warwick's Newsletter

July 2006

Visit www.malwarwick.com

A narrow focus, trusted managers, and transparency are key ingredients to running a successful foundation.

With acknowledgement to

Michael J. Fox

Chronicle of Philanthropy

June 29, 2006

Have an understanding of the project's importance to the donor, to his/her family or associates and to society. Addressing only what the project means to the charity is a programming failure.

With acknowledgement to

Successful Fund Raising

August 2006, Volume XIV, No. 8

Confidence is intimately linked to performance, not need. The more charities can show that they are making a difference, the higher confidence will go.

With acknowledgement to

The Chronicle of Philanthropy

September 29, 2005



A heart for our children

The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa is a community-based organisation which aims to reduce the incidence of heart disease and stroke in South Africa by providing education and supporting vital research.

Established in 1980, the Heart and Stroke Foundation receives no government funding, and relies on the generosity of individuals and the business community.

Since 1997 The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa Children's Programme has been teaching children healthy habits from a young age.

Generous sponsorship from Lucky Star has helped the organisation to reach out to rural communities.

Crèche aged children in disadvantaged communities are the primary focus, where they are taught about nutrition, exercise, the effects of smoking, basic hygiene and HIV/Aids awareness. The children learn songs and rhymes in their own language, receive an activity book and learn basic cardiovascular exercises.

For many children the meal they receive at crèche is their only meal for the day. The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa dieticians consult with caregivers, helping them to plan meals which are both nutritious and within their budget.

Visit www.heartfoundation.co.za

(Readers are invited to submit photographs, together with a brief overview of their organisation's work, for inclusion in this regular feature). ■

The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa has a heart for our children – bringing education on topics like health and nutrition to little ones living in rural areas.

FUNDRAISING FORUM

Fundraising Forum is a regular newsletter dedicated to the enhancement of management, fundraising techniques and the promotion of community service, welfare and not-for-profit organisations of all kinds.

It is published by Downes Murray International and circulated, free of charge, to anyone with an interest in the growth and improvement of the non-profit sector and those served by it. In addition to regular features written by Downes Murray International staff, there are extracts from worldwide fundraising publications which are reprinted with acknowledgement to the publishers.

We welcome submissions for publication from all writers involved in not-for-profit work.

Visit www.dmi.co.za

If you haven't yet, now's the time to launch a Successful bequest programme



For more than 20 years, Downes Murray International has been involved in the Archdiocese of Durban's bequest promotion programme. Cardinal Wilfrid Napier shares his advice on starting – and running – a winning bequest programme.

The fundraising programme of the Archdiocese of Durban has been handled by Downes Murray International for more than 40 years.

Together with Archbishop Hurley – who instituted the direct mail programme – I have trusted their advice through good years and lean.

I have learned that in the world of advancing and changing technology, a programme such as ours can only grow and be sustained through accurate monitoring – both of the market and of our donors' needs.

Launch

When it was suggested that the idea of leaving a bequest to the Archdiocese be introduced to our donors we forged ahead.

We began by sending out a direct mail letter which firstly emphasised the need for a Will, the fact that so many people die intestate (without a Will) and the difficulties and heartbreak this may cause the family.

It was written as a service and help for donors. Enclosed was a simple advice leaflet on making a Will and return card should the donor decide to include the Archdiocese in their Will.

Only two of these special mailings were sent out with disappointing immediate results.

In 1993 we picked up two bequestors and one prospect. In 1998 we gained three new bequestors and one prospect.

But the stage was set for the next step of the programme.

After the 1993 mailing we realised that we could use our direct mail programme to promote the concept of bequests to our donors, which we promptly did.

In 1994 six donors indicated that they had included the Archdiocese in their will, in 1995 – 19, 1996 – 11 and the number has grown each year since then.

In the first three months of this year alone we have already had 11 notifications.

My suggestions for a successful bequest programme are:

- Plant the 'seed' – the idea of leaving a bequest to your organisation – with a special mailing and information leaflet.
 - Use your direct mail programme to offer your free Wills booklet and to promote the idea of leaving a bequest.
 - Include photos and inspiring articles in your newsletters on how bequests are used.
- Donors respond well to good news and positive stories about how their gifts are working.

Our programme works because we have strong back-up and advisory channels.

Regular communication with our consultancy includes a quarterly review for report back, suggestions and improvements.

We recently launched a special society for donors who have included the Archdiocese in their Will – *The St. Michael Society*.

Each new member receives a special gift to acknowledge their commitment to the work of the Archdiocese.

Family

The Archdiocese's programme works because *all* mail is answered, each and every gift is acknowledged and all queries are answered as promptly and personally as possible.

