

## In the name of humanity

The tsunami disaster led to an unprecedented outpouring of humanitarian aid. Now, charities around the globe are wondering if they'll have to scrape the bottom of the philanthropic pot – or if the heart of the world will continue to beat as compassionately. Downes Murray International copywriter Marisol Gutierrez reports.

South Africans were no different to Australians, Americans and other people around the world as they dug deep into their pockets in response to the tsunami disaster.

Wealthy and poor, politicians, pensioners, corporates, children, celebrities ... nobody was unmoved by the scale of the devastation and human suffering brought home to us through images in the media. And it triggered the most generous provision of humanitarian aid in history.

### Unprecedented response

Relief group Oxfam International, appealing for tsunami aid in 12 countries, raised \$154 million within seven weeks of the disaster – the biggest response it has ever had. Médecins Sans Frontières offered to hand money back to donors after receiving more than three times the £16 million it had asked for. The South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) raised nearly R15 million in under two months.

According to SARCS's fundraiser Ann Bown, individuals were the main contributors to the organisation's bank account, with deposits ranging from R2 to R100 000. Corporate South Africa gave generously – in cash and kind – but it was 'ordinary' people who demonstrated the real strength of philanthropy.

### Concerns

Without diminishing the need for emergency aid, many non-profits have expressed concern over donors' future giving to the 'daily tsunamis' – such as poverty, abuse and Aids – which remain critical, devastating issues to the millions of people affected by them.

As an article in *Marketing Week* pointed out, '... the job of garnering a similar response to the crisis of world poverty, with 30 000 children dying each day from preventable illnesses, is not so easy. It lacks the cataclysmic imagery of a tidal wave.'

Perhaps it's akin to asking, 'Is the glass half empty, or half full?'. Positively, we could say that the tsunami appeal has

turned non-donors into donors, and that this previously untapped pool of supporters is now more likely to respond to domestic causes – given the right message.

Less optimistically, one could assert that the bombardment of tsunami appeals could have led to 'charity fatigue' in donors, who feel they've 'done their bit' by donating to the tsunami appeal.

### Inspire

But having said that, the real question is: Which attitude – and actions – will define the way your charity chooses to move forward?

Fundraising experts agree that more than ever, charities need to create campaigns that do more than show problems and seek solutions through donors' sympathies. Messages must be inspiring and moving enough to compel giving – whether they're about emergencies or not.

How? For starters, by investing more in existing donor nurturing tools and regular communications. Show supporters that you care as much about them as you ask them to care about your cause. Say thank you timeously. Offer report back. Demonstrate accountability and integrity. If these pointers seem 'basic', why do so many non-profits still neglect them?

Competition for funds has always been tough. The tsunami appeal may well affect income for non-profits, but it has also proved that goodwill is alive and well in South Africa. And that's good news. ■



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# A great fundraising opportunity

It was 1985 and DMS Direct (as DMI was then known) was already South Africa's largest and most successful producer of direct mail fundraising.

But looking ahead, it seemed that perhaps direct mail as a medium had reached its peak, and was about to be overtaken by other forms of fundraising which would eventually cause its demise.

So, in 1986, I set off for the Australian Fundraising Convention to see what was working in their dynamic fundraising environment and look for new ideas to bring back for our SA non-profit clients.

## Total development

One of the first people I met was Michael Downes and he shared with me a concept he called 'total development'.

Total development was a methodology which started with individual donors acquired by direct mail. Their involvement and loyalty to the cause was then grown to the point where some could be approached face-to-face for

major gifts and capital needs, and some would eventually leave a bequest to the organisation.

Today, 20 years later, direct mail is far from dead – although once again, the prophets of doom are starting to say that it is about to be overtaken by e-mail, the Internet, cell phone technology and electronic media.

Direct mail is still, by far, the most successful method of acquiring individual donors to any non-profit – which is the real point of this story.

## Ignoring individuals

I'm amazed to find many NPOs still reliant solely on corporate, trust and foundation support, with the only individual giving coming from annual or once-off special events – none of which encourage long term donor involvement or loyalty.

