

Back to basics



As someone who does a good few conference presentations and training sessions, Tony Elischer is becoming increasingly alarmed at how many fundraisers simply have not been exposed to 'core' thinking for a fundraiser – no matter what discipline they may be specialising in.

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'Back to basics' is a political cliché from the past that many of us have forgotten or perhaps would like to have; yet it's a perfect introduction to this column where I want to reflect on my surprise at the lack of basic knowledge across our sector.

I appreciate that not everyone will have signed up for fundraising training, but surely we must all have an expectation that someone working in the sector will want or need to review and learn some of the key thinking that underpins it?

Essential basics

As a 'starter for ten' I thought it would be useful to develop a check-list of the basics that every new fundraiser should know within the first months of entering the profession. If you are a fundraiser who falls into that category, ask yourself which of these you are completely au fait with and if you are a manager reflect on whether you have exposed your team to the following core thinking; it's easy to assume that people know the basics, in which case they never get covered!

1. The Fundraising Cycle: A simple framework that should underpin the strategy for all programmes. Need, audience, strategy/technique and evaluation should be a mantra that every fundraiser understands and practices.

2. The Fundraising Pyramid: The framework that gets the ultimate 'groan' when you begin to talk about it, but people soon see the value behind the thinking and have a refreshed idea about the basic concept that donors should always have somewhere to go in terms of your programmes and the need to grow relationships with people. It's been around for decades but the thinking is still sound, provided that it's viewed as simply that, thinking.

3. Five Income Partners: I believe that it is important that every fundraiser develops a basic appreciation that there are five sources of funds: individuals, organisations, statutory, foundations and companies. While a single fundraiser may focus on their 'silo', there is an increasing need for

integration in the fundraising mix and any strategy should review all five partners.

4. Simply understanding 'what is fundraising?': When I entered the profession it was summarised as 'the art of getting people to give you what you want, where and when you want it, for the purpose you have identified'; but this is too simplistic for today's world, fundraisers need to consider the wider ingredients of the profession in developing their definition of fundraising.

5. Fundraising is not just about money: Perhaps this piece of core thinking is for the wider charity as much as the fundraiser. There are five core gifts that individuals can give: time, money, goods, voice and influence and it is becoming increasingly important to take an holistic view of supporters and to link these different types of support in order to get the fullest possible picture.

6. People give to people first, whatever else second: A useful mantra when you consider the number of programmes currently being invested in that get people face to face to consider support for a charity.

7. Your best prospects are your existing donors: Investing more time in the people who have already declared an interest, this simple guideline is set to remind people to balance their energies, strategies and budgets. It is worth remembering that these core principles are offered across all fundraising techniques, not just direct marketing.

8. The Pareto Principle: In the good old days this reminded us that 80% of voluntary support came from 20% of our supporters. Now we need to adjust the original thinking to more like 95% of support from 5% of supporters. However the key principle remains, most fundraising programmes rely on a minimal number of supporters.

9. You don't get what you don't ask for: Seems obvious but this is a critical reminder that a central skill for a fundraiser is to ask for support, if they don't like this or if the day never seems to come - the answer for that individual is to 'find another job!'

10. Make it easy: for some fundraisers there appears to be a constant need to

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Is your newsletter working?

A potentially powerful communication device and fundraising tool – the newsletter is probably one of the most abused items in the fundraising mix.

Every week I see embarrassing examples of newsletters from non-profit organisations which completely waste the opportunity for donor retention and relationship building which this essential component of your direct mail fundraising programme offers.

So, let's begin with what a newsletter should be:

Focus

First off – your newsletter should be a 'Donor Newsletter' – start by calling it that name and you'll already begin to hold the correct focus. The purpose of your Donor Newsletter is to:

1. Make donors feel really good about their support of your work;
2. Tell them about the people who are benefiting from their donations;
3. Grow their understanding of all aspects of your work and why their involvement is so important to you;
4. Provide those who cannot visit your projects with clear and moving pictures of what they are helping to make possible;
5. Inform them about new directions and new projects for which you may be seeking their support in the near future;
6. Give them examples of how bequests are another vital (and relatively easy) form of providing you with income to continue your good work;
7. And inspire them with quotations and examples of the wonders of philanthropy.

