

MAKE YOUR
DONOR THE
HERO
FOR DONOR-
CENTRIC COPY



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

They go on and on incessantly. You patiently listen to all the minute details of their job. Then they prattle on about the house, the kids. Without even giving you a moment of silence to engage in the conversation, they share their one-sided views on everything from politics to the local sports teams.

“in copywriting that there are certain magic words, like “free” and “new.” But for fundraisers, the most important word may be “you.””

This person never gets around to asking about you. They're 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. The use of the word, “talking” is deliberate here because your communications should sound like a personal conversation you are having with your donor.

It is said in copywriting that there are certain magic words, like “free” and “new.” But for fundraisers, 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 nonprofits are so proud of the work they do, they focus on their statistics, their programs, their success — instead of clearly 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.” By simply adding the “you,” and getting the “feed hungry people” mission in there — the sentence 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.”

WE NEED YOU!

Use social media to engage and cultivate

Your website, blog posts and social media are powerful tools you can use to develop meaningful conversations with donors and prospects. Broadcast a survey to gain actionable information about what is most important to the people who support you. Use an online petition to create a non-monetary connection between donors, prospects and your organization. Having someone say, “Yes, that is important to me, too” is a valuable first step in developing a deeper connection.



Tell stories that express your organization's values and connect with people who share those values. Offer information to add value and help cultivate relationships. For example, an organization that fights hunger could offer recipes and nutritional information; a healthcare nonprofit can offer tips for healthy

when disaster strikes a family help and hope!

YES! I want to help children and families here in our community, when they face unexpected medical situations. I enclose my compassion.

☐ \$XX ☐ \$YY ☐ \$ZZ ☐ Other \$

☐ Yes! I'd like to make this a recurring monthly gift.

☐ I have enclosed a check made payable to Dayton Children's Hospital Foundation.

☐ Please charge my gift to my card (see reverse)

Your last gift was <LG> on <LGDate>.
*Reflects giving to the Foundation through X/XX/XX.

To donate online, visit childrensdayton.org/community20

Your gift is invaluable and will be used for the greatest need. Gifts are tax-deductible to the extent provided by the law.

Dayton Children's Hospital
One Children's Plaza
Dayton, Ohio 45404-1815

Donor ID/DMR82/SEGMENT CODE

living; and a humane society can offer information about how to care for pets, or who to call in an emergency involving your pet.

To grow your digital fundraising program with new prospects, the idea is to engage with people and cultivate a relationship with them first — before asking for a gift. Even after your prospect has become a donor, you still must provide helpful information, tell compelling stories and provide content that cultivates a stronger relationship, instead of asking for a gift in every communication.

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



ANNUAL FUND 2021 APPEAL

URGENT YEAR-END DRIVE

Please send your gift to fight cancer today!
Yes! I'll renew my support today to fund exciting breakthroughs in cancer research and care at UPMC Hillman Cancer Center. Enclosed is:

☐ \$XX ☐ \$XX ☐ \$22 ☐ Other \$ _____

Please give my gift to:

☐ Research (please make check payable to the University of Pittsburgh).
☐ Patient Care Programs (please make check payable to UPMC).
☐ I prefer to give by credit card (see reverse side).

Donate online at
www.upci.upmc.edu/giving
 or call 412-623-4700.

Email: _____

Mr. John D. Sampleperson
 DaVinci Direct
 36 Cordage Park Circle
 Plymouth, MA 02360-0000
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UPMC HILLMAN CANCER CENTER Development Department
 5150 Centre Ave., Suite 1B
 Pittsburgh, PA 15232-1309

XXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXX

If your donor has expressed an interest in supporting a particular area of your mission, be sure to provide updates on what their gift is helping you accomplish and invite the donor to support that area of mission again. For example, a major medical center can give donors the option to support a particular medical specialty, such as cardiology or oncology – and reinforce that preference in subsequent communications.

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 our programs going. I know you've given generously to help us rise to the challenges imposed by COVID-19. But frankly, the pandemic continues to impact our mission. I urgently need loyal friends like you to dig even deeper if possible..."

Keep your language simple and emotional.

"Your child has cancer." Can any words be more frightening to hear? Those are the words that Mr. and Mrs. Sampleperson 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.

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