THE BETTER LETTER CHECKLIST

CONTENT

- ❑ Is it 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 story instead of facts about organization?
- ❑ 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"?
- ❑ Asks multiple times (hard and soft)?
- ❑ Focuses on how the gift will deliver the mission, not how much the organization needs the money?
- ❑ Includes "thank you"?
- ❑ Starts with a personalized salutation?
- ❑ 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 achieve personal desires by giving to the organization?
- ❑ 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?

DESIGN

- ❑ Looks like a letter, not like a memo/marketing brochure?
- ❑ Photos or graphic elements are correctly placed: top right or middle left?
- ❑ Scanned signature is high quality; blue if possible?
- ❑ One signature, not several?
- ❑ Photos, if any, are of people (making eye contact, if possible) and have captions?
- ❑ Uses spot or full color in one or more non-text elements (photo, logo, captions, etc.)?
- ❑ Are important phrases in underline, italics, or bold?
- ❑ Do underlined, italicized, bolded phrases lead the reader through 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?
- ❑ Letter body is in black only?
- ❑ No reverse type?
- ❑ Any color behind the text is limited to 10 percent tint?
- ❑ Headlines, if any, are in upper and lower case, not ALL CAPS?
- ❑ Text is flush left or justified?

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