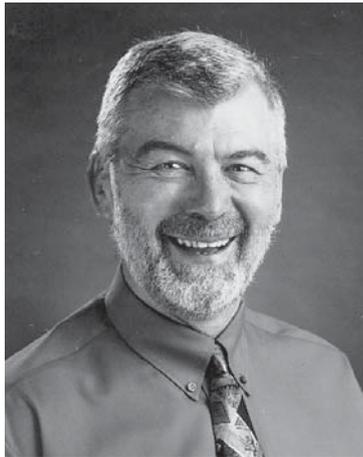
What to avoid

Next, let's look at what your donor newsletter should not be:

1. A vehicle for praising your board members and your staff or showing pictures of people at your latest black tie dinner;
2. A place to list the dozens or even hundreds of corporate or foundation donors from whom you have received gifts (put that in your annual report if you must);
3. The place to shout about your achievements or the fact that you have been in business for 25 years – unless the focus is on how your donors are the ones who have made it all possible.
4. A place to boast about how much money you have raised;
5. Or a vehicle for complex and dreadfully dull, financial reports.

Now let's look at the timing and format for your Donor Newsletter:

- Ideally, you should be producing at least two (or perhaps three) donor newsletters per year, and they should be timed to mail between your appeal mailings so that not every communication with donors is based on a specific and direct 'ask'.
- The most common size is four pages of A4 (A3 folded to A4 – and then folded to fit a DL outer envelope).
- ! The masthead (title) should be attractive and eye-catching and relevant to your work. e.g. 'Breadline' – the ACFS newsletter, 'Heart to Heart' – the newsletter published by Nazareth House, 'Contact' – the Blind SA newsletter and 'Silver Threads' the newsletter of TAFTA – The Association For The Aged in Durban.
- Use at least two colours (and nowadays, four-colour printing is about as inexpensive as two colours). Print the body copy in black (easily readable) and pictures in black (or full colour) and use your second colour for highlights and headlines.
- For body copy use at least an 11 point Serif typeface (such as Times New Roman) – proven by research to be more readable and readily comprehended. (For irrefutable proof buy the newly reprinted book *Type and Layout: Are you communicating or just making pretty shapes* by Colin Wheildon with the original Foreword by David Ogilvy. (Published by Worsley Press www.worsleypublishing.com. I guarantee it'll change the way you look at everything you print.) By all means use a Sans-Serif typestyle (like Arial) for headlines – but keep the body copy in Serif (99% of the world's newspapers can't be wrong!)
- ! Use two, or even three columns across the page (so as not to have long lines of copy that are difficult to read).
- ! Avoid type reversed out of a solid background, and avoid – like the plague – 'watermark' designs behind body copy (destroys readability).
- Don't print pictures in orange or yellow or green just because that happens to be your logo and newsletter second colour – green people don't look well!
- Remember that the average donor to a direct mail appeal is an older person who is often likely to have less-than-perfect eyesight – another reason to keep body copy at a size that can be easily read.



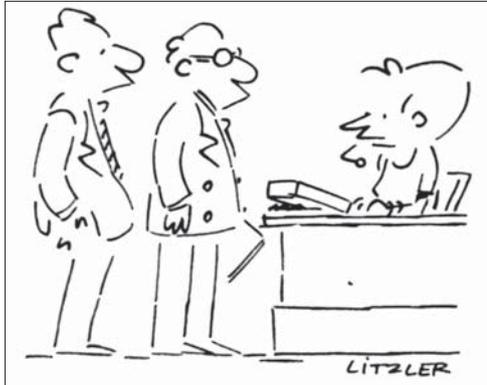
Terry A Murray is former Chairman of Downes Murray International and recently retired president of DVA Navion South Africa.

“If you follow these simple guidelines your newsletter will always produce a handsome net income”

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Milestone Thinking

On-target observations in brief



"Two visitors from the university to see you, sir. One of them appears to be packing a case statement."

