

Top 10 Pet Peeves of Donors Where Small Nonprofits Go Wrong in Asking for Money

1. **Mailings**
 - a. Incorrectly Spelled Names
 - b. Improper use of name, gender or title (or acknowledging both spouses or household adults in a mailing)
 - c. Cheap “free” items (note pads, pens, etc.) that indicate a waste of resources
 - d. “Faux” personalization (Dear Sue, if you don’t actually know Sue)
 - e. Too Many mailings
 - f. Too much “stuff” in the mailings
 - g. Pre-printed donation amounts on cards
 - h. Inability to Opt Out of future mailings
 - i. Mailing demonstrate too much time (and money) spent on resources, not enough on mission
2. **“Asks”**
 - a. “Guilt” Asks - Sending cards or mailing labels so the donor will feel guilty and “buy” them from you with a donation.
 - b. Generic (no personalization) Asks
 - c. Failure to make a case - Why do you want the Donor’s money?
 - d. Failure to Ask (the un-asked “Ask”)
 - e. Too many “Asks”
3. **Phone Calls**
 - a. Universally despised for an ASK
 - b. Missed for a “Thank You”
 - c. Impersonal (student, volunteer that doesn’t know the donor)
 - d. NEVER use a professional fund raising service
 - e. NEVER use a computer dialer (illegal in Indiana)
4. **Donation follow up**
 - a. Lack of Thank you note
 - b. Late Thank You note
 - c. Additional “Ask” in the Thank You note
 - d. Incorrect names, use of gender, title, etc. in Thank You note
 - e. Impersonal Thank You note
5. **Nonprofit Information**
 - a. Lack of meaningful financial information
 - b. Lack of timely activity information
 - c. Lack of acknowledgment of donors in newsletters, etc.
 - d. Nonprofit’s Lack of information or knowledge about the mission
6. **Donor Information**
 - a. Asking too many questions (collecting personal information)
 - b. Selling (or otherwise sharing) Donor personal information
 - c. No policy to protect Donor Privacy
7. **Internet Contact**
 - a. Use of Spam
 - b. Too many emails with not enough information (slightly less than Spam)
 - c. Sharing Donor email address
8. **Board of Directors**
 - a. Invisible Board (who’s running the show?)
 - b. Institutional Board (No new faces)
 - c. Lack of Engagement (Board not involved in fund raising)
9. **Facilities**
 - a. Failure to take care of property (“too poor” is not an excuse)
 - b. Conspicuous consumption of resources (appearing “too rich”)
10. **Relationships** – Failure to abide by the Top 10 Ways to Keep Donors!

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