

The Deadly Sins *of Those Who Review Creative*

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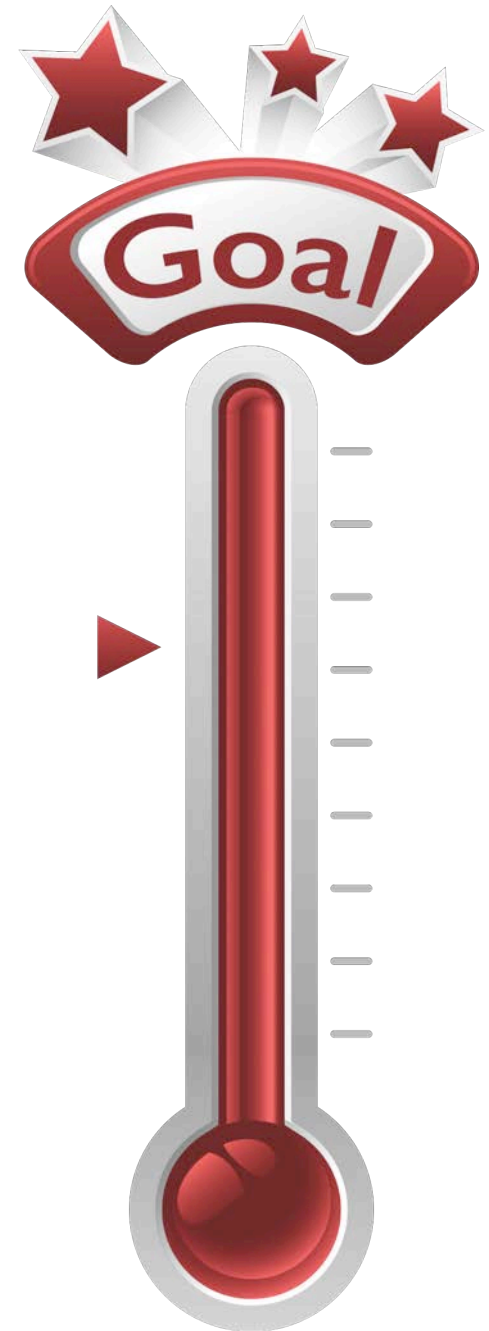
CHAPMAN CUBINE
ADAMS + HUSSEY

WASHINGTON, DC SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Sin #1:

Lust

Lust for response and revenue from your donors, without providing a strong offer and ask to get it.



Lust

- Every appeal must have a clear, concise offer — and a strong ask, or call to action.
- “Branded Appeal Themes” like Annual Fund, Challenge Match, Member Drive and Holiday Appeal work well and should be tested.
- If/when you test these packages make sure its because it's the best fit not because it's the easiest path to approval.



Lust

- Use reminder mailings and emails as follow-ups to important appeals. Continue the same theme, perhaps extend deadlines and pick up additional revenue with a “campaign approach.”
- Good storytelling is important but you can’t wait until page 2 to make your ask.
- Make a strong ask near the opening of letter and a number of soft asks as well.
- First line of your copy should have an effective “hook” – almost like the headline of a print ad – compelling the donor to read on



Lust

- Reference donor's past gift amount in copy, thank them and tell them why help is needed again.
- Be specific with your ask — base it on donor giving history — with upgrade amounts in letter.
- Test different gift arrays and techniques on reply devices.

You'll help make our House a place of comfort and support for families with children in the hospital. Thank you!

YES! I want to help keep families together and give them a welcoming home when their child is receiving medical care. **Here's my 2014 Annual Fund gift:**

☐ \$15 ☐ \$25* ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \$ _____

** This helps make our House a home!*

 Ms. Jane D. Sampleperson
36 Cordage Park Circle
Plymouth, MA 02364



 **25**
1989-2014
2014 Annual Fund
((Donor's Town))
Area Drive

Please return this form — along with your gift made payable to: Ronald McDonald House — in the envelope provided. Please see reverse side of this form for credit card payment options. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent provided by law. Thank you!

