



Writing an Annual Appeal

Annual appeals are most often sent between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Yet, they can be sent at any time of the year. For nonprofit organizations, finding ways to connect with your donors, providing ways for them to directly support and influence your work, as well as to recruit new donors, an annual appeal is a must.

Multiple appeals may be sent throughout the year to specific segments of your donor base. It is not recommended you send multiple appeals to the same donor throughout the year, they may begin to question your money management skills.

An effective annual appeal is comprised of the following:

- Must have a theme, the same clear message should be heard throughout the letter. The theme may be the same theme you apply to your organization for the year.
- Write it in a conversational tone. You want your donors to feel like they are having a conversation with you, to feel as though they are an active participant in the great work you are doing.
- Focus on the donors, specifically the impact they will make through their donation.
- Elicit emotion through a story. Your letter should be a carefully crafted story, equally filled with emotion, facts, results, and the potential impact the donor can make.
- Make a specific ask. You must ask for a monetary donation.

Once you define these five steps, you must then work to write a letter which is short, one page at most, easy to read and that clearly outlines the needs of your organization and the impact the donor can make, and empowers donors to make online gifts or makes offline gifting easy.

Remember complicated donations will not happen, it is best to offer ways to give immediately, and to focus on the impact your donors make.