

FUNDRAISING FORUM™

Are you a burnt out fundraiser?

It's totally normal to feel super exhausted after a particularly rough day – but if every day is starting to feel rough, you might be close to burning out.

Trainer, speaker, and author of The Happy Healthy Nonprofit, Beth Kanter points out the warning signs.

The clinical definition of burnout is 'a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion that occurs when we feel overwhelmed by too many demands, too few resources, and too little recovery time'.

Given the harsh working environment for non-profits, it's a perfect recipe for a lot of burnt out fundraising professionals. Here are four warning signs of burnout, coupled with easy ways to feel better.

Warning sign 1: You're feeling weary and small things start to really irritate you

The first sign of burnout is often a short fuse. Maybe every little thing about a donor, a board member, or your executive director is rubbing you the wrong way. Your executive team's expectations are way out of whack and you just don't have the energy to set them straight.

If you're feeling like you're at your wit's end at the start of the day, you might be burning out.

Self-care solution: Get more sleep, even if it means taking a 20-minute nap under your desk

Don't limit your shut-eye to your bed. Sleep in the workplace may seem like an oxymoron, but napping during the day can improve cognitive functioning, leading to greater productivity at work. Studies show that daytime napping can elevate moods and even improve immune function.

Warning sign 2: You can't seem to concentrate on anything and your productivity is suffering

When you're overworked and over-stressed, it affects your concentration – you forget things easily and you can't focus.

Self-care solution: Add more movement into your workday

A study found that a simple 20-minute walk can significantly improve your ability to concentrate. While another at Stanford University found people were more creative when they were walking versus sitting.

Don't think of taking a walk as taking a break or slacking, but instead consider it a tool that will improve your productivity and bring more creative ideas to your work.

Warning sign 3: You're feeling sluggish throughout your day

You feel physically and emotionally exhausted – you may go to bed early, only to wake up still feeling tired. You might find it difficult to get out of bed at all. This sort of fatigue only adds to your anxiety about all the work you need to get done.

Self-care solution: Stick to healthy foods – avoid sugary snacks at the office

Knowing what we put into our bodies can mean the difference between being strong, clear-headed, and effective or being sluggish, dull, and slow at work.

At home, you may be successful at avoiding sugary snacks because you don't buy them. That's why it's so important to make a plan for bringing healthy foods and drinks to the office.

Warning sign 4: You're feeling compelled to overwork

You may find yourself working after hours and weekends to research donors, write proposals, or plan campaign strategies. And, of course, you may not mind that much if you have a real passion for your work.

However, your passion can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it keeps you going in the face of difficult challenges. On the other hand, you can become so driven you don't stop to refuel or notice your work is starting to take a toll on your health and well-being.

Self-care solution: Take a break

Sometimes our reaction to stress is to work nights and weekends, not taking breaks throughout the day, or sacrificing holidays. But if you give your brain a chance to reboot, you'll return to work with more clarity and perspective. Working longer hours decreases your productivity.

The bottom line: self-care isn't a luxury – it's the key to being productive at work.

When you are overworked and super stressed, you will not perform at the top of your game. Take better care of yourself so you can raise more money for your organisation's mission to save the world.

*With acknowledgement to
<http://www.bethkanter.org>*

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The eight fundamentals of supercharged grant fundraising

Grants can be a great source of funding for non-profits of all sizes. While every organisation – no matter how small or large – should be focused primarily on individual fundraising, grants can be a great complement to your other fundraising efforts. Joe Garecht reports.

If you want to raise as much as possible for your organisation through grants, it is essential to keep these eight fundamental concepts in mind:

1. Good research is half the battle

Legion are the non-profits that submit grant after grant without truly understanding the funding foundation's key giving areas or application requirements. Don't make this mistake.

It may take you 20 minutes to do a good amount of research on a potential funder, but that research could save you a day's worth of grantwriting by preventing you from applying for a grant you don't qualify for.