Even the largest and most successful NPOs that rely solely on corporate and foundation support are subjecting their organisations to unnecessary risk, for these often extremely fickle sources are subject to policy changes and are also dependent on available income from profits or investment income.

Add to this the wellknown fact that more than 80% of all money given to the non-profit sector each year comes from individuals, and the need to build a base of individual donors makes even more sense.

So, if your organisation has NO individual donors or only a small number of individuals donating, consider this:

- Caring individuals give a total of 10 to 20 times more money to charity than the corporate sector, trusts and foundations in almost every country in the world.

- Individual donors, when properly nurtured, will stay loyal to your organisation for 20, 30 years or more (and often for their lifetime).

- Individual donors can be encouraged to become volunteer workers and even board members of your organisation.

- Individual donors will provide you with a regular annual income which grows each year.

- Some of them will be willing to help you with fundraising for large capital needs (and will be part of your campaign planning committee).

- Most individual donors don't only give to specific projects but will provide vitally important funds for essential administration and running costs.

- If they are encouraged in the right way, many will commit to a regular monthly contribution by debit order.

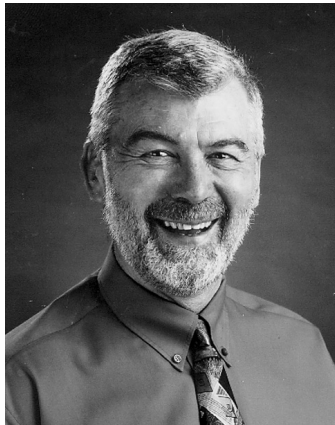
- Your individual donors will help to promote your organisation and its good works, and they will also help you find other donors.

- A percentage of your individual donors will be willing to become part of a special 'major donor support group' who will make larger than average annual contributions (usually in addition to their regular gifts).

- Finally, and most importantly, many individual donors who are in the right age group (65 years and older) when encouraged in the right way, will make a bequest to your organisation in their wills.

And with their bequests, they create the wonderful opportunity for you to build an endowment fund that will secure your future. What's more, bequest income can often be grown to a point where it even exceeds the annual income that you receive from your direct mail programme.

So if you don't have a direct mail fundraising programme which is providing you with a growing number of individual supporters and all the benefits which I have outlined – then you are surely missing out on one of the greatest opportunities in fundraising. ■



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

***"I am amazed to find many organisations still reliant solely on corporate, trust and foundation support"***



# Milestone Thinking

*On-target observations in brief*

Have multiple acquisition control packages. Use different themes for different lists.

*With acknowledgement to  
The NonProfit Times  
September 15, 2003*

How can you create a dynamic, effective appeal that motivates your donors? Write like you talk. Use 'I/you' statements to reinforce the relationship that exists with donors. Use simple words in present tense, with short phrases and sentences.

*With acknowledgement to  
Successful Fund Raising  
Volume XII, No. 10, October 2004*

Know that the best research is a personal visit.

*With acknowledgement to  
The NonProfit Times  
September 15, 2004*

Cultivate long-distance prospects. When news about your organisation makes it into the newspaper, clip it, copy it and send it to faraway prospects with a brief note.

*With acknowledgement to  
Successful Fund Raising  
Volume XII, No. 8, August 2004*

The ability to demonstrate clear need is a critical part of any capital campaign.

*With acknowledgement to  
The NonProfit Times  
September 1, 2004*

Remember how direct mail letters are read: signature first, then the P.S. ... then the first paragraph, perhaps indented paragraphs and underlined words - repetition is not redundant .

*With acknowledgement to  
Mal Warwick's website  
Visit [www.malwarwick.com](http://www.malwarwick.com)*

Concentrate on forming long-term relationships with new donors and let them choose how they wish to receive information.

*With acknowledgement to  
The Chronicle of Philanthropy  
September 30, 2004*



## Trees for school fees

*Hope for the future ... this rural child's education rests with a tiny tree nurtured from seed and sold to provide the money for school fees.*

**C**onservation-conscious local gardeners are creating an unprecedented demand for indigenous trees.

Rural communities are looking for sustainable income-generating programmes. Put the two together and you have a truly win-win initiative – Trees for School Fees – recently lauded by the Wildlands Conservation Trust in KwaZulu-Natal.

