

Bequests by direct mail – briefing and copy for the results you want

Frank Chamberlin

Room 218

Friday 25 February

12.05pm – 1.05pm

Bequests by Direct Mail

Briefing and copy for the results you want

The problem about bequests today

- We are one of many
- People are growing **more jaded** and wary
- Very often they don't believe us
- More and more people dislike **hype**

'I don't have time to listen, and I don't believe you anyway.'

The problem for fundraisers today

- How can we get this sceptical generation to accept and respond to our suggestions about a bequest?
- How can we build a database?
- How can we be *believed*?
- How can we be credible?

To be believed

1. Tell (only) the (verifiable) truth
 - If people today can't instantly verify a claim, they will assume it is false

2. Purge all vague modifiers
 - *"Virtually everyone sees the need for direct action"*
 - Today's consumers despise hype and anything else that insults their intelligence

3. Let someone else do your bragging
4. Substitute general descriptions with specific facts
5. Admit your weaknesses
 - immediately distinguish yourself from competition
 - opens the door for a trusting relationship
 - tell them what you can't do, and they'll believe you when you tell them what you can do

To be credible

We have to address the big questions that concern donors:

- Your accomplishments
- Your vision
- The recognition you offer
- Your efficiency

The problem of being believed and being credible often relates to how we present ourselves through the written word – and, in turn, that relates to how we brief the writer

Outline

1. The brief
2. The writing task
3. The role of the left/right brain
4. Bequest mail packs
5. Evaluating creative work

The Brief

The brief

- The single most important element in developing effective creative work is the brief

The Brief

- If the brief is not clear and single-minded in its purpose, you will never develop creative work that achieves your goals

The Creative Process

- As the solid foundation that top creative work requires, the brief must clearly state your objective – which might be to get the phone ringing, to distribute a certain number of bequest booklets . . .

Three key parts to the brief

- The single-minded proposition (the key message)
- The target audience
- Your objective

Briefing template

- Let's now examine a briefing template that works

Briefing template

- Client name:
- Product/service:
- Deadline for copy:

- Why are we writing or rewriting this document? And in the case of a letter who will be signing it?

Briefing template

- Who is the audience that we are aiming to reach?
- What is the desired tone? (e.g. Very formal, cheap and cheerful, solidly Australian, young and edgy, Mercedes Benz class,)
- What precisely is your objective?
- Give a detailed description of your 'cause'.
- How should the text present your accomplishments?

Briefing template

- What is your vision that should be presented?
- How will donors be recognised/thanked?
- Your efficiency with donor money: how should this be discussed?
- Is there a competitive situation that we need to be aware of?
- Is there a special need or deadline to promote?

Briefing template

What is the single most important message that you want to get across with this communication?

It's sometimes referred to as the 'single-minded proposition'

Briefing template

- What is the physical format? (e.g. an email campaign, a DL leaflet, a website...or what?)
- How is the finished product going to be used? (e.g. a brochure may be for mailing out or handing to people at an exhibition).
- What mandatories do we need to be aware of? (organisation name used in a particular way, use of 1800 number)
- Any supporting information?

The writing task

The 4 pillars of non-fiction writing

(including writing for bequests)

CLARITY
SIMPLICITY
BREVITY
HUMANITY

Pillar 1

CLARITY

Clarity

- If it isn't clear you might as well not write it; you might as well stay in bed
- Clarity is the goal in writing; the main prize
- It's surprisingly hard to achieve because so many sentences as they're first written, tend to come out just a little wrong

Illumination is required to be extinguished on these premises after nightfall.

Lights out after dark.

Pillar 2

SIMPLICITY

Simplicity

- Clutter:
 - the crippling disease in writing today
 - it's the main enemy
- We're a society drowning in:
 - unnecessary words
 - meaningless jargon
 - pompous frills
- With so much over use of words today, it's increasingly difficult to get your message across.

Simplicity

- We are not writing for the sake of writing
- We are writing to communicate – to get our message across and to get prospects to part with hard earned money
- One of the critical requirements for communicating, is to use words that you are sure the other person understands

**My thinking has evolved to the significant point
where a concept has emerged.**

I have an idea

Pillar 3

BREVITY

Brevity

- Saying things in the most economical way, not giving the reader anything she or he doesn't need
- Writing is like a good watch; it should function smoothly and have no extra parts to get in the way
- Short is better than long

Brevity

- **Short words** are better than long words
 - Don't use numerous when you can use many
 - Don't use assistance when you can use help
- **Short sentences** are better than long sentences
- **Short paragraphs** are better than long paragraphs

“Sorry about the length of this letter – I didn’t have enough time to write a shorter one.”