2. Build a 'stable' of regular grantors

One of the biggest keys to grant fundraising success for small and medium-sized non-profits is to build up a stable of regular grantors who fund your organisation every year, every two years, or as often as their guidelines allow. As a rule, these grantors will be local and regional foundations who provide small and medium-sized gifts in the R10 000 – R500 000 range.

It may seem easier to apply for one or two mega-sized R2.5 million grants, but competition for those size grants is fierce and often national or international in scope. Instead, focus on building a supportive group of foundations in your area who fund your work on a regular basis.

3. Funders want to understand the 'story' of your non-profit

It may seem like grant applications are all legalese, but the truth is that the funding officer who is reading your grant proposal wants to understand the story of your non-profit. In fact, they *need* to understand the story of your non-profit if you want to win the grant.

Your entire grant proposal should be telling a story – the story of your work and your grand vision for the future . . . the vision you want the foundation to invest in. Learn how to tell that story in every grant proposal you write.

4. Funders want to make good investments

Every foundation worth its salt wants to make sure that the organisations it funds with grants are financially stable and acting with the highest integrity. In short – they want to make good investments.

All other things being equal, if a foundation has to choose between two non-profits to fund, one of which has clear financial records, a good accounting system, and studies that show the effectiveness of its work – while the other has only the most rudimentary financial

reports, a haphazard accounting system, and only anecdotal evidence that its programmes actually work, the foundation will fund the first non-profit every time. Remember – your non-profit needs to show that it is a great investment worthy of grant Rands.

5. Funders want to change the world

Grantmaking institutions are looking to make good investments, but they are also looking to change the world for the better. This is why foundations would rather fund programmes that are growing and projects that are doubling in size.

Foundations see the money they give out in grants as "seed" money for future growth. If a foundation gives you R1 000 000 to fund a new education programme, it is almost always with the assumption that the programme will eventually become self-sufficient. Then, having changed the world for the better through that R1 000 000 gift, the foundation will move on to other projects and organisations.

Make sure you are casting a *big* vision in your grant proposals and showing funders that investing in your work will allow them to change the world through your non-profit.

6. Funders are overwhelmed, thus they look for ways to 'disqualify' organisations easily

If a foundation gives out ten R500 000 grants per year, chances are that they get 100-500 proposals from organisations seeking to win those grants. Like the non-profits they fund, foundations are generally understaffed, with far fewer grant officers than they need to give each proposal the time it really deserves.

One quick way to cut the workload at foundations is to disqualify non-profit organisations that fail to meet all of the application criteria set out by the foundation. Know the rules for *your* grant proposal before you begin.

7. You need a grant fundraising system

Super-successful grant fundraising requires a system – an easy to implement and scalable system for finding and applying for grants and stewarding funds once they are won. Don't just throw everything up against the wall to see what sticks . . . you'll drive yourself crazy!

8. Be a person not a corporate identity

This is a mistake. Grant officers are people. Grant committees are people. People want to hear from other people, not from a nameless, emotionless automaton or committee. Be a person, speak like a person, write like a person, and your organisation will win more grants.

Visit www.thefundraisingauthority.com ■

On-target observations in brief

No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.

Nelson Mandela

Personal networks and word of mouth are playing an increasingly important role in giving decisions . . . online searches are seldom used to inform giving decisions among high net worth (HNW) individuals.

**The Giving Report III,
Nedbank Private Wealth**

Relationships of trust depend on our willingness to look to our own interests and the interests of others.

Peter Farquharson

He who wished to secure the good of others, has already secured his own.

Confucius

Never worry about numbers. Help one person at a time, and always start with the person nearest you.

Mother Teresa

Many Chinese entrepreneurs are now donating for education; others support foundations in health care and research. None of us wants to be the richest guy in the cemetery.

Zhang Xin

I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver.

Maya Angelou

The NPO fundraising landscape is subject to ongoing transformation as NPOs are under increasing pressure to demonstrate value for money. Consequently, more and more NPOs engage in commercial activities to supplement their income. When doing so, NPOs will not be treated differently from other commercial entities, except where legislation allows otherwise.