An amalgamation of the former KZN Conservation Trust and Wildlands Trust, the new body is committed to involving local communities in conservation efforts. Recognising that long-term conservation is only viable if rural people 'buy into' it, the Trust pioneers innovative ways of marrying conservation with community development enterprises, such as tourism opportunities.

The Trees for School Fees pilot project at Muzi Pan, St Lucia, has resulted in 18 000 indigenous seedlings being propagated from seed by children and their parents – both at school and at home – and marketed through partner nurseries to generate money for school fees.

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

## 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.

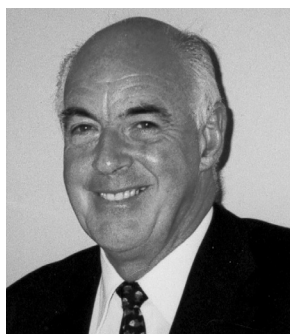
It is published by Downes Murray International and circulated, free of charge, to anyone with an interest in the growth and improvement of the non-profit sector and those served by it.

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.



# Ten top tips for board members



*In our special issue on boards last year, we looked at ways to strengthen your board. In this issue, Graham Wood gives some more advice – this time for your board members.*

**E**very board member I've met in all the non-profit organisations I have worked with over the years, tells me they will do anything except ask for money!

And while board members don't see their role as being fundraisers, they do need to be involved in something which is the very life-blood of the organisation.

So here are 10 tips for board members as to how they can become involved in the fundraising activities of their organisation:

## **1. Understand your role.**

Firstly, recognise that apart from your legal responsibility, you are someone who is continuing the spirit of the people who first established your organisation. So you are not a staff member – but you are one of the owners, and what the organisation is and will become is really in your hands!

## **2. Recognise the basics.**

In simplest terms we know that any NGO rests on three basic legs. These are: service delivery, management and fundraising. If each of these legs is firm and strong, yours is a good organisation. If any of these is weak, the board needs to help in developing a plan to strengthen it.

## **3. Understand how fundraising works.**

While most board members don't want to be fundraisers, they nevertheless need to understand the basics of an effective fundraising programme. They make the decisions and how else can they make the right decisions regarding fundraising? So attend courses, read books and ask for advice.

## **4. Help build a good fundraising programme.**

Some board members think all that is needed is to find a fundraiser who will go out and ask for money and work solely on commission.

But a good fundraising programme is much more than this! It consists of a case for support, a budget, people with influence, a target group and a development committee. In fact, the fundraising task must be seen as one of the most important parts of the entire organisation and needs to be given the attention it deserves. Board members can help a great deal in achieving this.

## **5. Become a donor yourself.**

Every board member should also be a donor! How can you expect others to give if you are not prepared to give yourself? 'Yes', you say, 'But I give my time!' While time is appreciated, without sufficient money, your organisation cannot go anywhere! Lead by example and others will follow.

## **6. Be an ambassador.**

There is nothing better than for someone who is not a paid employee, to be an enthusiastic representative of the organisation – to friends, family and other contacts. This helps to build awareness, create interest and prepare the ground for those who will later do the asking.

## **7. Learn to tell the story.**

Every organisation has a story to tell – of how it all started, of the good work being done, of the programmes to help those in need – and why all this is important. Every board member should know the story in detail and this is why the 'case for support' document is so important. Help to write the story and tell it well.

## **8. Provide good contacts.**

Fundraisers are always looking for good contacts who may be willing to give, if asked in the right way. Because board members move in different circles, they can often provide names of useful contacts who can be invited to a function or open day, and later be approached for support.

## **9. Help to grow a tree.**

Fundraising is more like planting a tree than turning on a tap! It takes time and is more a progression than an instantaneous action. It also requires an investment of funds in order to raise more.

So if you help to plant and nurture your fundraising programme, you will see it steadily grow and develop, and bear ongoing fruit for your organisation.

## **10. Have you hugged your fundraiser today?**

Finally, fundraising can be a lonely, stressful and often frustrating job. Your fundraiser needs all the support and encouragement you can give.

