

The more things change ...

This is an extract from Terry Murray's new book, The Art of Asking + 60 More Fundraising Tips and Trends, published to coincide with Downes Murray International's 21st anniversary in May this year. To order a copy e-mail jill@papillonpress.biz or telephone 021 851-4793.

Looking back at the first issue of *Fundraising Forum*, published in June 1987, it's quite easy to believe that, in fundraising at least, nothing much has changed in the past 21 years.

An article by Sheila McCallum urged us to hold firm to the belief that emotional copy was the essential ingredient to involve direct mail donors – and that certainly is still true today.

Neil Jackson talked about learning from the world of commerce and 'positioning' your NPO to attract more donor support.

He gave an example of Boys Town South Africa positively positioning themselves as different from other child care organisations.

Branding

So what has changed? Nothing much except the terminology – non-profit organisations in the UK and the USA in particular are all talking about 'branding'.

How to establish your 'brand' in the donor marketplace so that your organisation becomes 'top of mind' with donors.

Joe Araujo was interviewed on the then new management tool of strategic planning. Most NPOs are still using it in one form or another today.

They've recognised that it is necessary to regularly revisit mission and vision and even the relevance of services, in this rapidly changing world.

Jerry Huntsinger – America's dean of direct mail fundraising – gave us his six predictions for 1987. They included the forecasts that:

- The organisations with a strong public image would experience remarkable growth (positioning and branding, once again!)
- Donor saturation would get worse, not better, but that we can't stop prospecting for new donors or we'll stop growing and die.
- Prospect mailings will become less and less likely to break-even – but that it would be possible to justify the increased costs by acquiring donors who would contribute higher average

gifts, more times per year, and over a longer period of years.

- Premiums – little free 'gifts' attached to the mailing piece or offered in return for a donation – would remain with us always.

These predictions have all proved to be totally true 21 years down the line – not just for 1987.

The first issue of *Fundraising Forum* also showcased the three three-day Total Development workshops, run by Michael Downes and the DMI team in Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town.

One of the key elements of Total Development was the pinnacle of the pyramid, bequest promotion – the ultimate gift. And in the 21 years since this idea was introduced, bequests have proved to be one of the greatest growth areas in South African fundraising.

Now even more sophisticated with the introduction of bequest societies, the careful and caring promotion of this alternative form of giving is bringing in many millions of rands each year for our non-profit organisations.

The lead story in *Forum* Number 1 was about Michael Downes helping to launch Downes Murray International in South Africa.

Finally, the last and smallest article was about the latest postage increase – from 14 cents to 16 cents! It is now R1.93.

So there's the exception that proves the rule – an increase of some 1200% in 21 years can in no way be reviewed as a non change!

Let me leave you with the definition: 'Fundraising is the gentle art of introducing people of wealth to causes of worth.'

Twenty-one years of fundraising success

Downes Murray International celebrates its 21st anniversary in May this year. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our loyal clients, suppliers and friends for helping us to reach this milestone in our history! We look forward to many more years of fundraising success and innovation.

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You're invited to visit!

One of the most effective ways of encouraging donors to give again, give more or to just stay loyal to your cause by giving at least once each year – is to invite them round to see for themselves the work that you are doing.

Accepting that some not-for-profit concerns are less suited to donor visits than others, there is still much to be gained by the closer relationship that a visit creates.

And meeting some of the children or people who are beneficiaries of your not-for-profit enterprise is a sure-fire way to grow the emotional involvement with donors and an essential first step to greater support (which can be in cash, in kind or as a volunteer).

Of course, not all donors want a closer involvement – many prefer you and your organisation to remain the catalyst for their financial contributions.

But those who are ready to get 'up close and personal' will soon identify themselves by accepting your invitation to visit.

There are many different ways of achieving this.

Some of the more straightforward methods include having an annual 'open day' to which all donors and volunteers are invited.