**NPO Legal Issues, Ricardo
Wyngaard Attorneys**



More than feeding babies

Nutrition is a key pillar of child health and development, which is why malnutrition and food security have been the focus of the Feed the Babies Fund since 1957.

The organisation provides rural crèches with a fortified, concentrated cereal containing the correct ratio of minerals, vitamins, proteins and iron. Only water is needed to mix up a well-balanced breakfast, which the Fund provides to over 5 000 children in KwaZulu-Natal's rural areas and townships.

In addition to attending to the nutritional needs of its young beneficiaries, the Fund also provides Early Childhood Development training to the caregivers at crèches. To ensure that the crèches become Educare Centres, the caregivers are trained in Crèche Management and

Every Word Counts – an Early Literacy and Numeracy programme; and the organisation also facilitates training in Classroom Practice and First Aid. These courses equip caregivers with the necessary tools to teach children a syllabus that will aid their development and early education.

Assessments

Project staff spend time in the field assessing the development of the children and ensuring that crèches are run effectively in terms of guidelines that the Fund provides.

Based on these assessments, other needs that the crèches and children may have become evident; and the organisation then provides items such as blankets, mattresses, plastic tables and chairs, stationery and toys.

For more information, visit www.feedthebabiesfund.org.za

FUNDRAISING FORUM™

Fundraising Forum is a regular newsletter dedicated to the enhancement of management, fundraising techniques and the promotion of community service, welfare and non-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 international fundraising publications which are reprinted with acknowledgement to the publishers.

We welcome submissions for publication from all writers involved in non-profit work. Visit www.dmi.co.za for more information.

A pot of gold at the end of your rainbow

Denise Murray reveals the rewards and the secrets of donor newsletters that work.

Stung by strong client criticism of what I considered some very worthwhile copy, I sent this memo to my copy director:

'This client seems to have lost sight of the fact that the overall success of a newsletter depends on its balance, its 'mix'. It's a communication between people working for a cause, and people supporting that cause, about people benefiting from their combined efforts. In short, a newsletter is about people.

'And ordinary people are not bowled over by cold or clinical facts, technical jargon, columns of figures and dead statements. They're also not terribly interested in staff or in organisational data.

'What they are interested in is themselves. And how their gift is helping to make a difference.

And I went on to tell my copy director what I meant by good mix.

When I look back on that memo now, I see that the key to the whole problem lay in my first sentence . . . *'This client seems to have lost sight of . . .'*

He hadn't lost sight at all. He had never had sight in the first place, of what to me was a perfectly logical set of rules! Nobody had shared that information with him.

So for all who have donor newsletters, may I now share with you the secrets of a good 'working' newsletter.

This is what a newsletter is not:

- Just a free gift – a type of thank you.
- An ego boost for staff and board members.
- A pedantic paper.
- A soapbox from which we can bore the donors about our pet theories and benefits.
- An in-house communication.
- A substitute for an annual report.

Here's what a newsletter is:

It's the big fishing net which will entrap all your donors and draw them closer to you. There are big givers, and small givers – and you need them all. Your newsletter has to have something in it to reach them all.

To feel a sense of loyalty, the donor has to first understand your product, and then relate to it.

Philanthropy grows from the heart, and not from the head. More than that, most genuine understanding of an organisation's work also comes from the heart and not from the head.

It's understandable and acceptable that people in need of help are horrified by that dreadful emotion – sympathy.

It smacks of pity, and robs most people of their human dignity. And most boards, sharing in that horror, strive at all costs to protect those in their care from the indignity of sympathy.

I would like to strike 'sympathy' from the vocabulary of all fundraisers, and replace it with what I believe all emotional copywriters strive for – 'empathy'. Because unless you can identify with a need, you can't honestly relate to that cause.

Secret recipe of 'a good mix'

So where do we go from here? We make it a rule that every good newsletter should contain the three ingredients making up the secret recipe of 'good mix':

- Something for the heart – to unlock the empathy.
- Something for the head – to keep you thinking.
- Something about your organisation and its image – let your donors know that you're good people doing great work in an efficient and effective manner.