So how about some words of encouragement! Better still, go and give your fundraiser a hug right now – and thank them for all they are doing.

And if they don't die of heart failure, they will strive to do even more than ever before, because you cared!

Yes, we can't expect all board members to be fundraisers, but there is a lot they can do to help foster a sound, successful fundraising programme – because no organisation can really exist for long without it!

*Graham Wood is a former DMI Manager for the Western Cape. In 1997 he established his own fundraising consultancy – Graham Wood - Relationship Fundraising – serving clients in the greater Cape Town area.*

*E-mail woodrfr@mweb.co.za.* ■



# You're dared to be different!

All eyes will be on Cape Town between 18 and 20 May, when the Southern Africa Institute of Fundraising (SAIF) holds its 7th Biennial Convention 2005 – entitled *Dare to be Different* – at the River Club.

'Keynote speaker Geoff Hilton-Barber, motivational speaker and adventurer extraordinaire, will challenge and inspire you, whilst a panel of acclaimed South African and international speakers will bring you up-to-date on the latest developments and trends in fundraising,' said convention co-ordinator, Sue Brophy-Smith.

## International presenters

Speakers include international fundraising doyens Michael Downes (Australia) and Terry Murray (South Africa) of DVA Navion, top fundraising consultant Tony Elischer, and Cause Related Marketing expert Sue Adkins from the UK. South African speakers include fundraising stalwart Tamzin Racliffe; renowned fundraising expert and author, Jill Ritchie and CEO of Community Chest Western Cape, Amelia Jones.

Sershan Naidoo, Manager: Player Services and Media Liaison of the National Lotteries Board will also be a guest speaker at the convention – so be sure not to miss this session.

The preliminary programme can be viewed on the SAIF website [www.saifundraising.org.za](http://www.saifundraising.org.za). Presentations include *Good Governance of NGOs, From a Donor's Perspective, Bequest Societies, The Minefield of Volunteers and Capital Campaigns*.

A special programme aimed at those new to fundraising include *Organising the*

*Fundraising Office, Sources of Funding, Proposal Writing, Reporting to Donors and Setting up a Donor Recognition Programme.*

'The convention aims to help build the capacity of South Africa's fundraisers. It is also an exciting opportunity to discuss practical South African-focused strategies for securing the future, to renew friendships, and to build new networks with colleagues from South Africa and abroad,' Sue said.

SAIF is awarding convention scholarships to five fundraisers to attend the programme on day two. The Institute invites other organisations and companies to participate by increasing the number of scholarships. E-mail [suebrophy@telkomsa.net](mailto:suebrophy@telkomsa.net) – or call Sue on 083 461 9686.

Registration fee: R2500 for SAIF members; R2200 for second and subsequent delegates from one organisation and R2790 for non-members (includes 2005 SAIF membership if eligible).

Accommodation packages are also available. Enquiries: please contact Town and Country Conferences on (031) 716 8196 or email [tcc@venudata.co.za](mailto:tcc@venudata.co.za). Visit SAIF's website at [www.saifundraising.org.za](http://www.saifundraising.org.za).

SAIF was established in 1986, and is a non-profit voluntary organisation which exists to promote and encourage high standards of ethics, practice and public service among people involved in fundraising in Southern Africa. Branches are situated in Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. ■

*Whether you're an old hand – or new to fundraising – there's nothing quite like a conference to inspire and invigorate, network and catch up with colleagues. We spoke to co-ordinator Sue Brophy-Smith to find out what's in store at the Southern Africa Institute of Fundraising's 7th Biennial Convention in May.*

## Downes Murray International will be there

Are your communications looking a little tired and jaded, or are they made of the stuff that wins awards?

*Win or Bin* is one of the two sessions which Downes Murray International will be presenting at this year's convention.

Based on the popular series of articles in *Fundraising Forum*, this is a highly interactive session that will leave you with loads of new ideas to invigorate your fundraising materials.

You don't need a huge budget, full colour or a R1000-an-hour photographer to transform your direct mail, annual report, brochures or websites. You'll be amazed at how a few tricks can make the world of difference!

