

Direct Mail:

*A practical approach
to appeal development*

Nuz Hameed MFIA
Fundraising Manager
Taronga Conservation Society Australia

The Woolshed, Hobart, Tasmania
Friday 27 July 2023

About me....



Peter Mac
Peter MacCallum Cancer Foundation



For the Wild



For the Wild



What on the agenda?

1. Case for support
2. Content
3. Scamp it up
4. Copy & Design
5. Data
6. Post Campaign Analysis



What are your
top challenges
when developing
a direct mail
appeal?





- Start early! At least 4 month in advance:
 - 4 weeks – kick off/content gathering/appeal outline development/reviewing data/creating briefs
 - 2 weeks – copy development
 - 2 weeks getting R1 design
 - 4 weeks – internal approvals /review & finesse
 - 1 week – artwork file prep + proof checks
 - 2-3 weeks for mail house print and production
- Develop a content calendar for appeals for the full year



- Do the same thing each time and expect different results
- Assume your donor will give to you every single time
- Assume the donor will give to you over others
- Try educate the donor on everything your organisation does
- Leave it to the last minute
- Search for case study just before each appeal
- Not use evidence based tactics

Develop
your case
for support

CASE FOR SUPPORT

Case Study

Universal heart strings tugging truth.
Because....

Need

Urgency

Ask

Single minded proposition to give

PACK DEVELOPMENT

Scamps

Wave 1

Letter, lifts, RM, BRE, OE

Wave 2

Letter, lift, RM, BRE, OE

DATA & SEGMENTATION

DATA

- HVD
- Top 100
- Mid Value
- Standard
- Lapsing
- Deeply Lapsed
- Other constituents

Dollar handles

TEST/LEARN/INNOVATE

Testing?

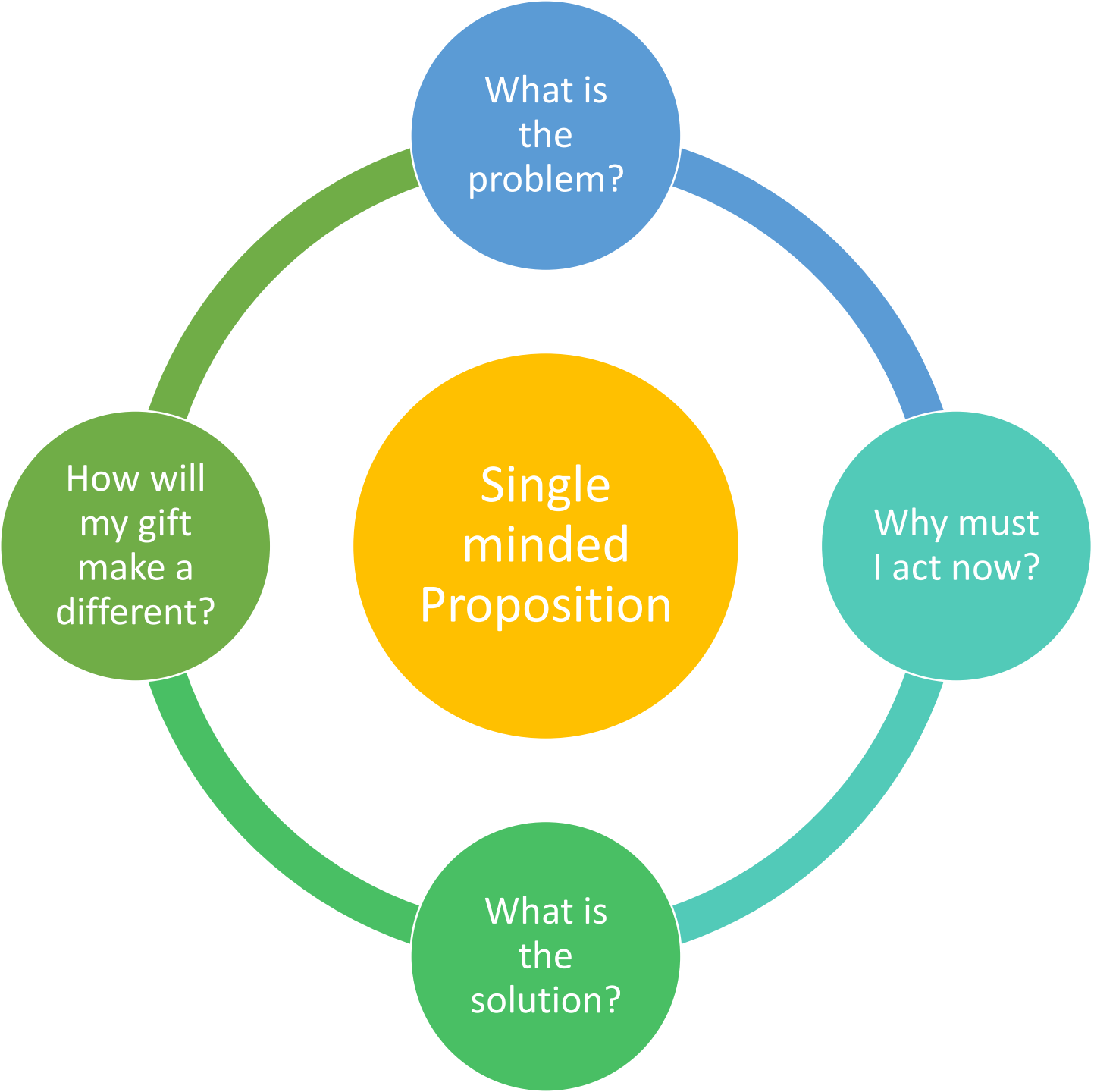
Application of past learnings – what's worked that we can replicate
New learnings