A newsletter should cover its costs at the very least. And I know that a good newsletter will make money.

But even if you're in a situation where you're forced to accept that your newsletter is not going to make money, its value as a public relations tool remains unchallenged.

These are just some of the things you can do by way of your newsletter:

Accentuate the positives

Tell about the good things you're doing. Share your achievements and inspire confidence in your work.

Hand out bouquets

This is the perfect place for giving donors recognition and praise.

Maintain interest

Share your dreams – you're all working towards them together.

Defuse the negatives

Every organisation, at some time or another, has to deal with complaints. Use your newsletter to publish apologies, explanations, and clarify issues.

Promote, promote, promote

It's here that you can create, improve or even change the face and public image of your organisation. You can share and build on your ideas and promote real understanding of the essential essence of your work.

Cement donor loyalty

If your newsletter contains something for everybody, it will grow donor loyalty.

Educate The more your donor knows about the cause you're serving, the stronger your relationship and their commitment.

Denise Murray is a Cape Town-based freelance copywriter whose work has helped raise millions of Rands both locally and abroad. ■

Donors: The next generation

Parents serve as trusted advisors to children in a myriad of ways throughout their lives. One of the most valuable roles parents can play is to help them understand the importance of philanthropy.

Next-generation knowledge of why and how to engage in philanthropy is needed more today than ever before. The non-profit sector is expanding in size and complexity to meet increasingly diverse challenges.

Philanthropic practices help a child develop compassion, altruism and good citizenship. They also nurture children's psychological needs by benefitting both society and the philanthropic individual.

Leading by example and exposing children to a variety of opportunities is one of the most important ways to engage children, who acquire philanthropic values, in part, by observing and participating alongside family members, teachers and other adult mentors.

Milestones

In an interview with the National Center for Family Philanthropy (NCFP), Dr Kathryn Agard, founding executive director of Learning To Give, suggests that parents and educators can identify developmental milestones in each child's life at which they can move to a deeper understanding of and involvement in philanthropy.

She recommends specific activities and educational benchmarks for children at each stage that help to facilitate this development.

The process can begin in children as young as toddlers. Using language such as 'You are helping our family' can help them understand why they should contribute to their family, school and community.

Agard said that primary school age children start to reach out to others, and parents should begin to tell family stories of philanthropy, including both giving and receiving.

By junior high school, children are open to the realisation that philanthropy is a tradition that exists around the world and should be involved in a regular, planned volunteer experience.

In high school, leadership development and transferring knowledge about the sector are important. Youth should be encouraged to become active in personal giving and to explore careers in philanthropy.

The NCFP recommends that parents maintain a strong connection with the unique interests and talents of their children. At each step, parents can help young people to self-identify their own unique talents, how they want to spend their time, and the valuable material gifts that they want to give away.

Learning to Give also offers valuable tools for parents to encourage the teaching of

philanthropy in their children's schools and to use in their homes and communities.

A resource entitled 'Nine Ways to Raise Children Who Give, Share & Care,' encourages parents to take such steps as reading books to their children that contain messages of giving and service, involving their children's friends in philanthropic activities, and encouraging their children's schools to adopt the 'academic service-learning' teaching method.

As children grow into young adults and begin to develop their own views, the NCFP and other experts emphasise the need to help children discover their own philanthropic calling. According to NCFP, 'Allowing a child to establish and pursue his or her own philanthropic agenda can be a valuable way of both reinforcing the importance of giving back to the community and allowing them to exercise their independence.'

Howard W. Buffett, son of philanthropist Howard G. Buffett, agrees. 'It is absolutely important to pass philanthropic values down.

But it is also important to keep in mind that the next generation needs an opportunity to explore their own ideas and their own kinds of interests within the realm of philanthropy, and to be able to branch out from what their parents or aunts and uncles or grandparents are doing.'

Young adults of financial or other privilege face particular challenges in identifying and shaping their own philanthropic paths.