This requires a bit of prior organisation to make sure that there are people to show visitors around, suitable refreshments, plenty of take away printed materials and perhaps some audio or visual presentations which run continuously throughout the day.

But it can be spectacularly successful as I have witnessed when attending the open day of Guide Dogs Victoria in Melbourne.

Some 10 000 people visit on that one day and they can meet the puppies and the guide dogs in training, experience for themselves the essential mobility aids and training techniques, buy all kinds of guide dog-related products and witness demonstrations of guide dogs at work.

An impressive and uplifting experience which cannot help but make donors feel closer and more supportive of your wonderful work.

An alternative event is the easier to organise 'tea and tour' occasion where you can invite groups of donors to come along for just an hour or two – enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and some light refreshments – have a short guided tour – and listen to a brief

presentation by your chief executive officer or development manager.

I have also experienced occasions like this where donors have made spontaneous contributions of up to R20 000 – more than enough to cover the cost of a whole year's tea and tour programme.

When organising this type of function it's often a good idea to offer transport for older donors (either using staff, volunteers or perhaps a minibus hired for the day).

Those senior donors who don't have transport or don't want to drive, can often be your key bequest prospects and the occasion always lends itself to at least some mention of your bequest society or the concept of a bequest as another form of support.

Some organisations have donor breakfasts, lunches or cocktail functions but always on their premises so that they can demonstrate what is being achieved with the money they are given.

Again, among the most successful events I have experienced are functions for specific groups of donors (or prospective donors) with a presentation by an acknowledged expert

in a particular field of endeavour which is likely to have the most appeal.

An example here is the University of the Free State which organised an on-campus function for attorneys on the subject of estate planning, with two expert presenters (one from the faculty staff).

The university even charged a fee to cover the luncheon costs and the event was still a sell-out success.

So put on your planning cap and work out the type of donor visit which best suits your circumstances and your particular organisation.

Then try to make it innovative and interesting – so that you generate enthusiasm for the idea – and finally, measure the results over the medium to long term.

I believe you will be very pleasantly surprised at what you can achieve.

Terry's Murray's book The Art of Asking + 60 More Fundraising Tips and Trends was recently published to coincide with Terry's 45th year in fundraising (in May 2007), and Downes Murray International's 21st anniversary in 2008. The book is a collection of Terry's Fundraising Forum 'My View' columns over the past 20 years.

The Art of Asking + 60 More Fundraising Tips and Trends is published by Papillon Press. E-mail jill@papillonpress.biz or telephone 021 851-4793.



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

“An impressive and uplifting experience which cannot help but make donors feel closer and more supportive of your wonderful work.”

Milestone Thinking

On-target observations in brief

We are not here to merely make a living. We are here to enrich the world, and we impoverish ourselves if we forget this errand.

*Woodrow T. Wilson
1856-1924, 28th President of the USA*

It's important to recognise that a challenge gift can motivate the challenger as much, sometimes more, as those expected to match the gift.

*With acknowledgement to
Successful Fund Raising
November 2007, Volume XV No.11*

Network with other organisations and industry professionals to share ideas, statistics, challenges, and solutions. After all, each of us is in this profession because we want to connect our worthy causes with caring individuals. It's in all of our best interest to collaborate and work together towards this goal.

*With acknowledgement to
Suzie McGuire in
Mal Warwick's Newsletter
January 2008
www.malwarwick.com*

You must give some time to your fellow men. Even if it's a little thing, do something for others – something for which you get no pay but the privilege of doing it.

Albert Schweitzer

Send donors a complete report on how their gifts were spent and how they met a real need. Donors will appreciate knowing you care enough about their gift (no matter its size) to keep them informed about how it was used and will likely remember this gesture next time you ask for a gift.

*With acknowledgement to
Successful Fund Raising
February 2008, Volume XVI No.2*

An economic downturn often brings a basic fundraising principle into sharp relief: Charities need to develop multiple sources of contributions or risk financial collapse.

