
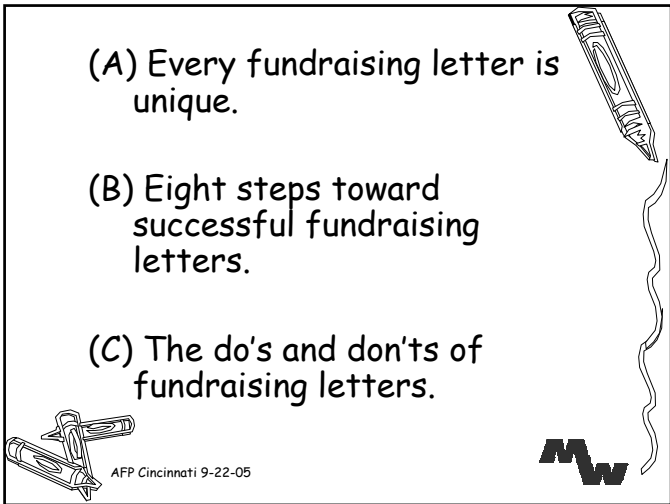



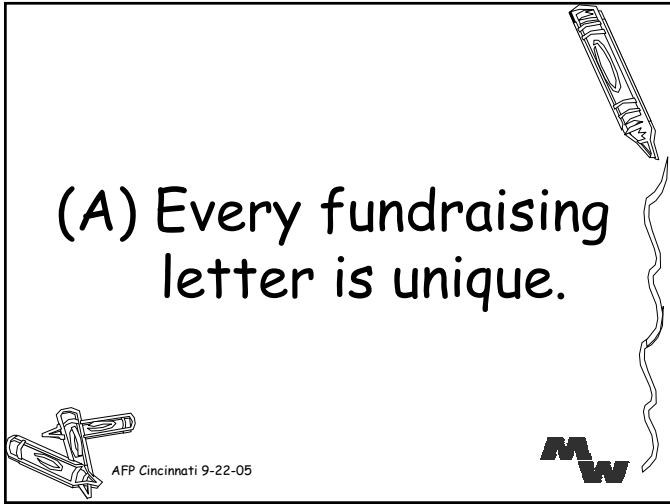
How to Write Successful Fundraising Letters
 Presented by Mal Warwick
 AFP Greater Cincinnati Fundraising Conference
 September 22, 2005
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- (A) Every fundraising letter is unique.
- (B) Eight steps toward successful fundraising letters.
- (C) The do's and don'ts of fundraising letters.



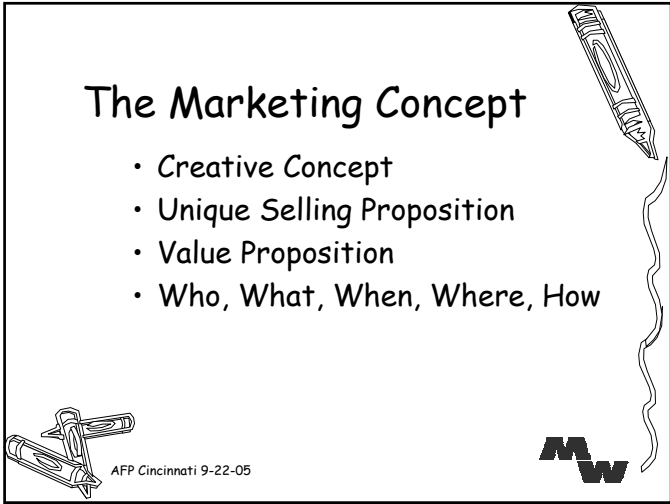
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- (A) Every fundraising letter is unique.




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The Marketing Concept

- Creative Concept
- Unique Selling Proposition
- Value Proposition
- Who, What, When, Where, How



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The Marketing Concept

- Who's writing to me?
- How much money do they want?
- Why do they want it?
- Why should I care about that?
- What will they do with my money?
- What will I get in return?
- Why should I give them money right now?



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The Marketing Concept

- Answers many of the reader's unspoken questions
- Connects the letter-signer with the reader
- Defines clearly what the signer wants, and why
- Lays out the benefits for doing what the signer wants



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The Marketing Concept varies by type of appeal

- Donor or membership acquisition
- Membership renewal
- Special appeals
- High-dollar mailings
- Monthly giving invitations



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In membership acquisition

"When you join [Fill-in-the-blank] with a tax-deductible gift of \$30 or more, you will add your voice to thousands of others in the growing movement to end hunger in America. And we'll send you, FREE, a handy tote-bag. More important, you'll gain great personal satisfaction, because you're doing something effective to end the scourge of hunger in our society."