Whether by guiding toddlers or advising wealthy, young professionals, everyone working in non-profit organisations supported by philanthropy have a role and stake in the success of continuing the philanthropic tradition.

Managers must encourage volunteers and donors to talk to their children about the rationale and scope of their philanthropic activity. You can encourage them to engage with their children in an organisation's events and activities.

Programmes

You can work with local educators and school administrators to establish programmes that teach students about the philanthropic tradition and engage them in both giving and volunteering.

By establishing the value of philanthropic giving and communicating this regularly to youth, parents and educators and non-profit leaders provide a valuable foundation for a lifelong understanding of philanthropy and how one's time, talent, and treasure contribute to a civil society.

Eugene R. Tempel is executive director and Dwight F. Burlingame is associate executive director and director of academic programmes for the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University in Indianapolis. ■

*Children are the next generation of philanthropists – but are we doing enough to educate them on the contribution they can make?
Eugene R. Tempel investigates.*

Three things you must give your board if you want them to succeed with fundraising

Every non-profit wants to have a board of directors that is enthusiastic and capable when it comes to fundraising. Yet so many organisations are disappointed with their board members' fundraising efforts. Likewise, many board members I have spoken with want to be better fundraisers, but just don't know how.
By Joe Garecht.

I have found that there are three key things you need to provide for your board if you want them to excel at fundraising. They are:

1 – Provide your board with motivation

It may seem hard to believe, but many of your board members may not know that your organisation needs to raise more money than it already does. Similarly, your board may not fully understand the impact of fundraising on your programmes and facilities.

Some of your board members may have served on lots of other boards, and started to tune out the fundraising conversations because they feel like they hear the same old fundraising drum beat all of the time – or, perhaps they feel they are being “browbeaten” for money over and over again.

No matter what your board members past experiences are with fundraising, now is the time to let them know that your organisation does, in fact, need to raise more money and that they can play a key role in helping you meet your goals.

Board members should also understand why you need the money now, as opposed to later or next year. You can easily accomplish this by showing the need that exists. For example, if you are working with a soup kitchen, you can make sure that board members know that there are 578 people in your town who qualify for assistance but whom you can't help because you don't have the money to do so. This adds urgency to your fundraising efforts and helps place the board's focus on fundraising by underlining the fact that without raising money, you can't help everyone in need.

Remember, though, that you should never browbeat your board into asking for money. To be successful, you should always help board members find a fundraising job they can be comfortable with.

2 – Provide your board with knowledge

There are two types of knowledge you need to provide your board members to help them fundraise effectively.

The first is the knowledge that fundraising isn't slimy, shady, or beneath them. You'd be surprised how many board members come into every discussion about fundraising with a set of preconceived notions and uneasy feelings about the whole thing. It is your job, as a fundraiser, to help dispel those notions for your board.

The truth is, fundraising enables hundreds of thousands of organisations around the world to serve – literally – billions of people, and makes life better for billions of people on this Earth.

And . . . most importantly . . . fundraising enables your organisation to do all of the great work that you do day in and day out. Make sure your board understands this and feels good about

raising money to support your mission.

The second kind of knowledge that you need to provide your board is fundraising knowledge – meaning how to actually carry out all of the fundraising tasks you are going to be asking them to do on your behalf.

So, for example, if you are going to ask your non-profit board members to be fundraising ambassadors for your organisation, don't assume that your board members know how to do that. You need to teach your board members how to talk about your work. You need to bring in clients and staff members to tell their stories to your board members, so that your board will have great stories they can tell about your work.

Likewise, if you are asking your board members to make thank you calls to recent donors, you need to show them how to do that – you need to give them a script, give them time to practice and make sure they understand how to report their results back to your development team.

Your board members are eager to help you do more good in the world. But always remember that they are volunteers, not professional fundraisers. Every time you provide fundraising opportunities to your board, make sure that you also provide them the training and knowledge they need to be successful with the task.

