



Checklist for Effective Appeal Letters

Content

- Has the marketing proposition behind the appeal been worked out? Is it consistent with the organization's case for giving?
- Makes clear what problem the organization is addressing and how a gift will help solve that problem?
- Is the letter from one person to another? Not from a committee?
- Engaging? Personal, even chatty style?
- Creates a bond; uses "you" and "I"?
- Appeals to emotions via narrative?
- Uses a limited vocabulary, short sentences, and paragraphs? Have extra adjectives or adverbs, verbal crutches, circumlocutions been edited out? Uses active voice not passive voice?
- Includes a call for giving in the body of the letter and in the P. S.?
- Asks for a specific amount, not just for "support"?
- Focuses on the difference the money will make in the life of an individual and how the gift will deliver the mission, not how much the organization needs the money?
- Includes "thank you"?
- Starts with a personalized salutation, and may include the donor's name in a critical sentence in the body text?
- Reminds the donor of the benefits of giving? Describes an opportunity for the donor to meet personal needs or achieve personal desires by supporting a worthy charitable aim?
- Are the claims in the letter believable and the narrative authentic?

- Is it clear why readers need to respond right now?

- Does the opening paragraph of the letter engage the reader's attention?

- Does the P.S. disclose some benefit or intriguing fact that's not discussed in the body copy? Is it especially interesting?

- Does an extra gift or upgrade letter lay out the reasons why the donor's aims will benefit from giving more?

Design

- Looks like a letter?

- Photos or graphic elements are correctly placed: top right or middle left; no middle graphic crosses the whole page?

- Uses a high-quality signature; blue if possible?

- One signature?

- Photos, if any, are of people and have captions?

- Uses spot or full color in one or more non-text elements?

- Do a few important phrases in underline, italics, or bold lead the reader on the first glance-over through the essential elements of the narrative and the appeal?

- Uses two pages (front and back) if needed to tell the story without crowding?

- No more than seven lines per paragraph?

Typography

- Uses a serif typeface?

- Text is in black only?

- No reverse type?

- Any color behind the text is limited to 10% tint?

- Headlines, if any, are in upper and lower case, not ALL CAPS?