### Bring examples!

Be sure to bring printed samples of your current work to the session, and the creative

team from DMI – with help from the audience – will give you simple, effective tips on how to improve your organisation's communications.

In DMI's second session, internet specialist Sheila McCallum will give you tips to make your website a success, in *Five Ways to get the Web Working for Your Organisation*.

### Statistics

The session will take a look at online fundraising statistics from the USA and how local usage compares, what makes an online campaign successful – including examples – and will investigate other ways the Internet can enhance an your marketing efforts.

DMI will have a stand featuring some of the work we have produced for our clients. Please be sure to visit us – we'd like to meet you! ■



# Tsunami appeals harness power of the web

*Undeniably the biggest natural disaster in recent history, the tsunami that hit South East Asia in late December 2004 elicited unprecedented levels of generosity and support from donors world wide.*

*Sheila McCallum reports on the role of the Internet in soliciting funds.*

Within hours of news of the catastrophe that overtook South East Asia on 26 December breaking, the first fundraising appeals were already being launched – a phenomenon that would have been unheard of a decade ago, before the advent of widespread Internet usage.

Organisations with an established web presence and the capacity to process huge volumes online – such as the *American Red Cross Society*, *UNICEF* and *Oxfam* – were able to post appeals on their websites almost as the news broke, and take advantage of the extensive media coverage to attract donations from all over the world.

For the first time, a significant proportion of donations in the USA – \$350 million – was made online, with *Save the Children*, *CARE* and *Oxfam* reporting that 31%, 38% and 80% of donations came via the Web.

## More than two million dollars a day

At the height of the campaign, Oxfam America's website was taking in over two million dollars a day, while *Save the Children USA* was processing \$89 000 worth of donations a hour.

Though these large, high-profile non-profits raised the bulk of the money, smaller lesser-known groups also broke all previous records.

In fact, the Internet allowed concerned individuals and groups to set up their own online campaigns virtually overnight. Using his family foundation, the *Shawnee Institute*, entrepreneur Pete Kirkwood created an online campaign from nothing – no history, no lists and no supporters – which raised over \$31 000 within a few weeks.

Agencies used e-mail alerts to existing supporters, paid search engine placements, sponsored links, blogs, banners and e-newsletters to reach potential donors.

## New donors

A number of relief agencies reported that the vast majority of online gifts came from new donors, many of whom had never given via the Web before.

Whilst traditional donors normally fall into the older age brackets, the feeling is that these new Web donors may have a

younger profile.

The challenge will be to convert this huge new base of supporters into regular donors.

People who respond to emergencies typically renew at far lower rates, and up to half of those who made spontaneous donations to aid tsunami victims actually asked not to be contacted again by the agencies they supported.

## Long-term commitment

Unlike their American counterparts, relief agencies in the UK largely overcame this problem by asking for long-term commitment, in the form of monthly contributions, up front.

Given the fact that it will take months, if not years, to rebuild infrastructures destroyed by the tsunami, getting donors to sign up for the long haul before all the hype died down makes perfect sense.

## Web-based follow ups

After the 9/11 disaster, many non-profits which raised money online fell short when it came to providing donor feedback.

Given the immediacy and cost savings of e-mail and Internet communication, there really is no excuse for this omission, and organisations which offer regular feedback to donors are likely to be most successful in the long run.

Keeping donors abreast of the progress in Indonesia and Thailand as communities are rebuilt, will help keep their interest alive and pave the way for further appeals for specific needs as and when they arise.

## Online scams

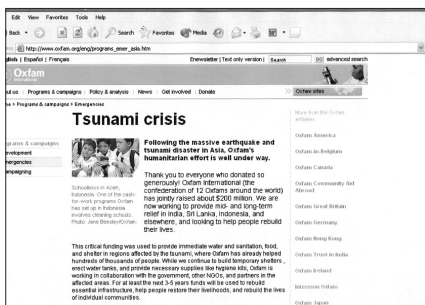
Sadly, the alacrity with which *bona fide* organisations responded to the crisis was mirrored by the scam artists; within hours the first e-mails – purporting to be from victims of the disaster – were already in circulation. Hopefully, would-be donors had the savvy to channel support through reputable organisations.

