

# Newsletter Strategies that Will Open Donors' Hearts & Wallets

Is your newsletter bringing in support – or turning people off? Use these do's and don'ts to make the most of this crucial communication tool.

By Gail Perry

**Y**our newsletter may be a total waste of your time. Even worse, it may be hurting you and your cause. Why? Because it's boring!

It may not be boring to you, but it sure may be boring to the people you hope will read it. And boring newsletters are a turn-off to donors.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if your newsletter actually helped raise money? Here are some do's and don'ts that will help turn your newsletter into a fundraising tool.

**1. Don't make it too long.** Do make it short and sweet. (Shorter is much, much better.) People are much more likely to review – and maybe even read – short newsletters.

**2. Don't be confused about your newsletter's true purpose.** Its purpose should be to make your friends, supporters, and donors feel happy about the wonderful changes they're making in the world. If you can get everybody to agree on the objective of the dang newsletter, then you can create something worth your time and energy to put together.

**3. Don't talk about your staff,** your building, your board members, or your organization. Do talk about what donors are accomplishing with their money.

**4. Don't use the pronoun "we."** Use the pronoun "you." It's not about you and your wonderful organization. It's about the reader.



**5. Don't put in too much copy.** Cut out 2/3 of your text and add pictures instead. Telling your story via pictures is more powerful.

**6. Don't use pictures with too many people.** Instead, use closeups of people. Too much detail in a small photograph shows up as a jumble. Photos that show people's facial expressions are engaging and appealing.

**7. Don't make your copy too dense.** Do add tons of white space, headlines, and bold type. People will skim the newsletter – not read it word for word. If it looks too dense, people will avoid it altogether.

**8. Don't include lengthy, complex articles.** Engage readers with articles they can skim. If you want people to comprehend what's on the page, you have to make it easily, quickly digestible.

**9. Don't use one color.** Include at least two colors. More color makes it livelier and more interesting.

**10. Don't send a pdf of your newsletter** to your e-mail list. Reformat it for online reading. Most print layout isn't properly formatted to read online; it's very awkward to read on a computer. You want to make your newsletter as easy and comfortable as possible for people to read. That's the way to keep them happy. **S**

Gail Perry, MBA, CFRE, is the best-selling author of *Fired-Up Fundraising: Turn Board Passion into Action*. This article is adapted from her blog at [gailperry.com](http://gailperry.com).



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