

Four Essential Ingredients for an Effective Newsletter

When creating planned giving newsletters, there is a basic formula that has proven time and time again to be successful for our clients. Here are four essential ingredients to creating an effective newsletter:

1. Tell a story.

Who doesn't love to read a good story? Using donor stories in your newsletter can accomplish several things: they honor the donor(s) who have made you a part of their legacy, and they can inspire others to make similar gifts. Donor stories can also be a simple way to explain a more complex planned gift or introduce a method of giving that can be further explained elsewhere in the newsletter.

2. The call to action

How did the donor give to your organization? Did they name your organization a beneficiary of their IRA? A donor advised fund? Appreciated securities? Include information on the type of gift or way of giving your donor chose to support your organization.

3. Say "cheese."

Your donors want to know who they are talking to on the phone or emailing with. Having your picture in the newsletter creates an element of comfort and trust, especially if meeting face-to-face isn't an option. A professional-looking photo is most effective, although, depending on your mission, there is plenty of room for creativity. Just make sure the photo reflects the story of your organization.

4. Show your work.

Use photos, captions and graphics to show how planned gifts help carry out your mission. Every square inch of the planned giving newsletter is valuable real estate, and using effective mission pictures and captions is a great way to highlight what's going on at your organization and, most importantly, convey ways planned gifts have benefitted you in the past and can help in the future.

We've found that following this formula—and adding your own creativity at the right time and in the right way—will result in a final piece you and your organization will be proud of, your donors will want to read and, most importantly, they will find helpful as they are considering their estate and financial plans and possibly how to include your organization in them.

A well-written newsletter is an important component of donor engagement. It is an essential part of your overall stewardship strategy, along with digital communications, video storytelling, mobile messaging and other ways of establishing and maintaining contact with your donors.

Sharpe's Gift Planning Newsletters are written and designed by gift planning experts who know how to raise large gifts. [Click here](#) to learn more.