*With acknowledgement to
The Chronicle of Philanthropy
October 28, 2004*

Never make a donor or prospect talk to more than two people to get a question answered.

*With acknowledgement to
Successful Fund Raising
May, 2000*

Have you learned to treat your donors as human beings rather than statistics, as people with their own wants and needs and preferences?

*With acknowledgement to
Mal Warwick in the NonProfit Times
September 15, 2004*

In the donor's view, the best relationship is one in which they deal with the organisation when they want, where they want and how they want.

*With acknowledgement to
The NonProfit Times
January 15, 2005*

The ability to make a project come alive for a donor is more important than any other fundraising skill.

*With acknowledgement to
Marilyn Grist in The Chronicle of Philanthropy
October 28, 2004*

Never stay longer than you indicated when setting the appointment.

*With acknowledgement to
Successful Fund Raising
October, 2004*



Healing and helping animals

Cats, cows, dogs, horses ... around 235 000 of these animals – and others – receive free veterinary treatment from the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) in just one year. That's a lot of needy animals – and as many grateful pet owners.

The organisation runs three hospitals, three clinics and nine mobile clinics in the Cape and Gauteng, which collectively service almost 50 underprivileged communities.

In addition to providing help to animals whose owners can't afford to pay veterinary fees, the PDSA also educates people in all aspects of animal care – including the importance of sterilisation.

About 6 000 pets are spayed and neutered by the PDSA every year.

Like other animal welfare charities, the PDSA does not receive a government subsidy and relies on public generosity – and its own fundraising efforts – for its survival.

It's thanks to animal lovers who support the PDSA that enables the organisation to travel into rural areas where absolutely no services exist for animals.

Countless animals within our cities' poorer communities – and those in far-flung rural areas – owe their well-being to the outstanding work of the PDSA.

For underprivileged pet owners, this organisation is more than a help in hard times. It's true compassion in action. (Readers are invited to submit photographs, together with a brief overview of their organisation's work, for inclusion in this regular feature.) ■

Pets – and their owners – have a place to turn to for help at the PDSA's hospitals and mobile clinic

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.

Grassroots fundraising: Big money requires relationships

If you're part of a small organisation, your best bet at raising big money is by building strong relationships with your supporters.

The purpose of fundraising is to build relationships. That may come as a surprise to some fundraisers who mistakenly believe the purpose of the exercise is to raise money.

But, according to Kim Klein, a California-based fundraising trainer, non-profit can't raise big money without first building relationships.

'What this means is that you have to constantly pay attention to how people come into your group, how they can stay in your group and, more importantly, how they can move up in your group.

'Even though we say fundraising is about building relationships, we often measure our success in the amount of money we raise.'

Thoughtful donors

The key, Klein said, is to pay more attention to habitual donors – people who give money to your organisation two to three years in a row. Because habitual donors are also in the habit of giving the same amount each time, it's the organisation's job to intervene – to get donors to give more and, more importantly, to get them to become thoughtful donors.

'A thoughtful donor says about your organisation, 'I give the most money to your organisation, and plus I give money to other groups', Klein said. 'Most people who give to charity give to between five and 15 charities. What you want to be is in the number one, two or three spot of those 15 charities. The non-profit sector is bigger than it's ever been. People are inundated with requests. Rather than giving R50 to a lot of groups, what we're seeing people do is narrow down. Instead of giving to 15 charities they're picking their top seven.'

'That's great if you're in that seven. You have to try to move people into a position where, even if they narrow down the number of groups they give to, they still have yours in the group.'

First step

The first step in helping people move from being a habitual to a thoughtful donor is to print out a list of habitual donors and show that list to someone who knows your community. That person scans the list for names he or she knows and makes an educated guess as to whether those people can afford to give more.

But, where do you find people to look at your list and talk to you about your donors – and with discretion? Klein suggests looking to your board, other thoughtful donors and other people in the non-profit sector.