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In membership renewal

"If you renew your membership in [Fill-in-the-blank] within the next 30 days, you will help sustain our movement to end hunger in America. We'll continue your newsletter without interruption, and we'll send you a colorful 16-month calendar depicting the progress we've made in our crusade against hunger."



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In a special appeal

"Your special, tax-deductible gift will enable [Fill-in-the-blank] to launch a dramatic media campaign about childhood hunger in America—and every dollar you give will be matched, dollar for dollar, by a generous anonymous donor."



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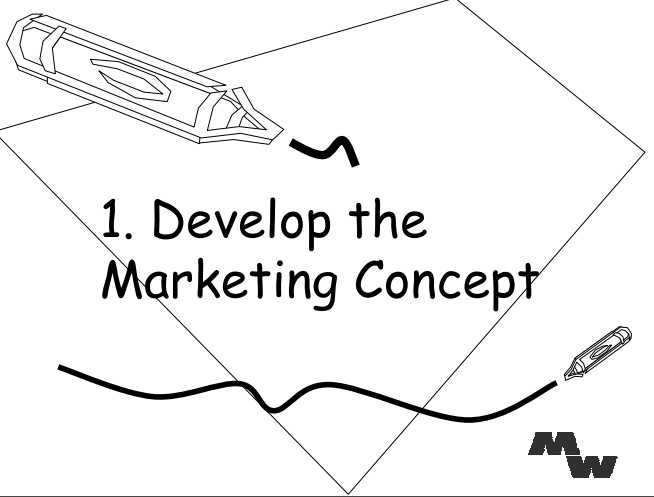
(B) Eight Steps Toward Successful Fundraising Letters



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1. Develop the
Marketing Concept




How?

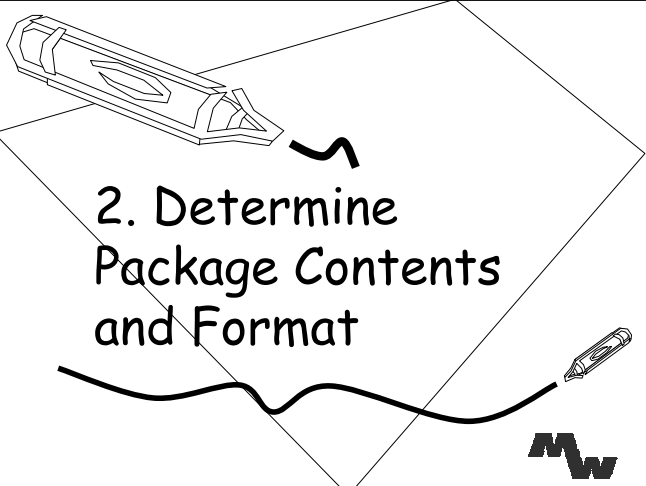


- a) Think
- b) Read
- c) Ask questions
- d) Think
- e) Draft
- f) Think again
- g) Revise

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2. Determine Package Contents and Format






Considerations

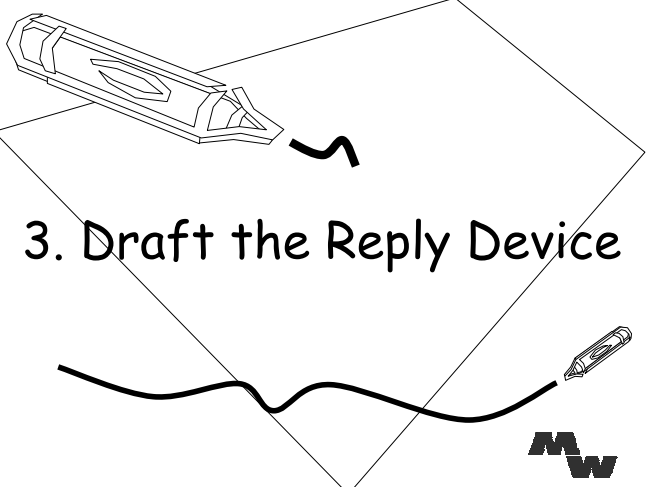


- Budget
- Technology
- Format
- Size & shape
- Components
- Graphics
- Length of copy