MULTI CHANNEL

Integration
Website,
EDM
SMS
Digital paid and organic

NEXT

Post Campaign Analysis
Receipt letter
Thank you calls
Recognition of support



- **NEED**: What is the problem for donor to solve ?
- **URGENCY**: Why must I act now?
- **ASK**: What is the solution?
- **DOLLAR HANDLES** : Define key ways the donation will help
- **TANGIBILITY**: How will my gift make a difference?
- **PROPOSITION TO GIVE**:
Please will you give <\$\$> today to help <case study> to <Solution> because



**Find your
'Because'
statement**



Because everyone deserves a place to call home.



Because young men in our community should not suffer in silence



Because people with blindness should be able to live with greater independence.

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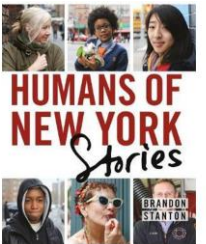
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Gather
content



**"I found him in the trash. I named him Shadow because he followed me everywhere."
(New York City, July 2014)**



Content Calendar

- Prep – create a content calendar with themes that resonate the best and most powerful stories for Tax and Xmas
- Interview and have on file photos and notes.
- If case studies are a challenge, identify the strongest issues/need within your organisation to build a story around.

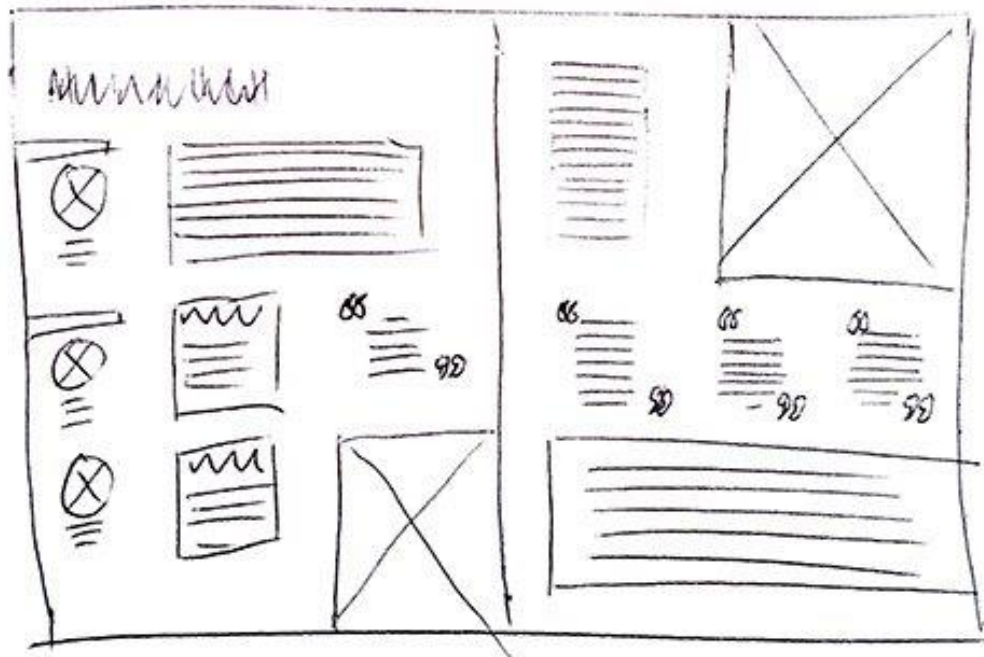
Content Gathering - beneficiary

- Questions that help develop letter + lifts
- Create a story – beginning, middle, end.
- Descriptive comments:
 - How did that make you feel
 - What went through your mind when you heard the news
- Explore the Why, What, How, When, Who
- Find something endearing – gardening, pets, family recipe,
- Try imagine possible lifts and dig deeper for more information during the chat

Photos

- Always have a few on file from the story bank.
- When developing your appeal, either:
 - Design the pack based on images you have on file
 - Design the pack and then capture photos (based on guifr)
- Take photos to show context – indoors, outdoors, activity, before /after
- Do not crop images – show full body/background.
- Photos looking straight at camera are powerful.
- Try capture genuine emotion in photos

SCAMP IT



Let's
scamp
your
appeal



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**Getting your
envelope open**



- The objective is to **get it open.**
- What it is not:
 - A chance to tell the entire story
 - Corporate branding
 - Repurpose past designs
- What it ought to be:
 - Quirky/interesting as I want to know more
 - Curious to know what inside
 - A charity I know and trust and always give to

Envelope considerations

- Who received what type of envelope for maximum impact/ROI
- Size of envelope
- Overprint/Full bleed
- CMYK/ 2 colour
- Postage
- Cost per pack / ROI



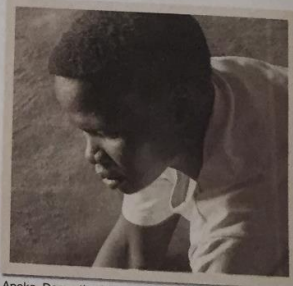
act:onaid

Locked Bag 5515, Camperdown NSW 1450
CM 15500094

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA

“My husband had been violent for a while.
I silently accepted the beatings because
the family was doing well.” - Apoko

6 / 9999999
Mr Sam Sample
99 Sample St
SAMPLETOWN NSW 9999



Apoko. Domestic violence survivor.

© ActionAid

Please will you help women at risk find safety and support?