'It's about knowing people, but also being discreet,' Klein said. 'If you don't know anyone, though, you can look at your donor history, and it will give you a clue. Anyone who starts with a first gift of R200 or more – that person is signalling you. His or her true ability is probably 10 times that much. From the first gift you can always negotiate the next gift. You can always ask someone to double his or her next gift.'

Building on the base

Once an organisation has a base of thoughtful donors, it is ready to move into the world of capital campaigns. Ideally, an organisation has built enough thoughtful donors that it can then ask to consider a gift that is 10 times their annual donation. But, since the organisation still needs to preserve its annual income, it needs donors to continue their annual pledge at the same amount, while simultaneously paying off their capital pledge. The way to ask donors to do this is by tapping into their assets.

The relationship an organisation has built with its donors is even more important during a capital campaign, because people become more fiscally conservative the more money they are asked to give. One way to make giving bigger amounts of money easier for donors is to ask people to give as a group instead of individually.

For example, a doctor or lawyer asks the partners in his or her practice to pool their donations. Another way is to ask a donor to give a big amount as the last gift of the campaign. If you want to ask someone to donate R100 000 to a R1 million campaign, set it up so that the donor gives only after you have first collected R900 000 of the R1 million goal. The donor feels protected from the possibility that the campaign will come to a halt before all funds are raised, and the organisation faces the challenge of raising R900 000 in order to get the last R100 000. Or, ask people to give as bookends: 50% at the beginning of the campaign and 50% at the end.

'Give people a lot of opportunities and a lot of negotiating room, a lot of places they can become involved,' Klein said. 'Help them to work out where they can get the money, and work inside of assets as much as possible. These are the secrets of how small groups can raise big money.'

Gina Bernacchi is a business writer with the Denver News Bureau and a frequent contributor to the NonProfit Times ■

5 Ways to get the web working for your organisation

If your organisation doesn't already have an e-commerce enabled website, now is the time to get one up and running. Internet fundraising is showing spectacular growth overseas, and South Africa is poised to mirror this trend over the next three to five years.

Nearly 3.5 million South Africans already have access to the web. Of special interest to fundraisers, 16% of them are age 55 and over.

SA business is showing increased confidence in online markets, investing R37 million on Internet advertising last year. Although still only a small portion of the total adspend, this amount is double that spent the previous year. Products that do well online are travel, insurance and (again of significance to fundraisers) online banking services.

Opportunities abound for forward-thinking non-profits to harness the power of the web in five main areas:

1. Raise money online

Unfortunately, it's not as simple as putting a donate button on your website and waiting for the money to roll in!

The Internet is a tool like any other, and exactly the same principals of fundraising apply: you need to alert people to an urgent need, tell them what you are doing to solve the problem, and show them how they can get involved in the work.

In order to achieve this, you may need to change the focus of your home page – away from information about your organisation, its mission and services – to an eye-catching appeal.

This may not sit well with your board of trustees, your CEO or even your PR department, who regard the website as a vehicle for promoting the organisation and/or publicising upcoming events.

Everyone in the organisation needs to agree on the primary function of the site. If it is there to raise money, then it should be designed with one purpose in mind ... to guide visitors towards making a donation.

2. Establish channels of communication

Fundraisers understand the importance of building relationships with donors and prospects, and the Internet offers a great way of doing this, through e-mail.

E-mail is a cheap, immediate and effective way to thank donors, provide feedback as to how their gifts were used and alert them to additional needs and opportunities for support.

Although spamming is not illegal – yet – in this country, it's certainly not recommended. Rather acquire e-mail addresses legally, by asking people: existing donors, people who attend your events, enter your competitions, or use your services. Viral mail campaigns are also a useful way of growing your e-mail address list, as is offering a free e-newsletter subscription on your website.

3. Reach new markets

SMS and e-mail are changing the way we communicate. Younger people, in particular, write fewer letters – and there's no logic to suggest this behaviour will change once they move into the traditional donor age group!

Viral mail campaigns, online polls and quizzes, activist campaigns and the like may well be the only way of getting your message across to this audience – and ultimately enrolling them as donors.

