

The Extreme Fundraising Ezine, Vol. II Issue 23

Welcome to the November 16th edition of Extreme Fundraising!

Today we'll continue our look at fundraising mistakes by seeing how convoluted our writing can be! As always, all the previous issues in the Extreme Fundraising Ezine are available in the archives at <http://fundraisingcoach.com/ezine.htm>.

I. Fundraising Follies: Say What You Mean

II. Resource Spotlight: Firefox

III. CharityChannel University presents Fundraising 101

I. Fundraising Follies: Say What You Mean

We all know the number one reason people *don't* give money is that they're not asked. So the simple act of asking, no matter how badly, will significantly increase your odds of getting a gift. Having said that, it sure helps to ask in language the donor can understand.

Last month, I received a fundraising letter from a group I'll call "Sywash." The top of the letter said, "Help Meet Sywash's Challenge!" Four paragraphs down, they finally got to the challenge:

"Sywash has been given an incredible opportunity by an anonymous donor to strengthen our financial base with a challenge to our annual fund supporters. As part of this challenge grant, we must secure \$50,000 in new and increased funding from our under \$1,000 givers during the coming months. Once we reach this goal, the donor will award an additional \$100,000 to Sywash."

I had to read that paragraph twice. The paragraph is all about "us" and "our goals"—even in the title of the challenge—a pitfall I talk about in my "Asking for Money" seminar. Moreover, there isn't any end date given for the challenge! It's left in a vague "during the coming months."

Why not make a much more compelling challenge by issuing it in the voice of the anonymous donor?

"Sywash changed my life. I'm so convinced of the importance Sywash's mission, I'm issuing a challenge to help them strengthen their financial base. Here's the challenge: if all of you give \$50,000 more than last year, I'll give \$100,000. Here's the catch: I'll only count gifts from new donors and increased gifts from donors who normally give less than \$1,000. Are you in? Think about it, for every additional \$1 you give, I'll give \$2. But hurry, you have to give before June 30th!"

I love this because donors can speak to each other in a much more direct style. If you do this, you'll obviously need to run it past the donor first but chances are, it is closer to what they want to say. After all, shouldn't a "challenge" be challenging?

The moral of the story: when you're asking for money, be as politely direct as possible. Donors are busy and don't have time to read-between-the-lines to figure out what you're trying to say!

We often we learn more from our mistakes than from our successes. You can email me your funniest mistakes at: marc@fundraisingcoach.com.

II. Resource Spotlight: Firefox

Have you heard the buzz? Internet Explorer finally has a strong rival: Mozilla's Firefox. Reports say it's a lot safer than surfing with IE.

One of the coolest things about this browser is that you can use tabs. All of your sites can be opened at the same time and you don't have to keep flipping from page to page! This makes prospect research so much easier.

You can get Firefox free at: <http://www.mozilla.org/products/firefox/>. It's taken me a little while to get used to it but I love it!

If you have tools that you think should be considered for inclusion, please email me at marc@fundraisingcoach.com

III. CharityChannel University presents Fundraising 101

CharityChannel University asked me to present my popular "Fundraising 101"! If you missed it here in Maine, you can take the class by telephone on December 1st. To check out all the detail, go to <http://charitychannel.com/cu/classes/title/> and look for "Fundraising 101."

To your extreme fundraising success!

Marc

Marc A. Pitman is an executive coach to nonprofit leaders. An expert in helping people identify their natural abilities, he provides his coaching and training clients with down-to-earth information that decreases stress and puts the "fun" back into fundraising!

The Extreme Fundraising Ezine is a free newsletter of The Fundraising Coach. Pass it on!

Articles from the Extreme Fundraising Ezine may be distributed or reproduced as long as the copyright and URL are included.

The Fundraising Coach, 632 Main Street, Lewiston, ME 04240, <http://fundraisingcoach.com>

Copyright © 2004 The Pitman Group. The Fundraising Coach, Creating Donor Evangelists, PYITS, "Put Yourself In Their Shoes," "Fundraising is an extreme sport," and "Extreme Fundraising" are trademarks of The Pitman Group.