act:onaid

CM 15500094
Locked Bag 5515, Camperdown NSW 1450

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA

**Please will you help protect
girls before it's too late?**

20000 / 999999
Mr Sam Sample
99 Sample St
SAMPLETOWN NSW 9999



Image courtesy of ActionAid Australia and UN Women

Locked Bag 5515, Camperdown NSW 1450
CM 15500094

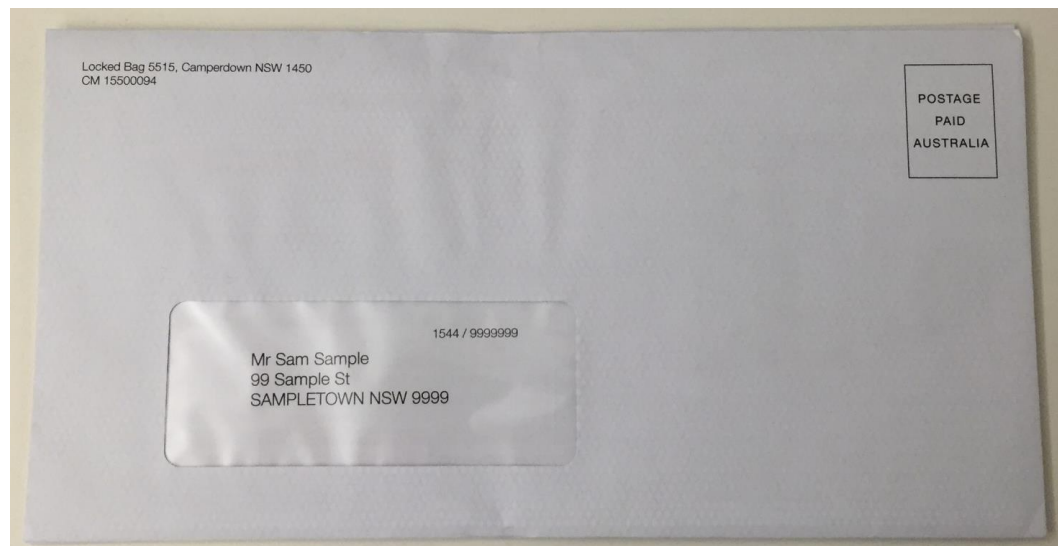
POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA

