Top 10 Pet Peeves of Donors
Where Small Nonprofits Go Wrong in Asking for Money

1. **Mailings**
   a. Incorrectly Spelled Names
   b. Improper use of name, gender or title (or acknowledging both spouses or household adults in a mailing)
   c. Cheap “free” items (note pads, pens, etc.) that indicate a waste of resources
   d. “Faux” personalization (Dear Sue, if you don’t actually know Sue)
   e. Too Many mailings
   f. Too much “stuff” in the mailings
   g. Pre-printed donation amounts on cards
   h. Inability to Opt Out of future mailings
   i. Mailing demonstrate too much time (and money) spent on resources, not enough on mission

2. **“Asks”**:  
   a. “Guilt” Asks - Sending cards or mailing labels so the donor will feel guilty and “buy” them from you with a donation.
   b. Generic (no personalization) Asks
   c. Failure to make a case - Why do you want the Donor’s money?
   d. Failure to Ask (the un-asked “Ask”)
   e. Too many “Asks”

3. **Phone Calls**
   a. Universally despised for an ASK
   b. Missed for a “Thank You”
   c. Impersonal (student, volunteer that doesn’t know the donor)
   d. NEVER use a professional fund raising service
   e. NEVER use a computer dialer (illegal in Indiana)

4. **Donation follow up**
   a. Lack of Thank you note
   b. Late Thank You note
   c. Additional “Ask” in the Thank You note
   d. Incorrect names, use of gender, title, etc. in Thank You note
   e. Impersonal Thank You note

5. **Nonprofit Information**
   a. Lack of meaningful financial information
   b. Lack of timely activity information
   c. Lack of acknowledgment of donors in newsletters, etc.
   d. Nonprofit’s Lack of information or knowledge about the mission

6. **Donor Information**
   a. Asking too many questions (collecting personal information)
   b. Selling (or otherwise sharing) Donor personal information
   c. No policy to protect Donor Privacy

7. **Internet Contact**
   a. Use of Spam
   b. Too many emails with not enough information (slightly less than Spam)
   c. Sharing Donor email address

8. **Board of Directors**
   a. Invisible Board (who’s running the show?)
   b. Institutional Board (No new faces)
   c. Lack of Engagement (Board not involved in fund raising)

9. **Facilities**
   a. Failure to take care of property (“too poor” is not an excuse)
   b. Conspicuous consumption of resources (appearing “too rich”)

10. **Relationships** – Failure to abide by the Top 10 Ways to Keep Donors!

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