3 – Provide your board with tools for success

Let's face it, nobody likes to be asked to do a job without being provided with the tools they need to succeed. The same goes for your board of directors. If you are going to be asking them to help you with fundraising activities, chances are your board is going to need certain tools to do their job.

What types of tools can you provide for your board to make it easy to help them help you?

- Scripts – teach them what to say and let them practice saying it.
- Stories – one of the easiest ways for board members to get people interested in what you are doing is for them to tell stories about the people your organisation is helping.
- Brochures, fliers, annual reports and other handouts.
- Non-ask event opportunities – also called point of entry or introductory events.

Your board members want to help you raise as much money as possible to support your mission . . . but they need your help and guidance to do it. Provide your board with motivation, knowledge, and tools for success, and watch them raise more money than you (and they) ever thought possible.

Visit www.thefundraisingauthority.com

Make online giving quick and easy

ONLINE

You thought that funding was the only thing that NPOs are competing for? Turns out, the real competition is for attention. This is seriously significant since interest and emotional engagement are what get supporters into your corner in the first place – before they click on the donate button.

You may have invested heavily and ensured that your site has fantastic images, intuitive design, great stories and, of course, shows the impact of your valuable work.

But the question is, what happens when people click on your 'Donate' button? That is assuming, of course, that this all-important button appears prominently on every page – which it should.

Is the potential donor confronted by a wall of text and banking details? Perhaps a wish list of things that are needed? Confusing information? Unfortunately, these types of pages do little to inspire giving.

They can make it seem like giving a gift will take too much time or be a painful process – or both.

We're dealing with limited attention spans, remember? We're also dealing with overflowing inboxes, information overload and dozens of other demands for the donor's attention.

Where to start

But, on the flip side, does your NPO's donation page make giving look easy? Perhaps it even makes it appear inviting and exciting! (Yes, that can be achieved!)

So, wondering where to start? To plan the ideal donation page and process on your website, consider these top tips:

1. Place a 'donate' button in a prominent position on every page.
2. Include a giving motivator/call to action on the donate page.
3. Within the body – or at the end – of inspiring stories about your work, include a link straight to your donate page.
4. Ensure that your donate page also looks and feels like your NPO, not another site. Branding needs to be consistent.
5. Ensure your Donate page looks as great – and works as well – on mobile.
6. Include suggested gift amounts and an open option ('My own amount').
7. Images or examples of what specific gift amounts can make possible are motivational - but ensure that they are credible.
8. Offer various donate options: credit card, debit order, EFT.
9. Ensure immediate acknowledgement.
10. Acknowledgement of a gift is not necessarily equal to a thank you. Ensure

that the donor receives a proper thank you letter that is appropriate for the amount of the gift.

11. What about asking the donor to opt in for news from you in future?

If your donate page communicates as well as the rest of your website; if it is easy to navigate, easy to understand and makes it seem simple to donate, you're on the right track.

Need some inspiration? Check out the website and donation page of charity:water to see what excellence looks like:

<https://bit.ly/2hm6l7v>

Online fundraising at a glance

According to the 2018 Global NGO Technology Report, which is based on the survey results of 5 353 NGOs around the world:

- 92% of NGOs worldwide have a website. Of these, 87% are mobile-compatible.
- 72% of NGOs globally accept donations on their website.
- 33% of NGOs utilise an online peer-to-peer fundraising service.
- 41% of NGOs use encryption technology to protect their data and communications.
- 45% of NGOs use Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) software to track donations and manage communications with donors and supporters. Of these, 64% use a cloud based CRM.

Closer to home, 74% of NGOs in Africa have a website, of which 87% are mobile-compatible. However, only 55% of Africa's NGOs accept online donations on their websites.

This report also stressed that NGOs are in dire need of modernising how they manage and secure their organisation's data. In an age of increased cybersecurity threats, enhanced data management and security is imperative.

DMI offers fundraising website audits to non-profit organisations, which include recommendations for improvements where necessary.