“I was one of the lucky ones...”

240 / 7002763
Ms Hameed
43/5 Pyrmont Bridge Road
CAMPERDOWN NSW 2050



Mary.
Single mother
and survivor of
domestic violence
-Istolo, Kenya



Copy ideas:

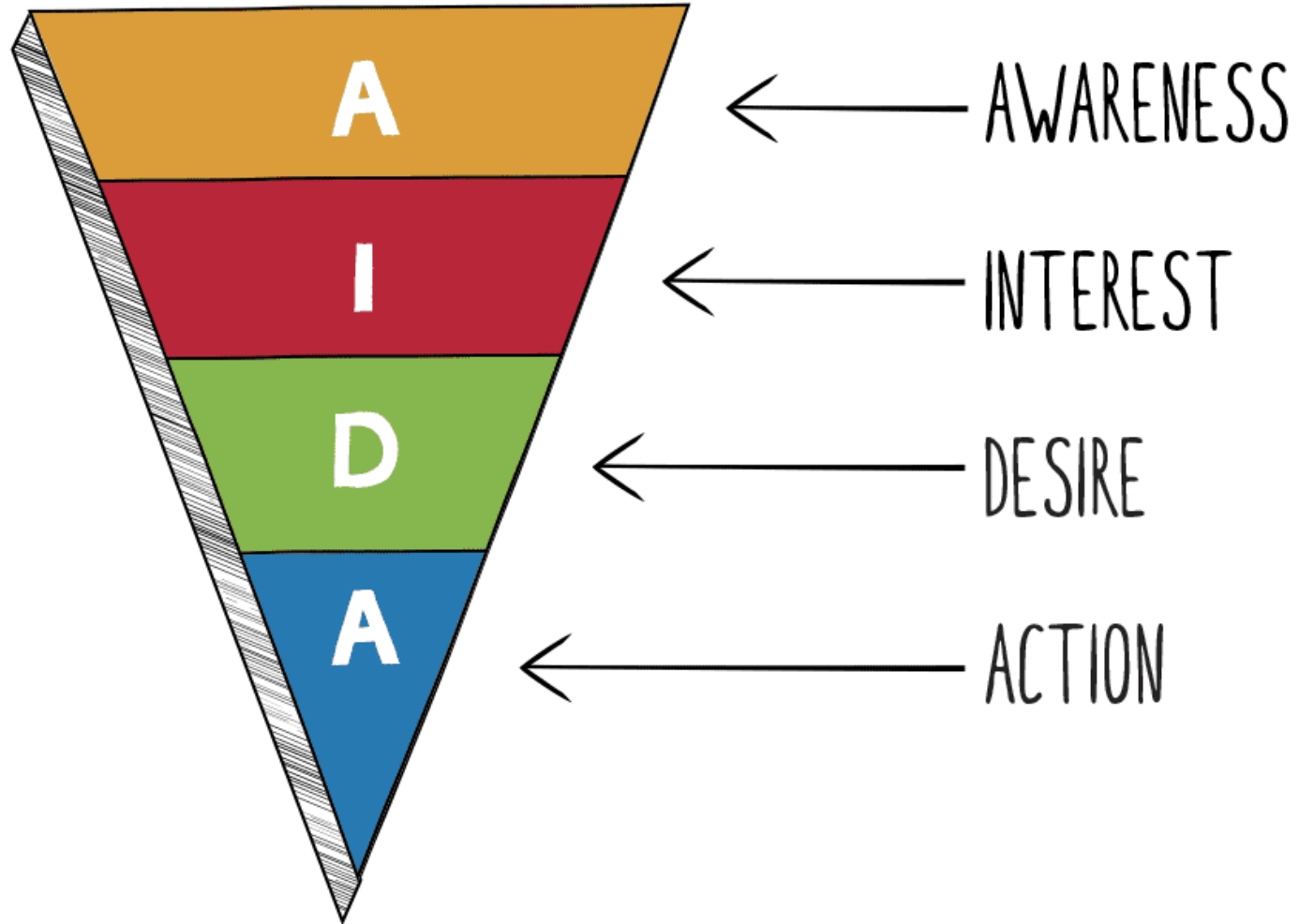
- Ask a question
- Evoke curiosity: important info inside, open this letter to find out more....
- Impactful statement
- Instructions – please open. Please read this letter.
- Urgency: Help feed families during lockdown