## What happened locally

Despite ongoing calls on their generosity at home, South Africans rallied to the aid of tsunami victims, contributing R1.65 million to a campaign run by Independent Newspapers. Interestingly, only R35 365 of this came in via the IOL website, indicating that Internet fundraising is still in its infancy in this country.

However, according to research conducted by World Wide Worx, the number of South Africans shopping online is set to reach the critical million mark within two to five years, paving the way for online fundraising to take off in this country.

*With acknowledgement to DM News and the ePhil anthropologyFoundation.Org.*





# 10 tips for getting the most from Committee leadership

Every organisation inevitably has committees of some sort, ranging from formal standing committees of the board of directors to ad hoc groups organising the holiday party. People end up on committees in a number of ways, too.

Committee membership can be determined by position or function, meaning that anyone holding a particular title automatically gets a seat at the table.

Members can be ordered or cajoled to participate, and sometimes people genuinely want to be there.

Regardless of how members end up on a committee, it is useful to approach the situation from a volunteer management perspective. Of course, everyone might clearly be a volunteer from the start.

But even in a required-attendance committee, recognise that everyone is serving above and beyond all the regular activities and responsibilities of their personal or work lives, and has the choice to be an active or an inactive committee member.

## Top tips

The following 10 tips for great committee leadership derive from the principles of effective volunteer management. And, they work in all sorts of settings.

**Tip 1:** *Make sure you need a committee. Committee meetings are a fact of organisational life, yet often waste time and patience.*

Too many committees are formed thoughtlessly as an automatic reaction to 'we have to get this done somehow'.

So we gather the obligatory five to nine people together, representing all sorts of constituencies, select a chair, and expect the group to do the work. But how many people does the work really require? If it only needs two or three efficient people, don't form a 'committee'.

Make a dynamic duo or terrific trio and let these appropriate people work out the tasks themselves.

No chairperson is needed either. Consider dropping the 'committee' label in favour of terms such as 'task force' or 'action team'. It's amazing how the name change can change attitudes.

**Tip 2:** *Rather keep a vacancy open than put the wrong volunteer into a key position.* Know the qualifications required, and screen candidates to ensure that your committee has the skills it needs.

**Tip 3:** *Interrelationships are the single biggest factor in the success (or failure) of volunteer projects.* There is often tension between employees and volunteers – and

between veteran volunteers and newcomers. Analyse the factors that might cause resistance and clarify who is accountable to whom. Keep meeting minutes to record who agreed to do what and by when, to keep everyone informed about expectations and work in progress.

**Tip 4:** *Concentrate on good followership and on good leadership.* Shared leadership is more motivating than top-down hierarchy. Define the committee's goals and write a job description for each member – then develop the job description for the chair or other officer. Train everyone to initiate discussion and not wait for everything to come from the chair.

**Tip 5:** *Burnout of volunteers is the inevitable result of going back again and again to the same volunteers.* Develop and enforce a rotation policy for committee leadership and membership. Take risks in recruiting members who may be new and untried.

**Tip 6:** *Be sure you are truly welcoming newcomers.* Do a mental walk-through of what happens to a new committee member and see if it feels friendly and helpful. Consciously orient newcomers – both with a solid set of historical materials and with an explanation of how the committee works internally.

**Tip 7:** *Recognition is much more than a thank you.* Appreciation and recognition are different. Learn to celebrate intermediary stages, not just end products, especially if your work has long-range goals. Thank people as they move through the process.

**Tip 8:** *Realise that no one volunteers to do a bad job.* It is respectful and motivating to evaluate volunteer performance and to help volunteers do their best work. Mutually agree on expectations and methods of reporting at the very start.

Don't allow absence from a meeting to mean a member doesn't have to report.

**Tip 9:** *Make the most of written communication, especially e-mail.* Use e-mail to send shorter messages more often, faster and at less cost. Learn to use the subject line to assist volunteers in separating FYI e-mails from items that need a quick response.

**Tip 10:** *Insist that actions and procedures be documented so that they can be passed on to successors.* In addition to committee minutes, it is equally important to keep track of policies made or changed, procedures implemented, sample forms developed, and other tools that will be useful to those who serve in later years.