Interested? Email us at info@dmi.co.za ■

Thanks to our digitised world, we apparently have an attention span of eight seconds – which is less than the goldfish's nine-second stretch! It's challenging enough to engage people with fleeting interest – so let's ensure that these efforts aren't wasted by dysfunctional donation pages, writes Marisol Gutierrez.



Should our jargon get junk status?

Let's deliver the deathly blow of junk status to the use of jargon in supporter communications, writes Marisol Gutierrez. But what about its use in the sector?

If a charity, even a favourite one, wrote to ask me for 'support' (ie: money) as part of their 'donor renewal' activities – and was crazy enough to use that term in the letter – it would make me feel one of two things:

1. Numb.
2. Incredulous (but not in a good way).

Why? Because I don't think of myself as a 'donor'; I'm a person, your supporter, your cheerleader and your fan. And unless you're writing from a luscious spa, the reference to 'renewal' isn't riveting to me, either.

Seriously though, if there's one hollow term in the sector, it's 'donor'. It is such a habitual description of every human and institutional source of funding that it has become faceless and lifeless. Yet, we want to be 'donor-centric' and we worry about 'donor fatigue'.

Perhaps we should start to think about other words to refer to and better describe the

generous people who give their hard-earned money to charities, such as friends, super-supporters, heroes and life-savers. That's what they are to me. Really. These are the people who, after all, back our notion of changing the world – and not with emojis, but with money.

Corporate partners, not 'funders'

Similarly, think about corporates not as 'funders' but as partners. Investing thousands or millions of Rands in an NPO's work should not be the basis of a loveless marriage marked only by communication when essential, in the form of reports by due date. If this is the case with your organisation (or business), opportunities for engagement are being wasted.

And no, it's not a word game. It's about a shift in mindset, relating better and it's about relationships – which are at the heart of fundraising, which is why it's also known as friend-raising!

Marisol Gutierrez is Communication and Partnerships Manager at Downes Murray International. She's also a seasoned copywriter who wouldn't dream of starting a letter with, 'Dear Donor'. ■

Monthly donors: the holy grail of fundraising

Corporate and institutional support has dwindled for many NPOs, shrinking their donor funding pool, which accounts for the surge of interest in individual giving. The 'ordinary' person has become an extraordinary catch.

We invest heavily in getting new blood on board, seeking out new monthly donors in shopping malls through face-to-face, via email, snail mail and telephone fundraising acquisition methods, through social media and peer-to-peer campaigns – as we should, if attrition rates are to be managed and donor pools kept filled to the brim.

The question is, what happens to our monthly donors once we have them? Do they receive the same – if not better – care and attention as they did before they signed up?

We'd all agree that this is how it should be. Of course ... except that often, it's not. Why?

Typically, because budget, time and energy are all devoted to donor acquisition – with relatively little dedicated to donor stewardship. It makes no sense – especially when one considers that acquiring new donors is an expensive exercise.

An acquisition drive surely cannot be considered sound without the inclusion of a stewardship strategy. It's the nurturing and stewarding of donors that builds community and loyalty.

Treat monthly donors as the special supporters that they are. There are dozens of ways to recognise individual supporters – and not all of them require big budgets. It's often the simplest of acts that are valued and mean the most.

Whether your NPO has five monthly donors or 5 000, the principles remain the same. This is a stellar segment of your supporter base, and they can be shown what their ongoing support makes possible in a multitude of ways.

Provide frequent feedback through newsletters and updates, express gratitude, invite them to events that your NPO hosts or is attending, inform them if a staff member will be featured in the media, reach out to them appropriately on special days of the year, recognise their birthdays (remember those real cards in which you can write a personal message, put into an envelope and post?) ...

... and occasionally, pick up the phone to remind them that they are your star supporters and you appreciate them.

That's right: Pick. Up. The. Phone. In an increasingly digitised, automated environment, speaking to a real person – hearing a real voice and not a recording – is fast becoming a novelty. Connect with your supporters and you deepen their connection to your cause.

Marisol Gutierrez is Partnership and Communication Manager at DMI. ■

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