George Bernard Shaw

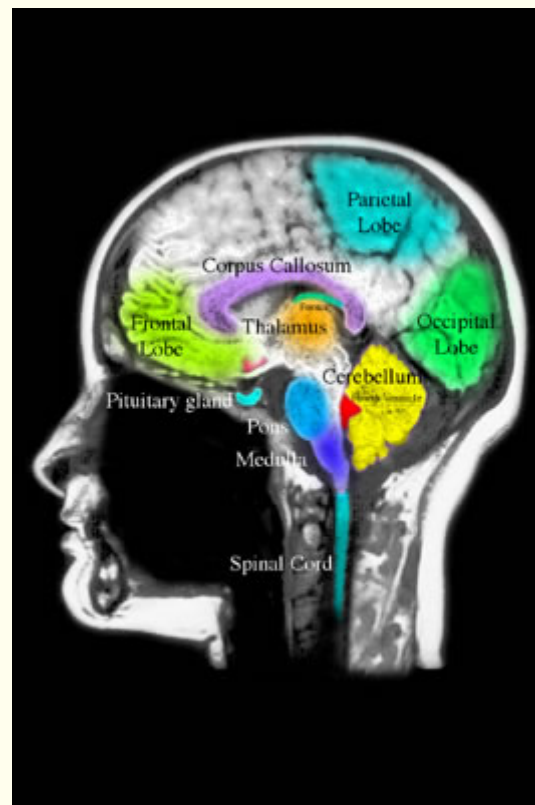
Pillar 4

HUMANITY

Humanity

- Be natural... be yourself
- Never say anything in writing that you wouldn't comfortably say in conversation
- When they sit down to write, most people try to commit an act of literature
- Usually, the 'person' who emerges on paper is much stiffer than the person who sat down to write

The role of the brain



Brain hemispheres in writing

- The writing process consists of different steps that sometimes conflict with each other
- One is a creative, productive and often subconscious phase
- The other is an editing, censoring, monitoring and conscious phase

Right brain

- The right brain is the residence of creativity
- It's where your ideas are stored
- We feel, invent and create with our right brain

Left brain

- The left brain is the residence of logic
- It's where we think, analyse and organise
- It places things in sequential order
- Correct grammar, spelling and editing

So what does all this mean?

- The common problem of starting a piece of writing and not getting very far with it is usually a sign that the left-brain, or editor, has entered the process too soon
- Awareness of your left and right brain functions will allow you to begin using the creative right side much more

Bequest mail packs

Classic bequest pack

- Envelope
- Letter
- Brochure/Leaflet/Folder/Booklet
- Reply component
- Add ons

Envelope

- The real purpose of the envelope is to get recipient in the right frame of mind for opening your mail piece

Envelope

- Value of a teaser or other design
- Postage options: peak, off-peak, stamps, franked, imprint
- Hand addressed
- Size versus postage costs
- Colours, stock, reusable...

Letter itself

- Most important element with most impact
- Heading
- PS - high visual value
- Readable signature
- Make it easy for them

Letter content

- Highlight the value of bequests
- Stress long term good
- Your bequest does not have to be large
- You can do good long into the future

Brochure

- Support to letter
- Visual impact
- Technical details
- Must always include contact details as it may be separated from the letter

Reply component

- Elements to consider:
 - Reply options
 - Reply paid
 - User friendly
 - Coding for tracking purposes
 - Follow up phone or email

Add ons

- Attention getters e.g. cards, tokens, puzzles, stickers
- Premiums of lasting value such as calendars
- Ad reprints
- Third party letter to add credibility

Evaluating creative

4 major fundamentals

1. Re-read the brief

- You can't evaluate anything professionally without being very clear about the objective of the exercise

2. Liking the piece

- Your 'likes' have no role to play for the professional marketer
- You must have solid reasons for objecting or accepting creative work.

3. Drop the pen

- As far as possible look at the piece as a prospect would – without a pen

4. Overall design

Is the advertisement designed so that your program objectives are likely to be met?

Evaluating creative

Immediacy

- How immediately is the benefit perceived when you look at the piece?
- Does the heading encourage the reader to read on?

Reasons to respond

- Have you given multiple reasons to respond?
- Deciding on a bequest is an emotional decision but prospects want solid reasons to justify their decision

Objections

- Has every reasonable objection been overcome?
- If not, you are forfeiting response

Response

- Have you made it as easy as possible for prospects to respond?
- Is it the message that stands out – not the design?
- Does the design support the brand?

Scanning

- Most people seem to be scanners today, so:
- Have you used bite-sized copy points instead of long paragraphs – especially in emails?

Target audience

- Is the approach right for the target audience?
- Or is it in the corporate speak of your organisation?

Finally a word about creative

- To be creative you have to believe you are creative
- The best fundraisers are not creative for the sake of being creative
- The best creative people look for solutions - not creativity
- Truly creative solutions come from a deep understanding of the target audience

Thank you!

Frank Chamberlin

Action Words

03 9481 1410

frank@actionwords.com.au

www.actionwords.com.au

INSPIRED
FIA's 34th International Fundraising Conference
 MELBOURNE CONVENTION & EXHIBITION CENTRE
 24 - 27 February 2011



Conference Partner



Principal Sponsor



Major Sponsors



Media Supporters



National Corporate Partner



National Principal Sponsor

FIA Corporate Supporter



Awards Sponsors