*With acknowledgement to
The Chronicle of Philanthropy
February 7, 2008*



50 years of feeding hungry children

Peninsula School Feeding Association (PSFA) was established in 1958, when the government stopped its school feeding programme, which was aimed at addressing the needs of hungry children at school.

PSFA relied solely on public donations until President Nelson Mandela introduced the Primary School Nutrition Programme (PSNP) in 1994, administered by the provincial health departments.

That's when PSFA was approached to provide school feeding to 300 000 children in the Western Cape.

In 1998, government introduced a tender process for delivery of the service. Today PSFA is one of three service providers.

Meals are prepared at the schools by volunteers, parents and community members, who receive an honorarium.

Meals include a peanut butter and jam brown bread sandwich with a nutritious high energy drink – or cooked meals, like rice and soya relish, bread and soya relish, and samp and beans.

PSFA currently provides feeding to 151 000 children in 572 schools.

Now in their 50th year, PSFA stays true to its motto: 'You can't teach a hungry child'.

For more information, contact PSFA on 021 447-6020 or visit www.pfsa.org.za

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

For 50 years millions of children have relied on the regular, nutritious meals provided by the Peninsula Schools Feeding Association.

FUNDRAISING FORUM

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

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

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

Visit www.dmi.co.za

Handwriting adds a personal touch

While most direct mail is mass-produced, there are ways to add a personal touch, as Deborah Block and Paul Karps explain.

In the never-ending search to give direct mail appeals a more personal look and feel, the use of handwriting for emphasis invariably comes up.

While some fundraisers see it as just another gimmick designed to fool the reader, we consider handwriting – when used appropriately and sparingly – as a highly effective way to warm a piece.

Sure, in reality the handwriting might be computer-generated. But so is a letter ... even though we make it to look as though it just came out of a typewriter (out of a belief in the increasingly shaky proposition that anyone remembers what a typewriter is!).

The idea of adding handwriting is to give the impression that someone went the extra mile to take pen in hand.

Here, then, are 11 ways you can use handwriting to add a personal touch to an upcoming package:

- Use a handwritten carrier teaser. This tactic works well when the return address includes a specific person's name. For instance, if your Executive Director's name runs on top of your organisation's name and address, then she can proclaim, 'Open to learn my urgent news' or 'I wanted you to know'. Of course, the same person should also serve as your letter-signer.
- To add a sense of mystery to your carrier, especially if you're using a celebrity

letter-signer, use this person's signature in the upper left corner. The rest of the envelope would then be blank.

- Start your letter – above the salutation – with a handwritten Johnson Box (or 'eyebrow') for immediate impact.
- Add hand underlining, starring, bracketing, and marginal comments to your copy. This can be particularly effective when your correspondence is in the form of a memorandum.
- If your main letter is signed by one person and you're including a memo by another, have the letter-signer add a note to the top of the memo asking the donor to read this second component.
- Close your letter with a handwritten P.S. for additional emphasis. We've seen some handwritten postscripts that fill half a page.
- Include a handwritten lift note. But be sure the copy runs no more than two or three short paragraphs. Handwriting – no matter how tidy – is usually harder on the eyes than a 'typewriter' font.
- Consider handwritten captions for your photos. This is especially effective if you're dropping in single shots and plan to use the backside for copy. The strategy also works well for a photo 'diary' insert.
- Upgrade your donors and hook prospects at a higher giving level – and jazz up your reply device – by including a handwritten line like, 'Your gift of R35 would really help'. You can also circle a specific amount in your typeset gift string.
- Handwrite a request on your reply envelope for donors to use their own stamps.
- Best of all, add some handwriting on every component for a consistent, visually sparkling, and warmly personal package.

But remember, you'll want to use the same handwriting everywhere ... and the same colour. Plus, you should make sure your handwriting is legible at a glance. Otherwise, you'll lose whatever benefits you would have gained.