DETACH AT
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Ronald McDonald House of Providence, Inc.
45 Gay Street • Providence, RI 02905
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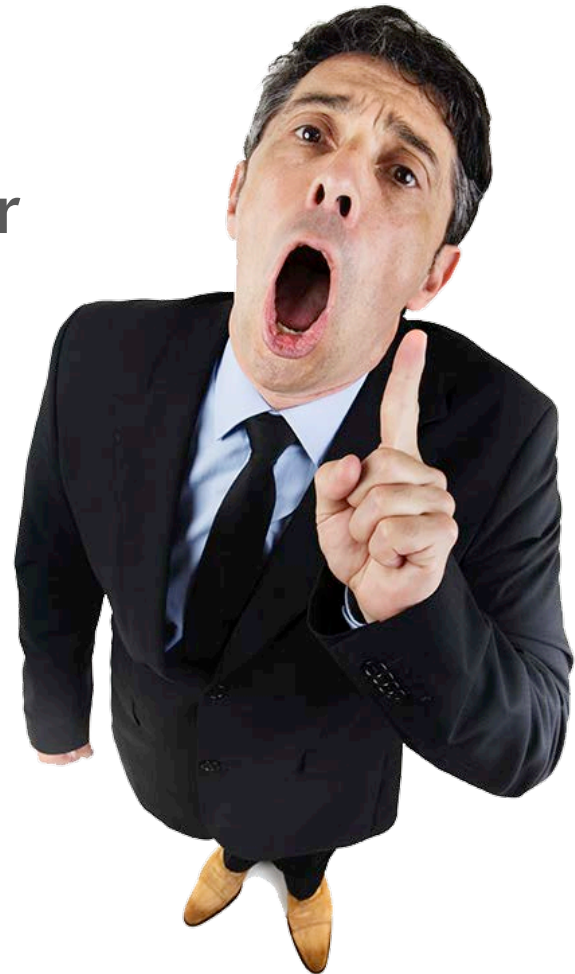
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Sin #2: **Gluttony**

Gluttony of words, or trying to say everything about your mission in every letter.



Gluttony

- Long copy – letters of 4 pages or more – can work well, but like all direct response copy, it must be written a certain way.
- If you don't have enough information to fill 4 pages without shrinking the margins and increasing the font don't waste the paper or the donor's time.
- Use short paragraphs – none longer than 7 lines. Use short sentences. No 50-cent words, unless you're explaining something technical, such as medical research.

A hand is shown holding a small, rectangular card. The card is white and contains several lines of text in a very small, black, serif font. The text is a standard Lorem Ipsum placeholder. The hand is positioned on the right side of the frame, with the thumb and index finger gripping the edges of the card. The background is plain white.

*Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur
adipiscing elit. Vestibulum est arcu, iaculis
facilisis nisl id, faucibus pulvinar libero.
Mauris in rhoncus risus. Proin a euismod
nisi. Donec tincidunt interdum sodales.
Nunc ut nulla et ipsum vulputate suscipit.
Aenean feugiat pretium orci, id dapibus
massa luctus in.*

Gluttony

- Avoid “death by a thousand bullets.” Bulleted copy is OK occasionally, but use only a few. I once reviewed a letter recently that had 19 bullets in it, covering everything the organization had done in the past year.
- Focus on one story... one key area of mission... for each execution. Keep it simple, emotional and powerful.
- Think of your series of appeals in the course of a year as a conversation with your donor. You can tell the whole story of your mission over time.

