

## How to make the most of Christmas fundraising opportunities

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What's your take on Christmas mailings? Do you want to generate more income from them? Or have you given up on Christmas appeals because you think that people will be swamped with mailings from other charities?

Christmas mailings can be profitable if you conduct and execute them well. Here are some ideas to help you improve their effectiveness and raise more money for your cause:

- **Mail something to everyone in your active donor file.** The Christmas mailing is a great opportunity to connect with everyone - your current donors, lapsed or regained ones and with prospects too. In other words, this should be one of your largest mailings of the year.
- **Develop a 'sizzling' cause concept and a great appeal package.** This is not an ordinary mailing. This is the time to spend creative energy and money on developing an inspired 'ask' and producing a mailing package that will stand out from the crowd.
- **Segmentation, segmentation and more segmentation.** Successful Christmas mailings call for strong segmentation. Although you might use the same cause concept for different segments of your supporter file you should tailor *'the ask'* based on the relationship that donor group has with your charity. (e.g. *prospect, lapsed donor, multi-year donor, etc*)
- **Create a highly personalised package for major donors.** The letter should be personalised and even have a hand written PS by your CEO. Use real stamps for this group of donors so that your letter is noticed when the donor sorts out their mail.
- **Use various channels to get your Christmas message out.** If your Christmas appeal goes out before your newsletter make sure you mention the appeal in the newsletter. Use similar graphics and a basic

ask as an advert in your newsletter. Also, make sure you send out an e-mail appeal as well as posting small adverts about your appeal in your charity's *facebook* page or other online pages and forums.

You might want to create a special page on your website that is focused on your Christmas appeal and drive traffic to that page using other social media tools available.

### **What should you say in your Christmas appeals?**

- **Say Thank You.** Thank your faithful and committed supporters for their past contributions. Share a story or other feedback to show them how their gifts have made a difference.
- **Invite support.** Invite your donors or prospects to make a special Christmas gift before the end of the year. Present a project or initiative that requires funding.
- **Give more feedback on past successes.** Show donors how people/ communities, etc have benefited from donors' gifts in the past year.
- **Share your plans for the coming year.** Tell donors about some of the initiatives/ projects you will be involved in the coming year. Invite them to support these initiatives now so you can begin the year in a positive way.
- **Include appropriate statements about tax benefits.** Every country has different laws about tax benefits to charity donors. If it is appropriate you should always include a statement about tax benefits to donors when they give before the end of the financial year.