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3. Draft the Reply Device

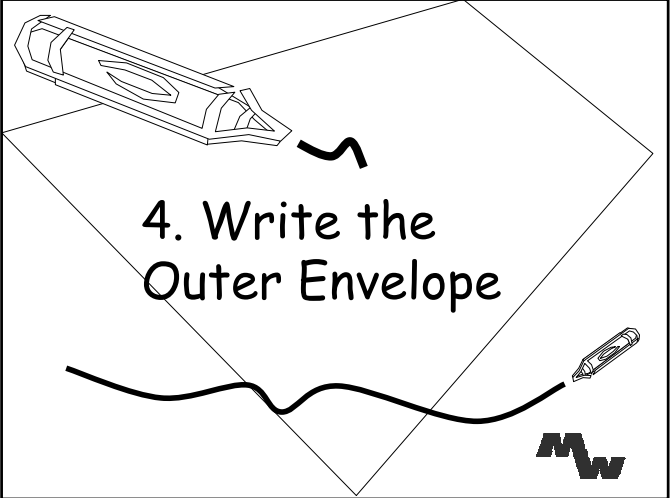




The reply device . . .

- Affirms the donor's decision
- Restates the marketing concept
- Details the benefits
- Guides gift processing



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4. Write the Outer Envelope

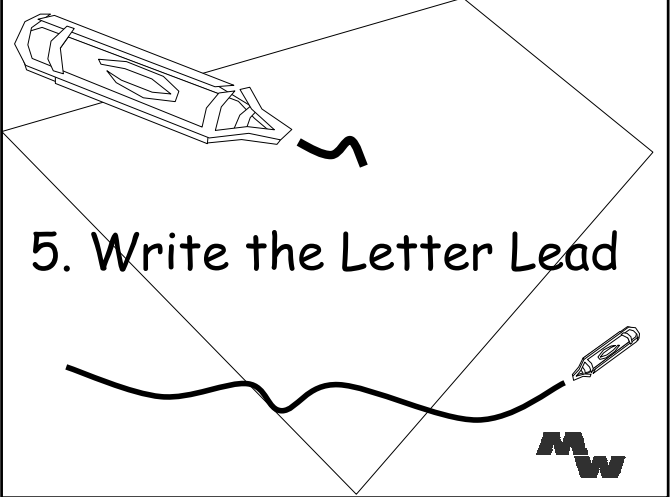
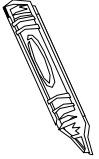


Decisions

- Postage format?
- Logo, name, and address?
- Closed-face or window?
- Teaser?
- Graphic images?
- Front & back copy?



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5. Write the Letter Lead



The lead may . . .

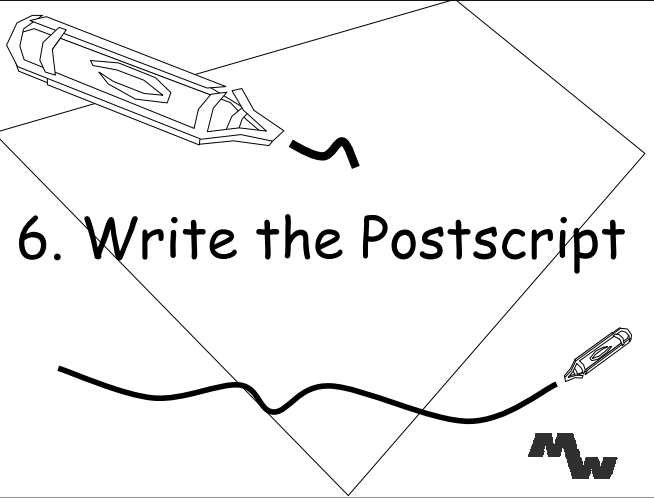
- Tell a story
- Continue the teaser
- Ask a question
- Challenge the reader
- Make the offer
- Establish relationship with the signer



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6. Write the Postscript



Prof. Vögele says . . .

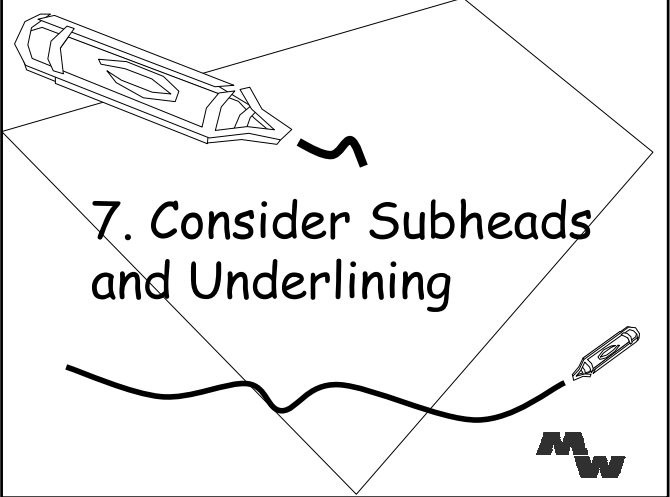
- 90% read the P.S. first
- The effective lead
- Don't waste it!
- Involve the reader