BRE

- Add Signatory & title for impact
- Include a message or photo
- Copy
 - to indicate urgency- Please post this before XX date
 - Thanks
 - Quote
 - Bible verse (if religious)

**Write your
Letter**

THE AIDA MODEL



Key elements of a letter

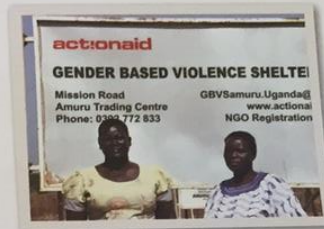
- Johnson Box
- Bulleted Ask
- Salutation
- Opening hook
- Do not – we – on your copy
- Placement of images & captioning
- Signatory

act:onaid

11th May 2015

Mr Sam Sample
99 Sample St
SAMPLETOWN NSW 9999

23 / 9999999



Counsellors Josephine and Santa stand outside Women's Protection Centre in Amuru. I'm asking for your help to ensure domestic violence survivors have access to safety and support.

Ask

Dear Mr Sample,

"My husband had been violent for a while," says 37 year old Apoko .

Apoko would accept the beatings because she felt she had no other choice. When it finally became unbearable she turned to ActionAid's Women's Protection Centre in Amuru, Northern Uganda seeking safety and support.

Problem

Ask

Today the Women's Protection Centres in Uganda are at risk of closing, leaving women facing domestic violence with nowhere else to go to. Mr Sample, this is why I'm writing to ask for your urgent help.

Urgency

Indirect Ask

I want to thank you for your past support to help women fight injustice. Your gift has provided women living in low income countries with vital skills and support.

Indirect Ask

But now, I'm asking you to stand up for women who face violence in their own homes, because domestic abuse is a serious threat to women and girls in Uganda. Please will you make a gift of \$75 to help women facing domestic violence be able to access safety and support at the Women's Protection Centre?

Ask

Solution

Urgency

Domestic violence is a huge issue in Northern Uganda. In rural Northern Uganda, most women have little access to education or money and are unaware of their rights. Apoko, and many women like her, accept the violence as a normal part of their lives. "Sadly it is common to hear stories of abandonment, battery, assault, physical violence and rape from the women coming to the Women's Protection Centres for help," says my colleague Nabwire Joyce, Project Coordinator in Uganda.

Problem

Solution

Two years ago, ActionAid set up the 10 Women's Protection Centres in the villages of Gulu, Lira, Amuru, Nebbi, Pallisa, Kumi, Kween, Mubende, Katakwi and Bwaise in Northern Uganda.

The Centres are safe shelters for women facing violence. Almost all women who come to the Centres are poor and have no skills or income of their own. They come at their own risk, as their husbands may beat them again if they find out. More than a 100 women come to the Centres each day, because they can no longer bear the abuse.