4. Establish credibility

One of the first things a potential funder will do is check your organisation out on the Internet. If you don't have a website – or you have one that is unprofessional – your chances of getting funding could be compromised.

Especially if your organisation is small and unknown, an effective website does wonders for your credibility. Use it to list your trustees, feature testimonials from people or partner organisations who already support you, and perhaps include a map pinpointing the area in which you work.

5. Save money

Using the Internet and e-mail to communicate with supporters costs far less than printing and postage. But there are other, less obvious savings as well.

If you can get volunteers to do tasks normally performed by paid staff, you'll save – and your website is a great way to attract volunteers. Consider including a password-protected section of news and information specially for them.

Another opportunity is to post frequently asked questions on the site, which can lead to huge savings in terms of time staff spend on the telephone answering queries.

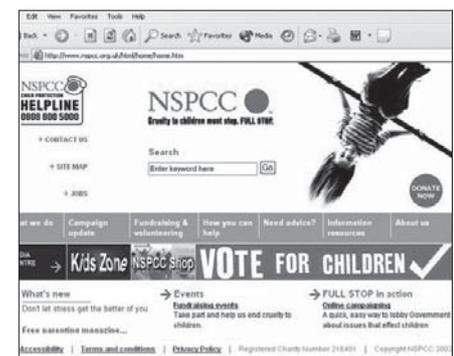
Finally, remember that these five ways to get the web working for you are just the start; your website is never finished!



Sheila McCallum manages Online Fund-raising Development at Downes Murray International – a position she assumed after more than 20 years' designing and writing direct mail fundraising appeals.



One that works – CARE Australia uses an impactful image and emergency appeal on their home page ... and one that doesn't – NSPCC offers no information or evidence of any problem, and no reason for visitors to get out their credit cards.



Raising money from special events

Love them or loath them, every non-profit holds special events. But just how 'special' is your event – and is it worth the effort?

At SAIF's 7th Biennial Conference, Pippa Shaper from Nazareth House, and Anne Wright from St Luke's Hospice talked about the pros and cons of special event fundraising. Richard Solomon reports.

So what's so special about your 'special' event? Are you going to break even? Are you even going to get anyone to pitch up on the big day?

The first question to ask yourself is 'do you really need a fundraising event?'

'Events take up an enormous amount of time and manpower,' said Pippa Shaper, fundraiser at Nazareth House.

'And then there's the question of what makes your event special? After all, it's usually the same people who are invited to all the special events. Unless you've made your event really special – and given it a unique name – chances are that people won't see it as exciting and appealing. And then they just won't come.'

Give it a name!

Shaper said it's essential that you make a name for your event – get it up in lights!

'And be sure to stick to you USP (unique selling proposition),' she said. 'Decide whether the event is raising money for ongoing costs, or a specific project. Specifics tend to be better – be specific regarding what you need the money for – and then report back to donors on how they've helped you to reach your goal.'

Another consideration is whether you'll be able to get a naming sponsor to carry all the costs of the event – in return for having their name and logo on all materials (posters, programmes etc).

Getting down to nuts and bolts, Anne Wright – fundraiser at St Luke's – said that special events can raise awareness of your cause, reach new (and younger) markets, help to grow your database by adding names of prospects to your file, build and nurture relationships with existing donors, move donors up the 'fundraising pyramid', and raise money.

Wright stressed the importance of a 60:40 income:expense ratio. 'Never spend more than 50% of your projected income. How much can you afford to spend?' Wright asked.

'You've got to be realistic about your budget. Be sure to cost in everything. Only take an item off your budget when you're sure that the item has been sponsored,' said Shaper.

'You really don't want your event to lose money – make sure that you cover your bottom line expenses.'

Next up for discussion was the issue of selling tickets: 'Don't be greedy when deciding on ticket prices,' was the warning from Shaper. 'Your ticket price must offer value for money.'

'The trick is to pitch your price correctly,' added Wright.

Other suggestions offered by delegates included: encourage and motivate staff and



From Christmas markets, to silent auctions and fashion shows – your special event needs to be really 'special'!

friends to sell tickets; advertise on radio, TV, press and local knock-'n-drops; approach other organisations with membership bases and offer tickets to your event to their members; send reminders to people who have attended previous events and incorporate other tools – like telemarketing – to promote your event.

