

# How To Write An Annual Fundraising Appeal Letter

What kind of letter am I going to write today...



## Acquisition

The reader is a **stranger**.



## Renewal

The reader is an **acquaintance**.

**.5%**

Response rate of

**40-70%**

A few questions your letter should answer...

1. Who are you?
2. What do you want?
3. Why should I trust you?
4. Why do you matter?
5. How do you relate to me?
6. What's the rush?

1. What did you do with my prior gift?
2. Are you grateful?
3. What do you want now?
4. Do you have proof?
5. Again: Who are you?
6. What's the rush?

## Personalization helps!

1. The person's name
2. The pronouns "you" and "I"
3. An audience attribute: "As a parent, you know..."
4. Geography: "As a resident of..."
5. Hand-written touches

## Don't forget to ASK!

Logo

[ Optional Important Message ]

Dear Ms. Smith,

If you're like me, the sight of kids running around on stage in silly costumes makes you giggle with delight.

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Sincerely,  
Ms. Sincerely Champion, ED

PS: I have more to say here.

ASK

ASK

ASK

## Know your **S**ingle **M**ost **I** mportant **T**hing

"Focus on the SMIT (single most important thing) you want to tell someone, right now. Ideally focused on a story about an individual."

- Jonathon Graspas

## ✓ Your Letter Checklist

- Is the letter a **conversation** or a **brochure**?
- Is the opening sentence **short**?
- Is it **personal** ("you" and "I")?
- Have I said **why** I'm here? ("I'm writing to you today because...")
- Does it make a **promise**?
- Is there **urgency**?
- Are there at least **3 asks**?
- Does it **entertain** (tell a story, offer news)?
- Is the donor the **hero**?

## Reply Device:

"The **reply device**: the purpose is to provide a practical way for the donor to post the gift. Nothing else."

- Jerry Huntsinger

**YES! I'M A TRUE BELIEVER!**

- I want to buy \_\_\_\_\_ days of True Believer's future at \$20. TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_
- I want to support a need for \$\_\_\_\_\_
- I'm so excited I'd like to support an anniversary all year at \$\_\_\_\_\_
- I'm such a True Believer that I want a whole month at \$\_\_\_\_\_
- Details I'd like to put my name on \_\_\_\_\_ (C./ J. 2003 published dates here) \_\_\_\_\_
- I'd like to honor \_\_\_\_\_ (please contact me to send my form a note) \_\_\_\_\_
- YES I'm a True Believer but I can't buy a full day. Please accept my donation of \_\_\_\_\_ dollars.
- YES I'm a True Believer and I would like to make monthly payments of \_\_\_\_\_

**YOUR INFO**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**WAYS TO PAY**

- Check payable to True Believer.
- Credit card (MC, VISA, AMEX, Discover)
- Name our special event \_\_\_\_\_
- Number \_\_\_\_\_
- Security Code \_\_\_\_\_
- VISA and MasterCard require 3-digits online.

May we publish your name in our donor list?

Yes  No

Donor-centric reminder on a reply device:

"Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary is solely supported by public contributions. Your involvement is critical to our work of drastically improving the standard of care for homeless pets. Thank you for being a part of this important mission."



**Tom Ahern**  
Blooming Communications  
Head Coach

Author of four books, Tom Ahern is considered one of the world's top authorities on donor communications.



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