Storytelling



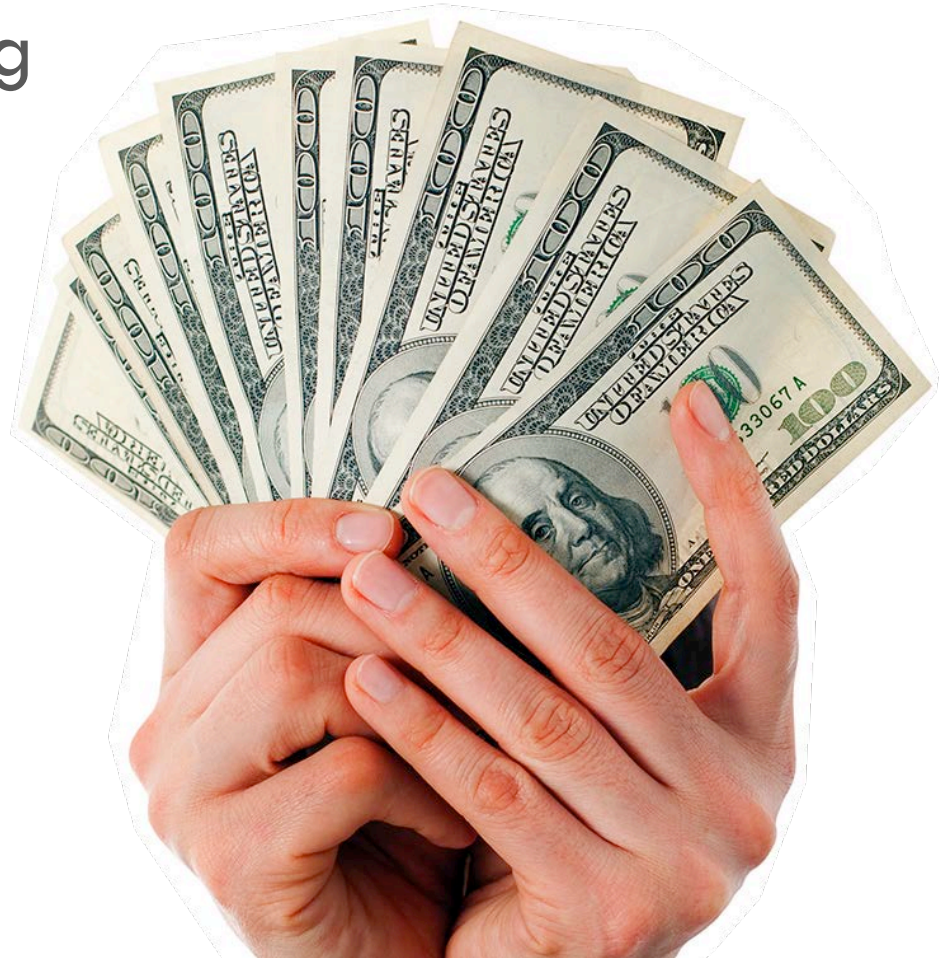
Gluttony

- Keep your branding consistent across all media channels. Remember that “a brand is a set of shared values.”
— Donny Deutsch
- Beware of too much information.
- Just because it’s a new topic to you and it’s interesting be careful about straying too far off message. If you recruit new donors on a dolphin message don’t shift to migratory birds post inception.
- The ED wants to add the information (insert something boring and in no way related to why the donors joined).
 - Some people remember the Alamo, I remember the middle of page two and three are the least read.



Sin #3: **Greed**

Greed in the hoarding of resources, instead of investing in new donor acquisition.



Greed

- New donor acquisition is an investment that does not pay off in year one. There's no way around that.
- Test, Test, Test!
- Cutting acquisition will cost you down the road. Your file will experience attrition (perhaps 30% per year) and you won't have the new donors to fill the void.
- By all means, increase efficiency in acquisition through list testing, predictive models, etc., but don't "take a year off."



Greed

- Invest in your most important donors:
 - Mid-level and major donors
 - Monthly donors/sustainers
 - Multi-year donors
 - Major donors



Greed

- Invest in your new donors (an organizational 401K):
 - You worked hard to get them don't let them go without a fight.
 - Truth is your better donors started out at the bottom if you want them to travel up the giving ladder you need to invest in them early.
 - What is you donor value? How much can/should you invest in new donors?



Greed

- The “bird in hand...” is worth a lot!
- Sometimes we tend to “protect” our most important donors. We say we’ll mail less and cultivate them in other ways. Often, they end up being ignored.



Greed

- Committed donors **WANT** to hear from you.
Don't ignore them!



