

FIELD NOTES



PREPARING FOR THE END

It's the time of year when bins of school supplies turn into Batman capes and butterfly wings. If you listen closely, you can hear the faint jingle of sleigh bells just around the corner.

For fund raisers, the last quarter of the year is **go time**. With the proper planning and a steady strategy, it can be the most wonderful time of the year.

On average, charities receive
41%
of their annual contributions in
the last few weeks of the year.

IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU

So you've had a good year and done wonderful things in your organization? Great! While you want to share the successes and impact with your donors in your year-end communication, don't make it all about you. Your year-end appeal should not read like your mom's Christmas brag letter. It's your opportunity to acknowledge that because of the generosity of their gift, you are able to make a difference. Their dollars help you make lasting change in the community.

According to Mobile Cause, people donate to:

- Be happier by helping others.
- Feel important by making a difference.

- Be connected with something good.
- Take advantage of tax deductions.

So...make them happy, make them feel important, connect them to something good: your organization. And of course give them an opportunity to take advantage of tax donations (to you!).

MAKE IT MEMORABLE

Your donors and prospects are exposed to more than 5,000 marketing messages each day. The holiday season is not-so-silent and with this being an election year, it's pretty noisy out there.



Your year-end communications need to stand out, be memorable and move your donors and prospects to want to learn more and support you. What moves people?

- **Tell a story.** A powerful story can create a personal and emotional connection between your donor and the people who have been helped thanks to their generosity.
- **Share a picture.** A smiling face and meaningful caption of

someone who has been helped by your organization is worth 1,000 words. And who has time to read all those words?

- **Translate the dollars in your gap to goal into experiences or services.** Instead of "we have \$10,000 yet to raise to meet our goal" try something like "with your help, 25 more children will receive a gift under what would otherwise be an empty Christmas tree this year."
- **Encourage donors to give the gift of generosity.** 79% of people would rather have a charitable donation made in their honor than receive a gift (that they wouldn't use). Socks and scented candles are nice, but the good feeling of making an impact lasts forever.
- **Include a simple, specific and clear call-to-action.** You know the work you are doing is making a difference and that their support will allow you to do more. Ask them to go on-line or mail in a check to help today. Use words like "give" or "donate" and tell them how they can do so "today."

To learn more year-end strategies for fundraising success, read and share these blogs at donorbydesign.com (click on the link or search Year-End Giving).