Urgency

Please turn over...



- Quality check the data – get the name right. Never say – Dear Friend.
- Use a hero image with eye contact for page 1 of the letter - if you don't have an image – consider a handwritten note or value statement.
- Pull the reader with a powerful opening statement
- Write as you would speak. Keep the language conversational.
- Johnson box works – but don't over cook it.
- Font type 14. Nothing smaller than 12.
- Indents – they hook the reader in.
- Underline, bold, bullets, handwriting in margins.

- Be bold. Be creative.
- Play with the tone of voice
- Define the voice of your CEO
- Ask with confidence! Its about the impact of your work.
- Avoid charity-speak/jargon.
- Avoid multiple copywriters.
- Avoid puns/humour.

Personalisation

- Avoid simplistic copy variations as it may not get noticed.

e.g.: – Thank you for your kind gift.

Thank you for your extremely generous gift.

- Consider values based opening para or a whole letter (based on segment and potential ROI).

Readability score

- 9th grade level – faster easier to skim read/understand.
- Complexity drives donors away.
- Number of words per sentence
- Number of syllables per word
- Short sentences
- Write as you would speak.

Resources:

The **Flesch-Kincaid** Calculator

Simplify!



Help families like Maria's recover faster from the cyclone through community meetings where people in the village can come together to discuss and decide what families need immediately as well as plan what they would need for their future.

Capacity Building and planning sustainable futures for low income communities.



Signatory

- CEO
- Program Person for further tangibility – Researcher, Field officer
- Beneficiary
- Volunteer
- A cat, dog – animal charities

Lifts



- Avoid repeating content – have a clear purpose and motivation for each lift
- Don't be afraid to explore unique ideas to share the beneficiary story
- Do not use the logo and CTA on every lift
- Do not restrict yourself to corporate colours - break free!
- Brainstorm for alternate options in the absence of photos

How many lifts is too many?

- Depends on your content
- Each lift must have something new/unique to share
- A lift can just be a a small postcard or a copy of a news clipping. Try to include a handwritten note to help tie in all the pieces.
- Test the number of lifts – this should depend on quality/richness and level of engagement of content.
- Have variety within lifts – so someone going through the pack contents may find an interesting lift and then be pulled into the story.

Response

Mech

- Review your form – is it easy to read/fill out
- CTA – is this in keeping with your letter ask
- Images
- QR code
- Are donor details correct?
- Are you capturing email address/phone - pre fill info that you already have on file.