Good luck and good (hand)writing!

Copywriters Deborah Block and

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Article was first published in Mal Warwick's Newsletter July 1999 issue. ■

*With acknowledgment to
Successful Direct Mail,
Telephone and
Online Fundraising™
November 2007
www.malwarwick.com*

New technology offers exciting opportunities

Digital printing has come a long way since Downes Murray International produced the personalised upper and lower case computer printed letter in South Africa in the late 60s.

Full colour variable data digital printing now allows for the printing of brochures, flyers and more – which include a donor's personal details. That means that when printing a flyer, for example, the donor's name can be included in the printed headline.

Sounds exciting doesn't it? The truth is, the opportunities are endless. But there is a downside. The cost.

Which option to choose?

At the moment variable data printing is only cost-effective for short runs and on-demand printing. That means that if you're printing one or two thousand copies, it may work out to be cost-effective. And then you'll be able to personalise each copy: each copy can be different.

But for longer runs, traditional offset lithography printing is still the best bet, and works out much cheaper. But then your prints can't be personalised.

Taking the long view

When George Hale moved to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina in the United States, about five years ago, the retired sales engineer figured he would drop by and introduce himself to staff members at the local Red Cross chapter.

After all, he had already spent about 30 years teaching swimming and other life-saving skills as a Red Cross volunteer in Connecticut and his native Rhode Island.

Mr. Hale, 80, had proven himself to be the kind of volunteer every non-profit manager dreams of – one who keeps coming back week after week, year after year, whose enthusiasm for the organisation's mission seems to expand with his workload and responsibility.

It turned out officials at the Coastal South Carolina Chapter of the American Red Cross had already heard about him from their counterparts in Connecticut.

'When I came to say hello,' Mr. Hale recalls, 'They said, "Yeah, we know all about you." '

And they put him right to work. Some experts say that with all the perennial hard-wringing over the problem of volunteer recruitment, perhaps not enough attention has been paid to the grooming of long-term volunteers like Mr. Hale. Why do they stay when other volunteers quit? How can charities keep more of them?

Such issues are likely to become more pressing in the years ahead. Charity officials say they could easily count on long-term commitments from people who grew up during the Depression and World War II – and therefore felt a strong sense of social obligation. But younger people have been less willing to stick with volunteer opportunities.

A 'leaky bucket'

The decades-long increase in the number of volunteers has recently showed signs of slowing, and charities lose roughly one of every three volunteers a year, says Robert Grimm, director of research and policy development at the U.S. Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that encourages volunteering. He calls this phenomenon the 'leaky bucket' that's costing non-profit groups an estimated \$30-billion annually.

'This is valuable talent and resources that's going out the door and not coming back,' he says. 'It's a big issue.'

He believes organisations that lower volunteer turnover rates and master the grooming of long-term workers will reap increasingly large benefits. A skilled volunteer who comes back year after year can be just as critical to an organisation's health as a comparably experienced and talented paid employee, he says.

'There's a stereotype that with volunteers, you can't trust them, or they don't do as high

quality of work,' he says. 'There's this culture of thinking that to get quality work, you have to pay for it.'

'Our gold standard'

John Cori's 20 years of volunteering for Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City makes a strong argument to the contrary. He is highly valued by the charity not only because he is dependable and conscientious but also because of what his presence has come to mean to the organisation.

The 44-year-old construction electrician plays Santa Claus every year at the charity's Christmas parties, uses his van to transport gifts from donors, assists in the annual 5K run, and helps fix things around the office.

'By doing good, you're going to be around good people,' Mr. Cori says. 'That's what kept me going.'

But finding volunteers like Mr. Cori, who are willing to stick with one organisation over the long term, requires what Mr. Grimm, the federal researcher, calls a 'talent management' approach to dealing with volunteers. Find out what stokes a person's passion or gets their creativity flowing, then plug the person into a role where those specific passions can flower.

