

Top 10 Pet Peeves of Donors

Where Small Nonprofits Go Wrong in Asking for Money

1. In Your Mailings.

- a. Spelling names incorrectly.
- b. Using names, genders, or titles improperly.
- c. Failure to acknowledge both spouses or household adults in a mailing.
- c. Sending cheap items like note pads or pens that indicate a waste of resources
- d. Using faux personalization
- e. Sending too many mailings, or sending mailings too often.
- f. Including too much “stuff” in the mailings.
- g. Pre-printing donation amounts on cards.
- h. Providing no option to opt-out of mailings.
- i. Indicating too much time and money spent on resources sent on mailings, rather than the 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 Asks: Asks without any personalization.
- c. Unjustified Ask: Why do you want the Donor’s money?
- d. No Ask
- e. Too Many Asks!

3. Phone Calls

- a. Universally despised!
- 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!

Thanks to Marc A. Pitman, Senior Editor, FundraisingCoach.com and author of “Ask Without Fear!” for starting the email thread that produced so much great information!