



# OUR TOP 5 TIPS ON WRITING GREAT DONOR APPEALS

The great donor appeal can inspire your supporters to donate, volunteer, and commit themselves to your organization's mission. But what makes a great donor appeal? The secret, as it turns out, is using your data to craft a message that clearly expresses your impact. Here's how to do it:

## TIP #1:

### Personalize Your Message

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In a recent survey, nearly 70% of donors indicated they valued a personalized experience while interacting with a nonprofit. Use data points you already have (last gift date, gift designation, class year, event attendance, etc.) to deepen the connection between the donor and the organization.

*How can you use your Neon reports and widgets to get a good list of donors to reach out to?*

## TIP #2:

### Always Show the Gift's Impact

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Use this letter as a way to share a recent success and a plan for the future. Increasingly, donors are researching the organizations they support and want to see that your organization is making an impactful difference.

In a recent study, 83% of donors said it was important for them to know the real outcomes of their charitable donations.

#### Did You Know...

- 40% of a direct marketing campaign's success **is in the data.**
- **30% of annual giving occurs in December**, with 10% of annual giving occurring in the 3 days of the year.
- 38% of donors feel that a direct mail appeal is the most effective way to convey a story, compared to 23% who believe email is best.

### TIP #3:

## Always Include a Response Vehicle and a Reply Envelope

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Online donations account for less than 10% of fundraising revenue. Don't assume your donor will go to your website, make it as simple as possible.

### TIP #4:

## Get Creative

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Given the amount of direct mail many of your donors receive, it's important for your appeal letter to stand out. Consider using photos, variable images, variable text, and other creative design elements to get noticed.

### TIP #5:

## Use Your Response Data to Plan Your Strategy

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Look at how your donors responded to this direct mail piece to identify trends. Do your donor tend to respond to pieces that include photos more than those that do not? Track response rates, appeal performance, average gift, cost per dollar raised, and other metrics to ensure you're making the most effective decisions you can to grow your program.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Michael Buckley**, CFRE is a career fundraiser, who currently serves as the President and Founder of The Killoe Group, providing inspirational, professional counsel to organizations at an affordable cost. Previous to this position, Michael has served as the Chief Philanthropy & External Affairs Officer at the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society in Menands, NY, and in multiple fundraising roles in higher education in the Albany area.

[www.thekilloegroup.com](http://www.thekilloegroup.com) • [mbuckley@thekilloegroup.com](mailto:mbuckley@thekilloegroup.com)