'You have to move from thinking, "What do I want volunteers to do?" to saying, "What do volunteers want to do for my agency?" ' Mr. Grimm says.

Non-profit managers need to look for people who believe passionately in their organisation's mission, but who also have interests or talents that mirror the volunteer opportunities the organisation offers.

'It's just fun'

Mr. Hale, for instance, grew up near the ocean in Rhode Island and loves to swim. And, he says, he is fascinated by learning new things, especially skills he can apply in everyday life.

He has used his Red Cross training to save his own son's life at least twice.

The volunteer has taught hundreds of children, and he says he loves watching the joy on their faces as they finally take their first successful swimming strokes, and giving them instruction that may one day save their lives.

'The thing that kept me coming back is that I really got a lot of satisfaction,' he says. 'Maybe I'm a selfish person, but I just got all of these good feelings.'

Challenge

The volunteers who most often drop out are the ones given the least challenging assignments, notes Mr. Grimm, the government researcher.

Fifty-three percent of people given tasks like general labour or providing transportation volunteer again the following year, according to the corporation's research. Meanwhile, 74 percent

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Charities that cultivate and keep volunteers over many years stand to reap big benefits, experts say. Eric Frazier reports.

*Adapted from
The Chronicle of
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February 7, 2008
Visit www.philanthropy.com*

Six revealing perspectives in data analysis

Fundraising begins with accurate donor targeting. No one has the time or money these days to take a scatter-shot approach to attracting and retaining the most valuable of relationships, writes Dawn Brelsford.

Using the same formulas to solve the mysteries of your donor data will always derive the same results. If those results aren't getting the answers you need, there could be better ways to look at your information. Here are six of the most effective lenses you can try.

1. Speed matters

It's not quantum physics that RFM (recency, frequency, monetary value) analysis targets donors who have given recently, given often and given more. The truth is that how fast donors give is a much stronger, more accurate predictor of repeat giving.

How do you know if a donor's speed is increasing? It's if the time between their donations has been decreasing. When that happens, it's an indicator that contact with them should be ramped up.

Rank your donors according to speed of giving and you'll find the fastest 20% is three times more likely to give than the rest.

The lesson is that speed can sometimes reveal the destination. Yet, it's still not quantum physics.

2. Give them a chance

Traditional RFM analysis has its uses, sure. But it can paint groups with the same broad, and sometimes inaccurate, brush. One donor is being compared to another donor – and the behaviour is predicted based on that single comparison.

Instead of comparing your donors to each other – compare them to themselves over multiple time periods.

- Have they increased their gift since last year?
- Have they started giving more frequently?
- Have they decreased their gifts?

These answers help you realise who is getting left behind and whose relationship is being nurtured.

Donors who decrease frequency are worrisome. RFM will label them as active donors but in reality they are on the verge of lapsing.

3. Donors are investors

To be a successful fundraising organisation, you should think of your donors as investors – as soon as their cheque is written they are a stake-holder in your mission. Studies have shown that a 5% improvement in loyalty might increase profitability by as much as 25%.

To get an accurate measure on the quality of a relationship with your donors, it's important to consider donor variables beyond years of giving or time on file. When you scientifically measure your donor's loyalty by classifying them into levels such as most loyal, tipping, or risky, it

gives you information to help develop or modify that donor's current relationship and realise the gains of loyalty marketing.

4. Wait and see

Development professionals must offer validation for their department's largest expense – acquisition. To do that, the number one measure is the quick and immediate calculation of the cost to acquire a new donor.

Add other factors to the mix and over time, your return on investment (ROI) will likely get a huge boost.

To measure the true ROI, you'll have to wait 12 to 24 months after the acquisition campaign you are measuring.

5. Survival prescription

In medicine, doctors need to understand which treatments help patients survive longer and which have little to no effect at all. In the fundraising world, the objective is to have a similar understanding of donor lifecycles.