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7. Consider Subheads and Underlining



Prof. Vögele's "Short Dialog"

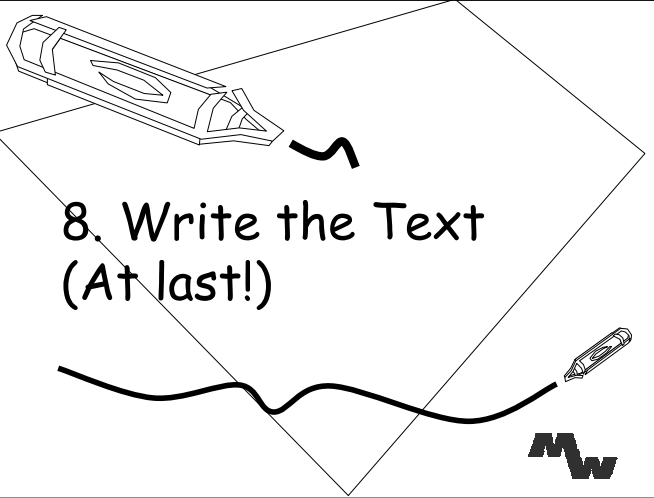
- Answer readers' "unspoken questions"
- Highlight benefits
- Show the key points of the story
- Guide the casual reader



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8. Write the Text (At last!)



(That's the easy part.)



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(C) The do's and don'ts of fundraising letters



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1. Use "I" and "You" (but mostly "You").

- Use "you" most frequently in your letters.
- A letter from one individual to another.
- Not a press release, position paper, or brochure.
- "You" and "I" provide "human interest."
- "Dear Friend," not "Dear Friends."
- Abolish the plural "you" & the royal "we!"



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2. Appeal on the basis of benefits, not needs.

- Donors give because they get in return.
- Write about benefits: lives saved, human dignity gained, larger causes served.
- Offering *tangible* benefits? Don't be shy!
- Emergency? Send an emergency appeal!
- Not an emergency? Don't cry wolf!



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3. Ask for money, not for "support."

- The "Ask" is not an afterthought.
- The "Ask" is your *reason* for writing.
- Repeat the Ask several times in the letter AND on the reply device.
- Maybe even lead with the Ask.
- Mailing a survey to sign? Sell it!
- But don't forget to Ask!



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4. Write a package, not a letter.

- All elements must work as a *whole*.
- Each component reflects the Marketing Concept
- Repeat the same themes, symbols, colors, typefaces



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5. Write in casual style.

- Use compact, powerful words. Short, punchy sentences.
- Favor words that convey emotions.
- Avoid foreign phrases or big words.
- Minimize use of qualifiers.
- Don't use abbreviations or acronyms.
- Good writing is always easy to read.



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6. Format your letter for easy reading.

- Leave "white space." The eye needs rest.
- Indent every paragraph.
- No paragraphs more than seven lines long.
- Vary paragraph length.
- Use bullets and indented paragraphs.
- Try subheads in long letters.
- Underline sparingly.



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7. Give your readers a reason to send money NOW.

- Create urgency.
- Look for reasons: a deadline, an election date, a fleeting opportunity.
- Or create your own reason.
- There is *always* a reason to send a gift now.



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8. Write as long a letter as you need to make the case.

- Not everyone reads every word, but some do. Others scan letters.
- Use every strong argument you can devise.
- That may mean a very long letter.
- Don't worry about boring your readers.
- Simple case? Write a **SHORT** letter.
- "Your dues are due" requires few words.



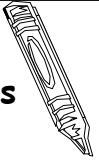

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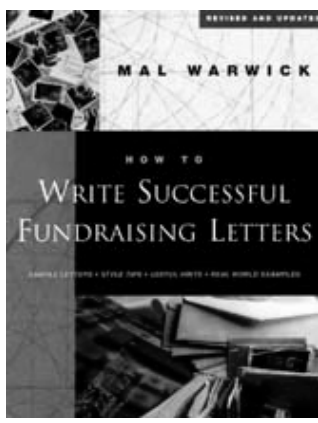


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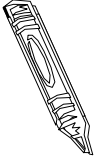





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That's all, folks!

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