Sin #4: **Wrath**

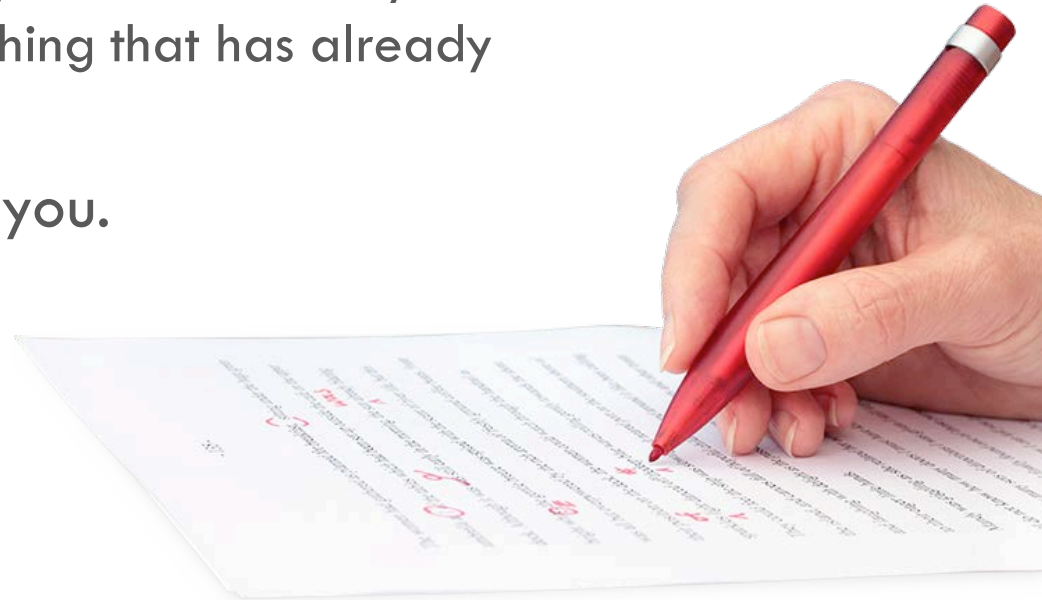
Wrath of the Red Pen

The incredible urge to ~~change~~ ^{alter} what someone else has created, regardless of whether or not it's on target.



Wrath

- In giving creative direction, do you ever say, “I don’t know what I want, but I’ll know it when I see it.”
- How about, “Why is the copy always so depressing? We have so many great accomplishments!”
 - As a wise man once said no one gives you \$25 for a success.
 - You need to explain why you need the donor’s support today, doesn’t work if you are referencing something that has already been accomplished.
- Remember: It’s not about you. It’s about the donor.



Wrath

- It doesn't matter if you don't like it – if you're not the audience!
- However, if copy & design does not agree with your brand and messaging strategy, you need to act.
- Be specific – the writer or designer can't fix it if you don't give useful direction.
- Have a plan for what you want to say in your program, and slot different messages and themes into your program plan.
- Plan ahead so you don't have to accept weaker copy & design.



Wrath

- Some find that a creative strategy or brief can keep them on track. Be sure to outline:
 - List/Audience
 - Offer
 - Ask
 - Format
 - Objectives
 - Measurement of Success
 - Copy
 - Design Background
- Be open to new ideas – or you'll stop getting them.



Wrath

We tried that
back in 1986
and it didn't work.

You know I am just
not feeling it.

It looks like something
coming from the IRS or
another government entity...
it doesn't scream urgency.

I have never seen
anyone do that
before... no.

Wrath

- Just because you wouldn't like the treatment doesn't mean it won't work.
 - I hate telemarketing... I can't believe that works?
 - The mission is strong enough we don't need techniques packages.
 - The ask is too aggressive it would its off-putting and would stop me from giving.
 - You can't ask for \$25,000 in the mail.



Wrath

- You have fight for what you believe in, but pick your battles.
 - Fight for the lead... fight for the carrier.
 - When negotiating copy always know beforehand what edits you will concede.
 - Create a Win-Win.



Wrath

- Protect the integrity of your successful control package.
- It's like a nest egg, bringing you dependable results and revenue.



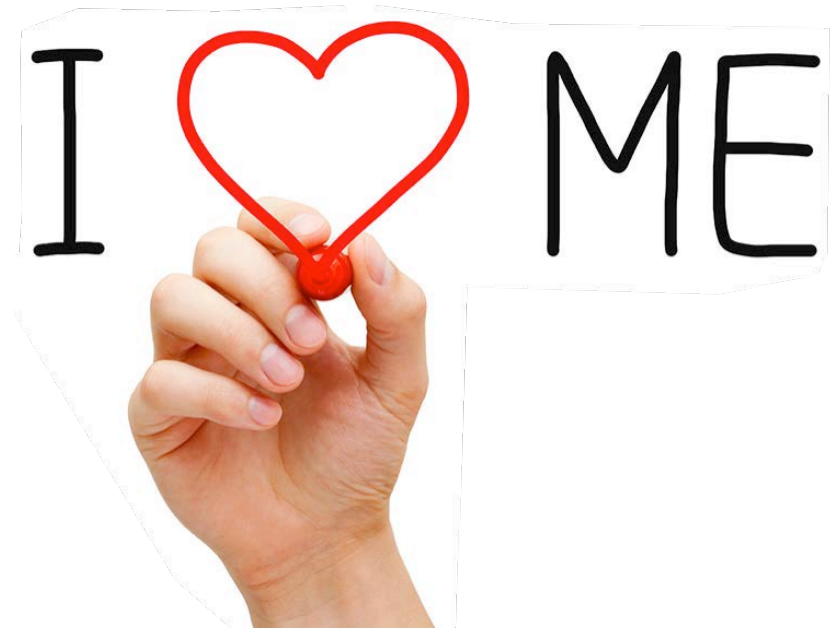
Wrath

- Don't change a control just for the sake of change.
- Beat it through testing.
- Test aggressively, but...
- “Run it ‘till they stop it!”



