



Direct Mail is an Investment

“Your gift of \$50 will provide food boxes to 16 families in need. Give the Donor an idea of how their gift will be used, make it believable.”

Sandy Rees, Non-profit fundraising coach

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Direct mail is a type of marketing that makes an offer and solicits a direct response. Direct mail provides you with different ways for donors to get involved, target customers who are not online and attract new donors to your organization. It is a fundraising method that allows a donor to directly respond to your request. Keep in mind it is not effective when used alone or as your primary source of fundraising. Along with personal solicitations, capital campaigns, planned giving and special appeals – including direct mail in your fundraising plan will contribute to your success and ultimately, feed more people. It is not cheap; make sure you invest in a good message and a list of people likely to donate to your organization.

According to Feeding America (the national network of food banks):

- ✓ 87% of all their member food banks have a direct mail program
- ✓ Together, members raise more than 22% of all dollars from direct mail
- ✓ The average percentage of total giving is 21.9%

TIMING

When developing a plan and mail package consider messages that resonate during a particular season. An appeal that focuses on choosing between heating a home and feeding a family works best during the winter months, and an appeal for a summer food program will have the biggest impact toward the end of the school year.

SUCCESSFUL PIECES

Some of Feeding America’s best performing mailings included the following:

- ✓ Mailings featuring a matching grant or grant challenge
- ✓ Fresh food focus, ‘move it or lose it’ theme
- ✓ Human interest appeals that include youth and senior stories
- ✓ Themes that create a sense of urgency and call people to action
- ✓ Highlighting the efficiency of your organization

SEGMENTATION

Segmentation is the key to cost-effectiveness; tailor different messages for donors, non-donors and lapsed donors:

- ✓ Donors – People who have made a gift within the last twelve months
- ✓ Non-Donors – An individual that has never made a gift
- ✓ Lapsed Donors – People who have not made a gift in the last thirteen plus months

BEST PRACTICES

- ✓ Make sure your 'ask' is clearly stated. Know your audience. Your language should be simple, to the point and organized.
- ✓ Your letter should grab the reader's attention immediately. Research has shown that when a donor opens your mail package, you have limited time to get their interest.
- ✓ Keep a consistent look for the mailings you send each year. If you start to notice a decrease in responses, try testing different envelopes to different audiences (Donor, Non-Donor or Lapsed Donor).
- ✓ Try different messages in your letter, test different images in the same campaign.
- ✓ Always follow-up. Donors are interested in how their money is being used. This keeps your supporters involved and up-to-date on the good work your organization is doing which will build a relationship over time.

COMPONENTS

There are many different pieces to a mailing. Here are some basics that mail campaigns use:

Outer Envelope:	Envelope addressed to the potential donor
Letter:	One page letter, personally addressed to the potential donor
Reply Device:	A coupon, survey, invitation to participate – a way for donors to respond
Donor Insert:	An insert about your organization that tells your story
Reply Envelope:	Return envelope addressed to your organization

Feeding America, Resource Development, Jonathan Webb

RESOURCES

How to choose a mailing list for a fundraising letter

<http://ezinearticles.com/?How-to-Choose-a-Mailing-List-For-a-Fundraising-Letter&id=2483398>

Tips for Nonprofit Direct Mail Campaigns

<http://ezinearticles.com/?5-Top-Tips-For-Nonprofit-Direct-Mail-Success&id=2182604>

Reference for Business: Direct mail

<http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/encyclopedia/Dev-Eco/Direct-Mail.html#ixzz0oUYa3bJW>

Sample Donor Insert for Food Bank (#4):

<http://chooseflat6.com/Flat6%20Copy%20Writing%20Samples.pdf>

The Alaska Food Coalition is here to help. Copies of Alaska Food Coalition White Papers are available online: <http://www.alaskafood.org/whitepapers.shtml> For additional information, contact Vanessa Salinas, Alaska Food Coalition Manager: afc@foodbankofalaska.org

Next Month:

**Operations
Management -
FIFO Expanded**

**STRENGTHENING
ALASKA'S ANTI-HUNGER
NETWORK**