If your organisation has many committees, consider holding a chairperson's institute and training everyone on tips such as these.

Visit [www.energizeinc.com](http://www.energizeinc.com)

*If your organisation's committee is causing more headaches than happiness, chances are that you need this advice from Susan J. Ellis, president of specialist volunteering firm, Energize.*

*Adapted from  
The NonProfit Times  
December 1, 2004*



# Urgency vs desperation

By most accounts, these have been tough times for non-profits. Whether due to a volatile stock market, a staggering economy, or a general public malaise (and/or distrust), donations are down — corporate, foundation, and individual gifts alike.

The challenge, then — from a copy perspective, at least — is how best to confront these fiscal difficulties in your direct mail solicitations. After all, as fundraisers, we often find ourselves walking a fine line between emphasising an urgent financial need versus sounding desperate for cash.

Here are some tips we've learned, to help you keep your footing on the right side of that line:

## Be positive

First, don't ever forget that needing money is not a crime for a non-profit. So never — ever — be apprehensive or coy, apologetic or indirect about asking for a gift. It's part of the job. In fact, it is the job.

Second, state the need in as compelling and urgent a manner as you can. If you don't, your reader will simply send her money to a group that really seems to need it.

And, of course, you must ask directly and often for a gift. Don't ask, and you won't get. That's all there is to it.

The key, here, is to put a positive spin on what your organisation is going to do with this money. You're going to feed the hungry or free political prisoners or save the environment or fight hatred. You're going to make a difference and do some good.

## Focus on your work

And while keeping the lights on and paying the bills are obvious prerequisites to anything you'll be doing in the field, it's been our experience that people typically don't give to support this sort of thing. Nobody wants to think their hard-earned dollars aren't going directly to helping kids, homeless people, the environment, or whatever. So zero in on your work as

opposed to operational needs.

Since you want to focus attention on your ambitious future efforts, the goal is not to dwell on the negative. It's not necessary, in other words, to declare how gifts are off and you're hurting for cash. And you certainly don't want to raise doubts about some nefarious, underlying reason for that shortfall.

Just remember: No one likes to support a loser. Especially a whining loser.

In effect, you never want to portray your non-profit as a sinking ship in need of a life preserver. Donors — and prospects — will merely search out another vessel that will deliver them to Salvation Island.

One notable exception is when your group suffers a sharp or unexpected drop-off in government funding. Indeed, this itself can serve as a major reason why you're asking for a gift. It's a common strategy for both public broadcasting stations and social service agencies.

## Don't browbeat

The worst scenario, as far as we're concerned, is for an organisation to cry poverty . . . only then to turn around and lambaste the donor for being the cause of the problem.

Sound far-fetched? Not at all. Here's actual language used in a special appeal mailed by The Conservative Caucus, as quoted in this newsletter back in January 1999: 'TCC is not getting the support we need' and 'to cover basic expenses for salaries, rent, telephones, copying machines, postage, stamps, payroll taxes and the like, TCC must promptly replenish its cash flow'. The group even says it needs money 'to pay off past due bills'.

That's what we mean by desperation! *With acknowledgement to Mal Warwick's website. Visit [www.malwarwick.com](http://www.malwarwick.com). This article was written by managing editors Deborah Block and Paul Karps, partners in BK Kreative. E-mail [bkkreative@aol.com](mailto:bkkreative@aol.com). ■*

## "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](http://www.stevensoninc.com)
- The NonProfit Times, 190 Tamarack Circle, Skillman, NJ08558 (\$129 per annum) website: [www.nptimes.com](http://www.nptimes.com)
- The Chronicle of Philanthropy, P O Box 1989, Marion, Ohio, 4335-1989 (24 issues – one year 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 (6 issues per annum \$79). website: [www.malwarwick.com/newsletter](http://www.malwarwick.com/newsletter)

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### Website

[www.dmi.co.za](http://www.dmi.co.za)

### E-mail

[dmi@iafrica.com](mailto:dmi@iafrica.com)

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Durban  
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