Sin #5: **Pride**

Pride in your own organization's stats, instead of the role your donor plays.



Pride

- Don't focus on how great your organization is, tell the donor how great they are for supporting you.
- Don't fight to win, fight for the best product... we all like to win... but make sure your motivation is pure.
- Less "me" in the copy and more "you".
- Remember what Mother taught you. Don't forget to say "please" and "thank you."



Pride

- It's hard for a donor to visualize the “thousands of people/families/animals you help.”
- Focus on the story of one person or family... one life transformed... one animal saved...
- Take it down to the more personal, individual level, so the donor can relate.



Sin #6:

Envy

Envy of another organization's program performance without doing the work needed to build your program.



Envy

- Whatever if I had cute pictures of kittens and puppies? I would make a bazillion dollars also.
- Why didn't I think of that?
- It takes time, testing and a great deal of effort from a cohesive team to craft an enviable program.



Envy

- Don't expect to have a program overnight that your competitor took 20, 30 years or more to build.
- Do the hard work of testing and refining every aspect of your program: list/audience, segmentation strategy, offer, format, copy, design, postage, timing... everything.
- Make a commitment to get good photos that show the donor's gift in action.



A picture is worth a thousand words

Sin #7: **Sloth**

Sloth is not finding the good,
true story that exemplifies
your mission.



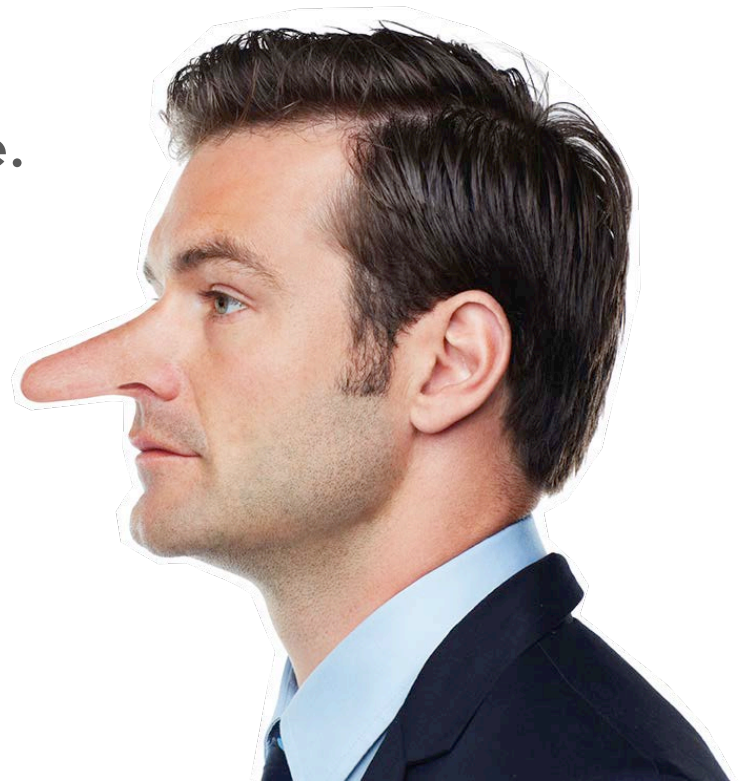
Sloth

- Your organization does great work. You have great stories, but it's not always easy to get them.
- Sometimes “Marketing” and “Development” don't play nice together. Make a concerted effort to breaking through silos.
- It's especially important in today's age of multichannel communications.
- Work with your colleagues to provide your program with stories that drive people to action.



Sloth

- Sometimes people use “composite” stories, instead of real ones. It’s a slippery slope.
- They create a “story that could happen” – instead of one that actually did.
- There’s a very fine line between a “composite” and an outright lie.



Sloth

- It's lazy... and wrong because it breaks trust and damages the credibility of legitimate fundraising.
- Look at what happened to Brian Williams!
- The best path isn't always the easiest.



Thank You

*Let's continue the discussion:
#DMA7deadlysins*

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