Setting aside variables and drilling down to a plain vanilla survival analysis requires one thing: hazard probability – that is the chance that a donor who has thrived for a length of time is going to lapse before the next unit of time.

Computing your hazard probability by month will reveal a pattern and give you the opportunity to correct your course. If the numbers tell you that 40% of your file will lapse in April, an amendment to your communications strategy that month should be the right prescription for damage control.

6. All bubbles burst

Most donors have a ceiling on the amount of support they'll offer and how many times they'll tolerate the pitch. Once they reach it, you guessed it; they go through the roof.

The single biggest indicator that your ask strategy is too aggressive is this: you have a statistically significant dip in the number of donors and increase in revenue during the same period of time.

On the surface this would seem like a positive trend. For one to two years, the net income bubble will grow – then a dramatic decline is assured. This is the very high cost of pushing donors too hard.

Be on the look out for it and it will keep your ask strategy in check.

Dawn Brelsford is vice president of strategy and planning for a fundraising consultancy at Barton Cotton, headquartered in the Baltimore-Washington corridor.

Visit www.bartoncotton.com

*Adapted from
The NonProfit Times
January 1, 2008
Visit www.nptimes.com*

Acquisition best practices

Testing against your control

There's been a lot of talk lately about declining response to new donor acquisition mailings.

In these challenging times, it's more important than ever to make sure you're following the best practices in acquiring new donors – while thinking creatively about how to improve your results.

Of course, the lists you use in your acquisition mailings are of the first importance – and will make or break your programme.

But you should also take a cold, hard look at your creative, offer, and ask – and make sure you have the right mix to inspire people who know nothing about you to help you in your cause.

The first item on any acquisition creative check list should be to make sure you have a proper control – and that you're testing against it. In acquisition, you need to test extensively to maximise returns from your available list universe.

But to test, you need to make sure you have a solid control that you're testing against – otherwise you won't be able to make the correct decisions based on your test's results.

What makes a control package? It can be any package that you've mailed once, and then mailed again without making extensive changes.

You should have a feel for how your control performs: how much it costs, what kind of average gift you can expect, and what percentage response you'll get.

What do you test for?

Before you decide on creating any test, you need to set aside time to look at your acquisition results, and decide what your goal for testing is.

Usually, a test will win by doing one of two things: increasing your response rate or increasing your average gift. Unfortunately, it's rare that a test will do both.

That means you need to decide what's more critical for your acquisition programme. If you're bleeding dollars to acquire a handful of donors – and are having a hard time justifying the expense of the programme – you may want to test to increase response, by reducing your ask amount or adding response enhancers such as premiums or involvement devices.

That way you can pay for more of the acquisition investment with upfront results, while adding more donors more quickly to your housefile.

On the other hand, if you're acquiring a fair number of donors, but having a hard

time retaining them or upgrading them in your housefile programme, you need to test to increase your average gift.

This is often a tougher challenge than increasing response rate, because the best way to increase your average gift (without destroying your response rate) is to find a compelling, urgent need that will inspire donors.

You really need to push hard on your creative, convincing potential donors to invest deeply in your cause.

Once you decide your goal, you can begin to determine what you specifically want to test against your control.

I think of testing an acquisition in two ways: incremental tests to improve the control and breakout testing to come up with a new control.

Incremental vs. breakout testing

Incremental tests aren't as exciting, but, especially as you build an acquisition programme, they're much more important. For an incremental test, you should replicate your control package exactly, except for the difference you're testing.

For example, you may want to change one of the ask amounts in your control package, while keeping every other element between the two packages the same.

In a breakout test, you throw everything you know about your control to the wind – and try an entirely new package. Of course, it's important to do this type of testing every once in a while. Most controls fatigue over time (although much less rapidly than you might guess), and it can be possible to get a great boost in your results by trying an entirely new package.

