

Meals On Wheels
LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



Communicating with Your Community

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August 24, 2012, 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
2012 MOWAA Annual Conference
Gaylord National Harbor Hotel

Shoring up new volunteers

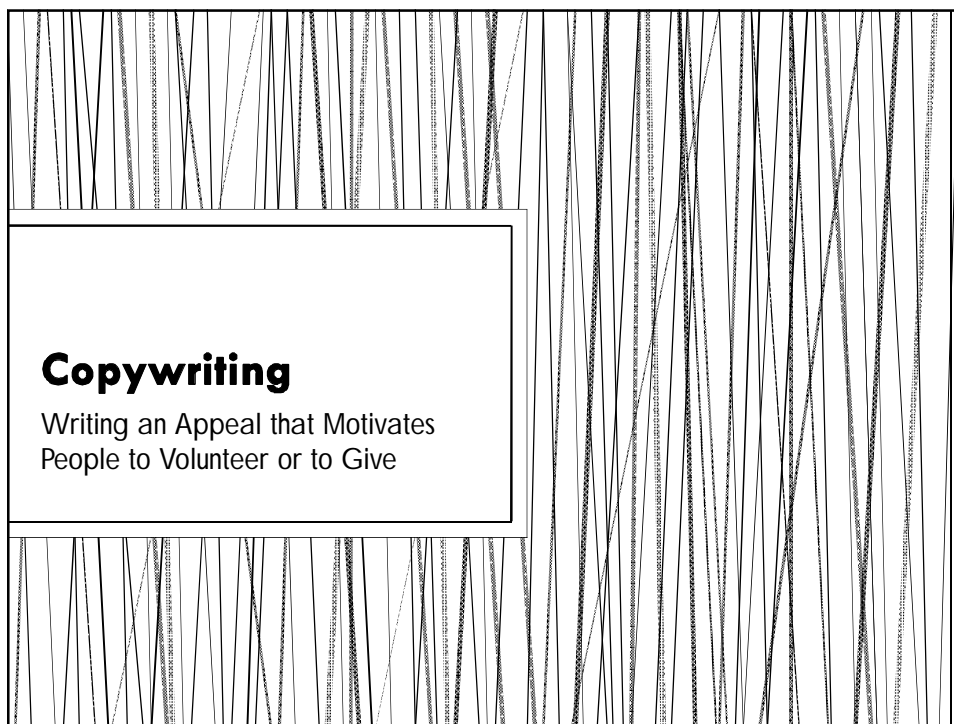
- Seek 'em out
 - Have a sign-up sheet with you all the time
- Sell 'em with information
 - Benefits of volunteering
- Think short term
- Match skills
- Praise 'em like you should

Social Media

- First, create a web site
 - Benefits of volunteering, contact info...
- Facebook
 - All of your friends
 - Hopefully they will reply or recommend
- LinkedIn

What to say

- Appeal to desire to make a difference
 - Statement of need...
 - Rather than saying "Meals on Wheels needs volunteers to deliver food," it is better to say "Many seniors in our community are limited in mobility or can't leave their homes or have few close family members to help them."
 - The statement of need prompts a potential volunteer to think, "Somebody ought to do something about that."
 - Job Description
 - Your message will be more powerful if you describe tasks and activities in terms of the need because not everyone will be able to figure out why such activities are important.
 - Benefits
 - Doing something worthwhile is not the only reason why people volunteer. Your message should show potential volunteers that other needs could be met by doing volunteer work at your organization.
- Appeal to idealism
 - "You are giving your time and effort to a group of folks needing help."



Copywriting
Writing an Appeal that Motivates
People to Volunteer or to Give

Why...

- Are you writing an appeal letter?
 - "Because I want them to respond."

Why...donors give...and volunteers offer their time

- Connection...
- Help others...
- Make a difference in their community..

- If someone doesn't know much about your organization...
 - The above factors won't help.

We need...an EMOTIONAL response.

- ***At the end of the day, people buy with their hearts, not their brains.***
- Give readers emotional connection
 - Motivating factor_____
- Reader should feel singled out
 - Motivating factor_____
- Illustrate consequences for NOT contributing or volunteering
 - Motivating factor_____
- A friendly and engaging letter tone (so they know you)
 - Motivating factor_____
- Mention the recognition they get
 - Motivating factor_____
- Give them something tangible in return
 - Motivating factor_____

Other advice

- Don't go overboard
 - Alienation possibility
 - Not
 - "Without your help, 800 citizens in this area will go hungry in 2012...."
 - Sounds dire and threatening
 - Instead
 - "In 2011, MOW distributed 12,000 fresh meals to people in need. Without the help of volunteers or your donation it means that many of these individuals wouldn't have to choose between paying their heating bill and purchasing food. With your help, we hope to double the number of meals we distribute in 2012."
 - Paints a better picture of need
- Gather testimonials

First impressions

- First paragraph
 - First line
 - Short/sweet, grab reader's attention
 - Motivational language
 - Something you want the reader to remember
 - One-sentence takeaway
 - Write as if you are having a conversation
 - Avoid passive voice
 - Removes conditional phrases, makes appeal more potent
 - Not "Your donation will reduce poverty."
 - Instead "Your donation reduces poverty."
 - Be explicit in your "ask"
 - "By making a tax deductible contribution, you can help."
 - "By volunteering you provide a lonely senior with company, or a healthy meal."

Key message components

- Rule of thumb: Be creative
 - Ask for a specific reason
 - Create a sense of urgency
 - Ask for a specific item/amount
- Never bore your prospect
 - Competing against other appeals
- PS...
 - Because many people skip to the end
 - Captures the essence of letter/final appeal

Online appeals

- You need to establish yourself as credible and informative.
- With your web site, you cannot personally greet every visitor.
 - Keep it simple – be casual
 - Keep the tone light
 - Do spell/grammar/eyeball check
 - Talk to the potential donor.
 - Use the word “you”
 - Limit excessive adjectives and exclamation points
 - Competing against other appeals
 - Always have a “call to action”

Examples

- Guide dogs
- Charitable giving by generations
- Social Media for Annual Appeals

Connecting with Generation X

- Difficult to attract
 - Demanding more information about groups before they make a gift, tend to distrust large organizations, and are more likely than their predecessors to choose volunteer activities that provide challenges and social connections.
 - Disconnected from their communities or are turned off by the cultures and images associated with longstanding charities.
 - More skeptical than their predecessors and less willing to trust bureaucracy.
 - Men spending more time with their kids.
 - More likely to carry student-loan and credit-card debt, factors that make it more difficult for them to give financially, but they can volunteer!

Making Connections

- ***Appeal to idealism***
 - Leery of seeing their time and funds wasted
- Social networking
 - A more mobile generation
 - Looking to connect with people with similar values volunteering is a good way to do that
 - Social events- Many MOW programs organize Special Events to fundraise. Volunteering for and event is a good way to connect.
 - Looking for value
- No single way to give
- Facebook...
 - Pages, articles, photographs
- Text messaging
 - Helping a friend