Dollar handles

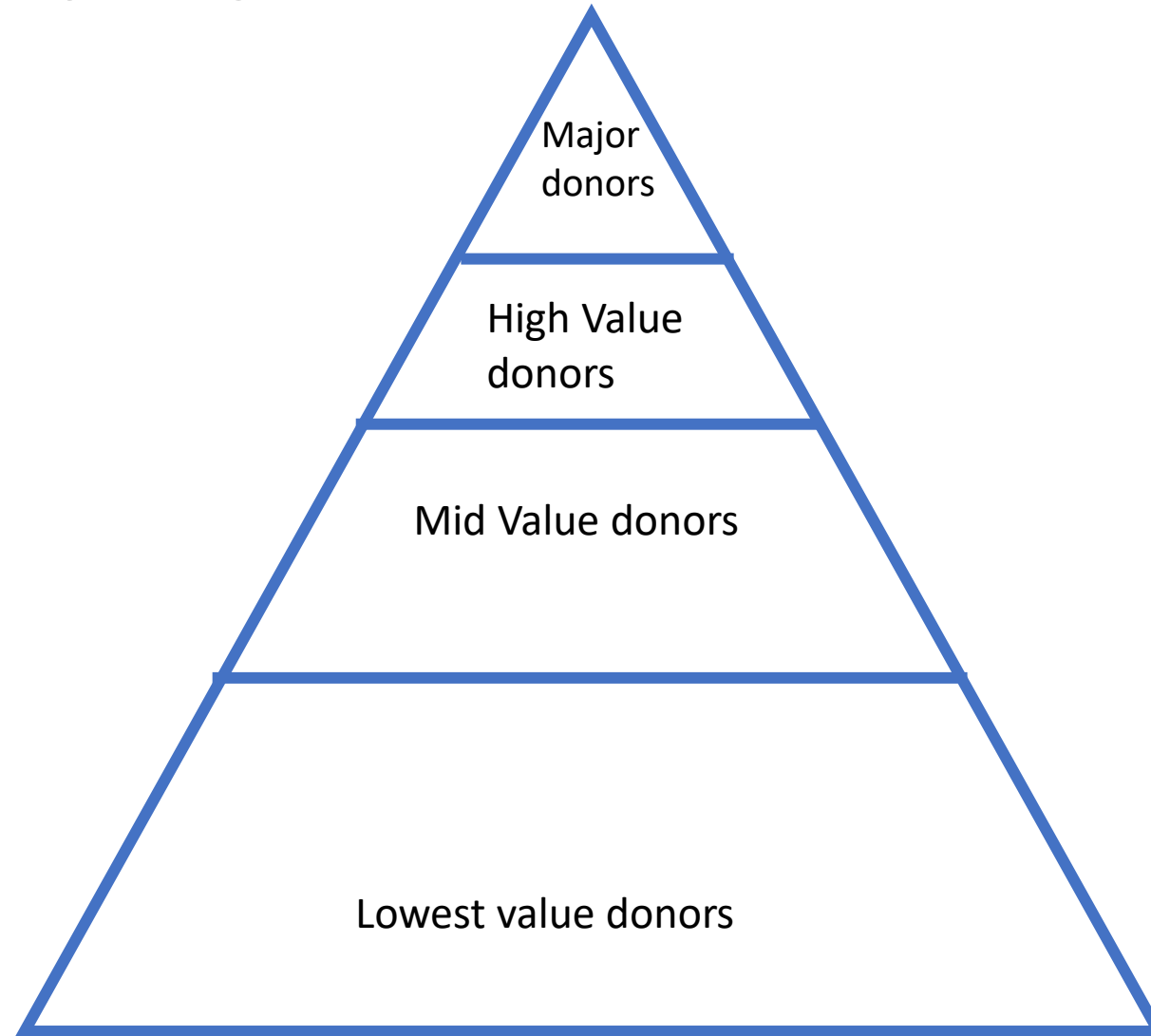
- What are your three dollar handles?
- How much do you ask – and when?
- Check your data base for accuracy



Data &

Segmentation

Donor Pyramid



Pack projections

WAVE 1			COSTS				PROJECTIONS			
Packs	Segment Info	Estimated count	CPP (production)	CPP Postage	Total CPP	Total Cost	Response Rate	Average Gift	Income	ROI
Pack A	Major donor	3	\$ 2.78	\$ 2.10	\$ 4.88	\$ 747	45%	\$ 2,500	\$172,125	230.53
	CEO managed supporters	50								
	Top 100 - contol	100								
Pack B	Mid Value	300	\$ 2.78	\$ 2.10	\$ 4.88	\$ 1,464	25%	\$ 320	\$ 24,000	16.39
Pack C	Standard Test 1	4,000	\$ 1.10	\$ 0.60	\$ 1.70	\$ 6,800	10%	\$ 65	\$ 26,000	3.82
Pack D	Standard Test 2	4,000	\$ 0.81	\$ 0.60	\$ 1.41	\$ 5,640	12%	\$ 85	\$ 40,800	7.23
Pack E	Reactivation Pack	1,800	\$ 0.69	\$ 0.60	\$ 1.29	\$ 2,322	2%	\$ 30	\$ 1,080	0.47
TOTAL		10,253				\$ 16,973			\$264,005	

Testing

- Test to improve RR/ average gift
- Test to increase chances of letter being opened
- Test at off peak shoulder season and apply learnings at Tax & Xmas
- Test 10% of sample file

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THANK YOU!

**Happy Fundraising &
Enjoy the Conference!!**

Nuz Hameed
nuz.hameed@taronga.org.au
040 2699 477

[linkedin.com/in/nuzhameed/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/nuzhameed/)