Ready, steady, sell!

So when should your marketing and media coverage kick off? And when should you start selling tickets?

'I'd suggest about a month before the event – that's about how far in advance people start putting things in their diaries,' Shaper said.

Wright suggested that media coverage should start about three weeks before the big day – giving enough time for media hype to get going, and for the 'who's who' to get talking.

So there, all your tickets are sold, the big day – or night – has come and gone. And now you can sit back and relax till next year, right? Wrong!

'Make sure you keep a list of everyone you must thank. You can even write your thank-you letters before the event. Get your thank-you letters out quickly. Once the event's over you can tell people how much was raised and where it's going to be put to use,' said Shaper. 'Sending a heartfelt thank you to all the people who helped means you're more likely to get their help next time.'

And that's a wrap

Once you've recovered from your event – and sent out those all-important thank-you letters, be sure to have a 'lessons learnt' session, Shaper said.

'The session will help you to identify what worked and what didn't. Make sure you learn from your successes and failures. Keep them on file for reference for the next time, so you don't make the same mistakes in the future.'

Are you sincere, or do you say: Just give us the money!

Perhaps its part of the modern world wherein 'entitlement' has infected all areas of life.

'I want it, and I want it now.' 'You owe it to us.' 'Give me what you've got, now go away and don't bother me.' These are the mindsets that will kill any golden goose.

Believing that you're worthy of and entitled to your donors' money, and giving back little or nothing in return, will lose you your support base.

An attitude of 'don't care', and non-responsibility towards your donors is the first step towards attrition. Simply because, why would anyone keep giving to your organisation for zero recognition, when they can get better return elsewhere?

Love at first sight?

Fundraising is no different from business.

People put money in to get something out. If they get good after-transaction service, they'll give you their money again. In business, when shareholders are dissatisfied, companies quake. In fundraising – in too many instances – when donors are dissatisfied, nobody seems to care. It doesn't take a genius to predict the outcome.

Fundraising can also be compared to a love affair.

First, there's the chase – the initial face to face approach, or the direct mail acquisition.

Once interest is established, what usually follows is the 'getting to know you' period; the wooing process.

However, a potential relationship can die right here at this early stage, for lack of attention, personal interest and especially appreciation.

How many people give only once?

Or twice at a push and then fall away forever?

But if you pass that first test the person being pursued will still be hopeful, and you'll move on into the possible-commitment period. This is when boredom, apathy, indifference and taking for granted begin to take their toll.

A secured partner may soon find themselves expected to continue giving, without recognition, whilst the other half turns their attention to 'more important things in life', or a fresh chase.

When caring, genuinely interested listening, making-up, remembering, thanking, communicating, apologising, and nurturing go . . . so will the neglected partner.

In the same way, the donor will also go – to another more appreciative organisation.

So why not be the NGO that does it the right way!

By honouring the humanity. Your donor

is not just a name and address on some list or label, or a number in your records, but a living person with resources to share, who also has needs to be met.

People who care about the work you do have the potential to engage with you in a fruitful long-term partnership. And this applies equally to donors at all levels of giving.

Even the widow, who today can only afford to send you a few Rand, may bequeath her home and its contents to your organisation when she dies – because you cared about her when she lived.

By being accountable. In accepting the generosity of your donor, acknowledge that you're on the receiving end of a privilege.

In return, your donor needs to know that you've used that money well, for the stated reason that it was given. Always supply real report-back. This shouldn't be a choice, rather a given responsibility.

To be successful, the donor/NGO relationship must be a two-way street. Get the balance of give and take right, and you have a win-win future.

By being humbly thankful. Humility may be outmoded, but the sobering truth is that your organisation's very existence depends on those people who fund it.

By encouraging an ethos of humble thankfulness and genuine donor appreciation throughout your organisation, you're creating a cause which people will want to keep on supporting – because you make them feel good, as philanthropists, and as human beings.

