

# TOP 10

## Copy Points that Work

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# 1

Make “you” (the donor or prospect) the hero

Think of your letter as a conversation. Talk about “me! me! me!” and it’s boring. Talk about you – how much we know about you – how vital you are to our work – how we couldn’t do it without you – and it becomes more engaging. Consider the first line of a letter your “headline.”

2

**Focus on a single offer**

Don't make the mistake of trying to list all aspects of your mission in every letter. Make the offer clear and compelling. Tell them, in simple terms, what their gift will do.

5

**Act Locally**

Use copy like "Our Annual Fund is underway in (DONOR'S CITY OR TOWN) and your help is urgently needed ... or ... we help 56,247 people in (DONOR'S STATE) who are living with this disease."

8

**Test special offers/themes**

Invite major donors and major donor prospects to "Join the Club." Offer special recognition and benefits "in appreciation for your outstanding leadership and support."

Test Annual Fund or Matching Gift as a theme in both Acquisition and Renewal. Test a member card in renewal. Test a monthly giving offer to frequent givers.

3

**Use emotion**

For some organizations, tugging at the heartstrings is essential – children's causes, humane societies, etc. Even organizations that focus on more clinical subject matter, like medical research, can benefit by injecting some passion and conviction into the copy – while being sure to highlight the specific needs and benefits of supporting research.

6

**Personalize the ask**

"Mr. Sample, your last gift of \$XX came at crucial time. Your gift was vital to our (mention specific areas of mission the gift was used for). If you can give another gift of \$XX, or perhaps even \$XX... \$XX or more, you will..."

9

**Test a circled gift amount on reply slip**

Circle the upgrade amount in "blue pen" and include handwritten text that says, "this amount would really help."

4

**Create urgency**

To increase urgency, test "rubber stamp" graphics on envelopes with the word, "Urgent" or "Important." Try a deadline to increase the sense of urgency. Use a P.S. to add an urgent tone, or simply to restate the offer.

7

**Nurture the relationship by creating a donor dialog**

Thank donors for their ongoing kindness and support. Then ask them to contact you by email and/or mail to express opinions, get information, become involved in advocacy, volunteering, etc. Tell them, "your feedback is important to us!"

10

**Ask and then ask again**

Include a soft ask in the beginning of the letter and a harder ask at the close. Test a lift note that includes an ask from a third party endorser. The reply slip should summarize the offer also contain another ask as a call to action. The reply slip should be able stand alone – in case it gets separated from the letter.

**IMPORTANT**

John, your help means so much to us...

Please give what you can.  
Won't you join our club?