

WHY WE WRITE THE WAY WE DO

What to expect with Five Maples copywriting

The reality is donors are busy. Donors are letter scanners. *And donors want to be the heroes.* This means that you need to **GRAB THEIR ATTENTION**, involve them directly, and make it easy for them to see their role in the call to action—and **FAST**.

We can take a lead role in planning and writing, edit for clarity and effect, or simply provide you feedback on your draft, paying attention to **donor-centric language, ease of reading and effective asking**.

Here are some examples of the strategic ways we develop compelling yet easy-to-digest copy for your fundraising project:



WE USE A STORY THAT ILLUSTRATES THE DONOR'S IMPACT instead of fact overload. Stories about how an individual's life was changed makes the donor's impact more tangible, personal, and stirs emotion.

LENGTHS OF LETTERS VARY. Most readers will automatically turn over a page to see what's on the back. Crowding text to achieve a one-page letter could reduce reading.

WE ARE DIRECT. Your readers already know you're asking them for money. The call to action must be direct and repeated to help ensure that the donor acts. Asking "Please give today" creates urgency. Asking for a specific amount takes the guess work out of how much they should donate.

WE bold OR underline IMPACT STATEMENTS SO THEY STAND OUT. If a scanner reads nothing else, they will easily see the urgency of the call to action, the ask, and the donor benefit.



WE WILL INCLUDE A P.S. A postscript is often the only part of a letter that is read. You have a 1-2 line opportunity to summarize the entire point of your appeal letter, and possibly captivate a donor that would have just thrown the letter away.

WE USE SIMPLE WORDS AND SHORT SENTENCES. Even the most educated of readers will appreciate a letter that doesn't take long to read and gets to the point. An easy read that motivates them to action will not insult your donors.

WE ARE REPETITIVE. It is important to make sure the mission sticks with the reader. They may only read one of your several calls to action, which is why the first sentence, bolded sentences, captions and P.S. must all deliver the donor benefit and the ask.

WE ARE DONOR CENTRIC. Your organization wouldn't run at all without money from your donors. Donors make the work possible, and the purpose of an appeal letter is to reinforce their impact through phrases like "Thanks to you..." and "But without you..."

YOU!



WE ENCOURAGE PHOTOS IF DIRECTLY SUPPORTIVE OF THE STORY LINE. A single person making eye contact is best and you should avoid group photos. Including a caption provides another opportunity to repeat the call to action and the donor impact.

THERE IS MORE WHITE SPACE THAN TYPICAL. White space increases readability. Important statements can get lost inside of a long paragraph and it's necessary to showcase your message as easily as possible.



WE DO MORE! We have seen response rates improve by 50% when using a digitized, handwritten note from the signer. It looks real and it adds a personal touch that creates a feeling of familiarity.



To sum it up, if the content seems simplistic, it's so your message can be quick and easy to grasp. If the writing sounds repetitive, it's so the mission sticks with the reader. If the ask seems forward, it's because it must be a direct call to action. **And if we talk more about the donor than your organization, it's because the letter is about the donor.**



Check out our entire copywriting knowledge base and improve your results!