We have built up a 'family' of donors who trust our integrity and know that their gifts are valued, no matter how small. It follows that when the time comes to make a Will, the Archdiocese is included amongst their nearest and dearest.

To any non-profit organization considering such a bequest programme, I recommend professional help – you won't regret it. We haven't.

And the success of the Archdiocese's programme has proved the benefits of professional guidance, determination, testing and building strong, warm relationships with your potential bequestors. ■



The Archdiocese of Durban produces simple guides to making a will as a service to donors, and new bequestors are enrolled as members of the St. Michael Bequest Society.



Growth in online fundraising continues



Of the 167 American charities which took part in the latest annual online fundraising survey mounted by *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, 93% reported doing better in 2005 than they had the previous year. Thirty three percent raised double or more what they raised in 2004, with several reporting increases of well over 1000%.

In the five years that the publication has been measuring online fundraising results, income has grown in leaps and bounds.

For example, in 2001 World Vision raised US\$1.7 million online; this figure grew to US\$2.8 million in 2002, US\$5.7 million in 2003, US\$8.5 in 2004 and US\$37.1 million in 2005. This growth is typical of the majority of organisations participating in the survey.

Trends mirrored in South Africa

Similar patterns are evident among South African non-profits with established online fundraising programmes.

Although we've yet to see anything like these amounts, what we are seeing is a steady growth in both numbers of online donors and income raised, that mirrors what is happening in America.

Another encouraging trend for South African non-profits using the web as a fundraising tool is that on average, gifts made online are larger than those received through the mail.

Who's raising most online?

Not surprisingly, the really big earners identified in *The Chronicle* survey are large, well-known organisations such as the Red Cross Society (US\$157.7 million), the United Way, which is similar to the Community Chest in South Africa (US\$140.9million), Unicef (US\$54.8 million), the Salvation Army (US\$45.9 million), American Cancer Society (US\$30.1 million) and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (US\$26.2 million).

Online giving was a particularly important source of revenue for charities providing aid after natural disasters such as the Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina.

But while the Internet has become an important source of donations for some organisations, the majority still report online giving accounts for less than 5% of the total funds raised.

Lessons we can learn

Online giving is growing, but it's unlikely to take over from other fundraising channels in the near future. However, those non-profits experimenting with combinations of online

and offline efforts are pointing out that it is increasingly difficult to credit the source of gifts to any one medium.

If your direct mail or television advertisement encourages donors to visit the website and they make a gift, should that gift be credited to the mail/TV or the Web? If you send out an e-mail alerting donors to a forth-coming direct mail appeal, which medium triggered the gift?

Holistic approach

Save the Children is restructuring its fundraising goals to remove the 'competition' between traditional mail and electronic appeals, in favour of co-ordinated programmes that work in synergy to maximise total overall results.

Other non-profits are harnessing the interactive nature of the Internet to enhance traditional fundraising efforts.

Prior to sending out an appeal for HIV/Aids children in Africa, Compassion International used an online forum to find out what their donors felt about this aspect of their work. This information helped shape the subsequent mail appeal.

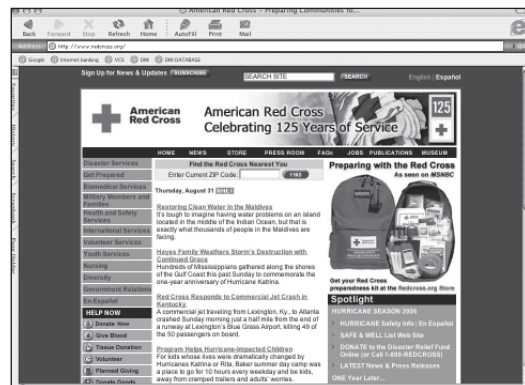
Those that hold marathons, bike rides and other events where participants solicit contributions from friends and family members are finding the Internet particularly effective in collecting sponsorship pledges.

One DMI Online client used their website to process ticket sales to a fundraising event – the adaptability of the medium makes it easy to incorporate a web element.

Back to basics

The bottom line is that online giving works provided you remember the basics: build relationships with donors and prospective donors through e-mail, telephone and face-to-face connections; use your website to focus attention on real needs and your organisation's solutions to those needs; ask for the gift; and have the mechanisms in place to accept online donations.

Results of the latest American Online Giving Survey conducted by the 'Chronicle of Philanthropy' reflect another growth year for this medium. Sheila McCallum of DMI Online draws parallels with the local scene.



The top-earning American Red Cross website (above) raised US\$157.7 million in 2005. Another high earner, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, uses the Internet to track sponsors of event participants (below).