Superlative care

And the proof of the pudding?

It's there to be seen in the bank balances of those NGO's who genuinely care about their donors; who thank promptly, personally and pertinently for every donation, no matter how small; who show and tell how the person's donation is making a difference; who answer their letters with warm and thoughtful sincerity; who take the trouble to address problems or misunderstandings; who (when appropriate) sometimes communicate without asking for money; who 'give back' in creative ways; who make time to pick up the telephone and speak directly to a donor; who treat their donors as they would their nearest and dearest.

These visionary organisations have loyal donors of many years standing; have enough money to carry out their important work; have substantial major gift groups to fund extra projects; and, ultimately, have bequests rolling in to secure their future.

You can do it, too! ■



Sounds harsh, doesn't it? But, sadly, it's a very real attitude in many NGO's, which goes on to become the silent killer disease of their fundraising programmes. Copywriter Denise Murray shares her passion for great donor nurturing.

How 2 help

How 2 help is a guide to worthy causes and development initiatives in and around Durban.

The book is the second in a series of *h2h (how 2 help)* guides – created as part of the h2h initiative, founded by Capetonian Tracey Young. The first book covers charities in and around Cape Town and was launched in 2003.

The h2h initiative aims to release guides in other major South African cities – which will be updated on a biannual basis – to incorporate 50-60 new projects in each issue.

'The objective of the books is to increase awareness of the incredible work that is happening right on our doorstep, to encourage us to get more personally involved in worthy causes and to realise that while funding remains important, for us to give a little of our time and share a little of our love, knowledge and expertise, is often significantly more valuable to these initiatives,' said Young.

Louise Palmer was the primary researcher and co-author of the Durban edition.

The book is available at leading bookstores, visit www.h2h.info, contact Aardvark Press on (021) 782 4615 or email orders@aardvarkpress.co.za. ■

Back to basics (cont from p1)

over-engineer programmes and to develop techniques using mirrors not windows. It's simple, the best fundraising is the fundraising that becomes part of every day life.

11. Segmentation is a necessity not an option: Defining strategies, communications and programmes that enable the donor to feel like a 'segment of one'. 'One size doesn't fit all' – it never did and it never will! We need to divide our supporters into as many groups as we can effectively define and manage to get closer to their needs, life-stage and lifestyle.

12. Intelligent thanking: Often seen as the 'end of a donation', acknowledgment should be seen as the 'vital beginning' of a possible relationship. This is a guiding principle that needs to be taught, explored and appreciated by all fundraisers. The list could go on and on and many readers will say 'what about ...', but it's a start and it does reflect some haphazard research over the last couple of years on what new fundraisers simply don't know or prioritise!

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Is your newsletter working? (continued from p2)

- Intersperse your stories with inspirational quotations or snippets of useful information.
- Always choose a striking article and strong headline for the front page to attract immediate attention and interest.
- Make sure that your headlines (and body copy) are donor focussed and feature words like 'you' and 'your' rather than 'we' and 'our'.
- Use good pictures showing people – and some close-ups so that you can see the eyes of the people in the photos.
- Tell stories that provide feedback on the people and projects which you have featured in your recent appeal letters.
- You don't need a heavy, glossy paper for your newsletter – this often gives older folks the impression of wasteful use of funds. An 80 gram Bond is quite sufficient, and even newsprint is often enough.
- Always include a pre-addressed donation form (or 'deepflap' reply envelope) with a 'soft ask' e.g. "Please will you keep this for when you are moved to support our work again". This can usually be used as

the address piece when you mail your newsletter in a DL window outer envelope (thus avoiding ugly and impersonal address labels on the outer envelope and at the same time making it much easier for donors to respond).

How do you score?

So there you have it – what amounts to a check list of donor newsletter 'Do's and Don'ts'. Perhaps you'd like to try scoring your newsletters against our recommendations to see how you stack up?

What I can promise you is that if you follow these simple guidelines, you will find that your newsletter:

- Always produces a handsome net income from donations;
- Brings your donors closer to your cause and grows their understanding and loyalty to your programmes;
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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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