But the truth is that most new packages lose to controls. If you've built a control package and tested incremental changes against it, you should have a good idea of what's inspiring to the individuals whose names appear in your list universe.

If you can easily create a new package that matches or beats the performance of your control, you just haven't done your homework yet.

The best part of acquisition testing is that it's fun. You get an insight into what specific elements motivate donors to support your cause – and you get to root for your favourite package as you watch the returns come in!

Peter Schoewe is Senior Consultant, Mal Warwick Associates, e-mail peter@malwarwick.com

If your control acquisition package isn't bringing in the results you had hoped for, it might be time to test, as Peter Schoewe reports.

With acknowledgments to Successful Direct Mail, Telephone and Online Fundraising™ February 2008 Visit www.malwarwick.com

Taking the long view

Continued from page 5

of volunteers supplying professional or management assistance stay on year to year.

Some possible tactics for grooming long-term volunteers might seem counterintuitive, like giving volunteers, especially those who are the most promising, more to do.

Seventy-six percent of volunteers who serve 12 or more weeks per year return the following year, as opposed to 51 percent of those who serve less than three weeks out of the year, according to federal statistics.

Tough sells

Some volunteer opportunities are inherently challenging, are hard on volunteers either physically or emotionally, and can lead even those who are most dedicated to a cause to burn out.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City, for instance, hopes to keep volunteers for four or five years, but, in recognition of the difficulty of the work involved, instead asks helpers for only a one-year commitment. The average volunteer stays 15 months, says Mr. Coughlin, the charity's recruitment and outreach supervisor.

Mr. Coughlin suggests that other organisations with emotionally taxing volunteer duties give new volunteers a thorough orientation that explains the challenges.

Sometimes, volunteer work is a 'tough sell' because it is not inherently challenging, but menial.

Managers of volunteers acknowledge finding help for such mundane chores can be a struggle. And yet, they say, there is always the harried professional or busy parent who wants to help, yet doesn't have time for an in-depth commitment.

If an organisation keeps good records of volunteer preferences and availability,

the managers insist, it can generally find someone to fit any job.

Charities can also meet the challenge by outlining a 'volunteer career path' that makes it clear that lower-level duties will give way to more challenging roles, says Mr. Grimm. It needn't be any different, he suggests, than the grooming managers do with paid employees.

The 'right place'

Indeed, for many long-term volunteers, it is the sense of camaraderie with a charity's staff members and clients, the feeling of sharing in the organisation's mission, that keeps them coming back.

When Irmgard (Sonya) Cohn retired from her job at a theatrical agency in her early 70s, she felt empty.

Her husband, a doctor, had long since died.

So, she began volunteering at the Jewish Home Lifecare System, a nursing home and rehabilitation centre in Manhattan. She had a simple job – typing information about patients into a computer database. But the people were so friendly, she notes, always saying, 'Thank you, Sonya!' just because she came in.

She felt like she was part of the place.

She still recalls a key moment early in her 18-year tenure as a volunteer there: Walking down a hall, she saw a nurse pushing a patient in a wheelchair. Both were singing.

'I said to myself, "I'm in the right place",' Ms Cohn recalls. 'It's such a beautiful thing.'

Now 91, she still volunteers at least one day a week. 'If you stay home at this age,' she quips, 'you get old.'

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

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Downes Murray International

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

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

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"Reprinted with acknowledgement to ..."

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

- *Successful Fund Raising*, PO Box 4528, Sioux City, Iowa, 51104, USA, (12 issues per annum \$159) website: www.stevensoninc.com
- *The NonProfit Times*, 190 Tamarack Circle, Skillman, NJ08558, USA, (\$129 per annum) website: www.nptimes.com
- *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, PO Box 1989, Marion, Ohio, 43306, USA, (24 issues – one annum at \$95) website: <http://philanthropy.com>
- *Successful Direct Mail, Telephone and Online Fundraising*. Subscribe for free at www.malwarwick.com/newsletter

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