



# Fundraising Letters for Every Occasion

BY TERRENCE FERNSLER

*Here are examples of every fundraising letter you ever thought of writing—and more.*

## ***The Complete Book of Model Fundraising Letters***

*By Roland Kuniholm. Hardcover, 378 pages, ISBN #0133342026, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall (800-947-7700).*

**T**his guide truly is a complete book of model fundraising letters. It includes letters for finding new donors, seeking repeat gifts, acquiring monthly donors, and enticing lapsed donors back into your fold. In addition, the book describes tools that few direct marketers think about, such as referral letters. It also gives tips on getting people to read your letters, deciding how much money to ask for, and keeping your costs down.

Kuniholm knows that fundraising is largely building relationships with supporters, and makes sure the reader knows it, too. Perceptively, he includes samples of acknowledgment letters and responses to complaints—important parts of that relationship-building. Keep in touch with your contributors, he writes, and they will keep in touch with you. He offers a myriad of legitimate ways to do so.

Kuniholm gives examples for so many situations that you will easily find some which apply to your organization.

He even provides samples of telemarketing scripts, since telemarketing and direct mail work so well together and are often used hand-in-hand.

There is much to know about direct mail, and Kuniholm has covered it all. Like most direct marketers, he fails to state directly that major donors are best left to personal visits, though he does imply it when reviewing major-donor letters. There is no hedging, however, when he describes *when* to write each category of letters. He gets right to the point, concisely. When explaining *how* to write each type of letter, he is just as brief, sometimes avoiding discussion altogether and just offering examples.

There are three things to think about when preparing a fundraising letter: getting recipients to read it, explaining why they will want to contribute, and making it easy for them to do so. In this book, Kuniholm focuses on the last two points. His purpose is to help you choose words that will inspire people to support your cause. He doesn't format his model letters—a strategy which emphasizes the importance of what's written over how it looks. Your letter's format may encourage people to open and read it, but your words convey what your organization is and does. Without the right words, people won't give, and even the fanciest package and design is wasted. His approach underscores this

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vital lesson much more clearly than does any other fundraising-letter book.

Caution: Do not try to design response devices, reply envelopes, teaser copy, or motivational pieces from this book alone. Kuniholm includes that information to show that there's more to direct-mail fundraising than putting words on a page. But that's not his focus here.

This guidebook works best for people who already have some experience in preparing direct-mail packages. It serves as an inspiring source of ideas for letters and as a brief review for preparing the other pieces of the package. You'll want this volume on your shelf because it's an excellent overview; it doesn't

go into unnecessary detail of why to do this or that. You already know why. If you don't, you need a different publication, or a consultant. This book gives well-worded, easily-adapted models to plug into your fundraising packages. ■

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