

“BUT ENOUGH
ABOUT ME...
LET’S TALK
ABOUT
YOU!”



By Steve Maggio
President/Chief Creative Officer
DaVinci Direct

Have you ever gone to a social event and been stuck next to the person who can't stop talking about himself?

He goes on and on incessantly. You patiently listen to all the minute details of his job. Then he prattles on about his house, his kids. Without even giving you a moment of silence to engage in the conversation, he shares his one-sided views on everything from politics to the local sports teams.

He never gets around to asking about you. He's just interested in talking about "ME."

You wait for the opportune moment when you can slink away gracefully.

As much as we all dislike such encounters with "me focused" people, we can sometimes slip into the same kind of mindset when talking with our donors in our online and offline fundraising programs. And I use the word "talking" deliberately because I feel strongly that your communications should sound like a personal conversation that you are having with your donor.

It is said in copywriting that there are certain magic words, like "free" and "new." But for fundraisers, I suggest that the most important word may be "you."

Use it freely and often in your direct mail letters, emails and social media and give your donors a sense that you do, indeed, know them, care about them, appreciate their support and welcome their opinions.

But how do you get personal with your donors? Here's a list of the few things you might try.

TURN THE "WE" STATEMENTS INTO "YOU" STATEMENTS.

Many clients are so proud of the work they do, they focus on their statistics, their programs, their success – instead of simply stating the impact the donor has on the people they help.

For example, instead of saying, "our programs provided 100,000 meals last month," say, "you help us feed 100,000 hungry people every month." I simply added the "you," got the "feed hungry people" mission in there – and changed from a passive voice to an active voice to make the sentence more dynamic.

Avoid the word "we" and talk one on one. Say "I deeply appreciate your support" – instead of "we deeply appreciate it." Instead of "We're proud of our efficient use of funds, say "you can be proud of our efficient use of your gifts."

USE THE INFORMATION ON YOUR DATABASE TO LET THE DONOR KNOW THAT YOU KNOW THEM.

If you can reference giving history, work that into your message. It shows that you know what the donor gave in the past – and can help you gracefully ask for an upgrade.

Reference the donor's name and local city and state in the letter – simple pieces of data that many organizations don't make full use of. And, of course, you can never say "thank you" to your donors too much.

For example: "Your last gift of \$XX came at a crucial time and was most appreciated. But there is much more we must accomplish in our fight against cancer. Sadly, XX,000 people will be diagnosed with cancer this year in (Donor's State) alone. Today I hope you will give another generous gift of \$XX

continued on next page ➤



– or perhaps even \$UP1... \$UP2 or more during our local (Donor’s City) area Annual Fund Drive.”

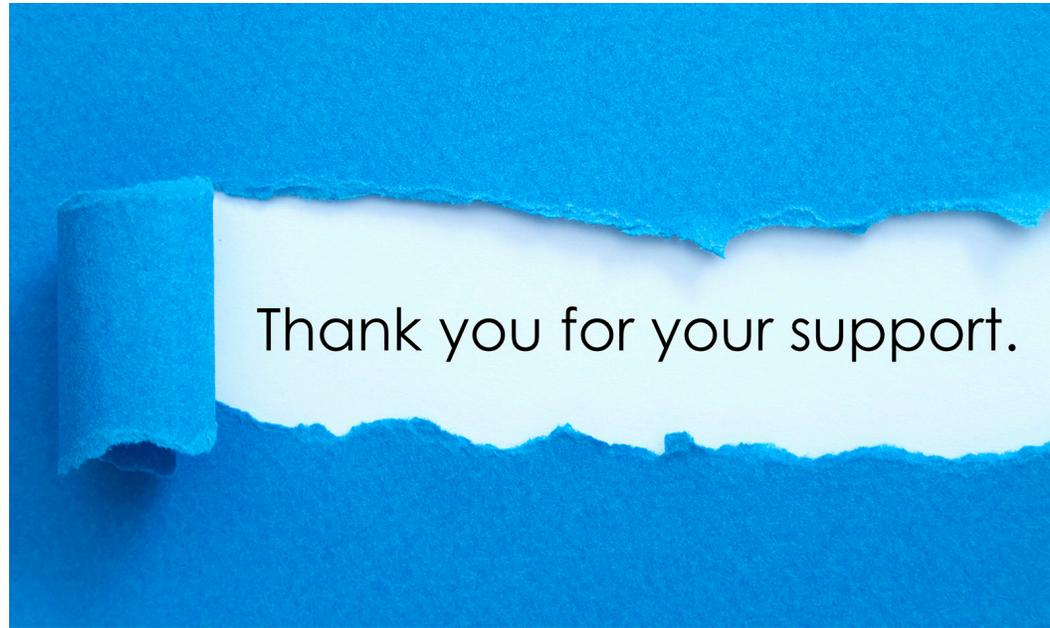
DON'T BE AFRAID TO SHARE YOUR FEELINGS.

“I don’t know what I’d do without good friends like you. I’m worried about raising enough money by year-end to keep all of our programs going. I know you’ve probably given generously to the hurricane relief efforts. But frankly, the disasters of the past year have had a negative impact on us. I urgently need loyal friends like you to dig even deeper...”



KEEP YOUR LANGUAGE SIMPLE AND EMOTIONAL.

“Your child has cancer.” Can any words be more frightening to hear? Those are the words that



Thank you for your support.

Mr. and Mrs. Doe heard last August when Sally, their 3-year-old, was diagnosed...

“Shivering, scared and alone, Elaine wandered the streets in a desperation – until XYZ House – and friends like you – reached out and pulled her in from the cold.”

OFFER HELP, SOLICIT OPINIONS AND INVITE A DEEPER PARTICIPATION IN YOUR CAUSE.

“Thank you so much for your ongoing support. And please remember that XYZ Org is here for you and your loved ones – always. You can call our Help Line at...”

“What programs would you most like to support? Take our on-line survey at...”

“Would you like to volunteer at the hospital? I could sure use your help. Call (name) at...”

Of course, these are just a few of the many ways you can make your communications with donors more personal and interactive. If you’d like more ideas, YOU can call me anytime at 508-746-2555 ext. 511.

© S. Maggio



DAVINCI
DIRECT



Steve Maggio
508-746-2555, ext. 511
steve@davinci-direct.com
davinci-direct.com