

THE ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT OF EFFECTIVE
FUND-RAISING LETTERS AS PERCEIVED BY
PROFESSIONALS AND SELECTED
RECIPIENTS

By

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PREFACE

Of the many techniques involved in fund raising, the letter is the most fascinating to me. Fund raisers must be doing something right in their writing the appeal letter. Individual donations to charity continue to rise yearly. Apparently, there is a great deal of agreement between the fund raisers and those who contribute as a result of the letters. I wanted to know precisely what made one letter more effective than another, and what guidelines could be set up to construct an effective letter.

Appreciation must go to Dale Ross and Mary Bea Drummond who made helpful suggestions in the early stages of this study. Many thanks to Dr. Walter Ward, chairman of my committee, for his enthusiasm and technical expertise throughout. Thanks to Dr. Marlan Nelson and Dr. Michael Bugeja for their helpful suggestions, interest and willingness to serve on my committee.

To Iris McPherson and others at Oklahoma State's computer center for their handling of a considerable amount of data, many thanks. Thanks, too, must go to my friends who gave me encouragement just when I needed it most.

This thesis wouldn't have been possible, however, without the support, love and faith of my husband, Michael, and my daughter, Ammie, and sons, Chris, Steve, Tom and Tim. To them I dedicate this work.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A recent study of charitable behavior of Americans by Yankelovich, Skelly and White for the Rockefeller Brothers Fund found that nearly 15 percent of Americans would give more to charitable organizations if somebody asked them.¹

This study dealt with one method of asking for charitable contributions--the fund-raising letter.

A 1978 survey found 63 percent of respondents looked forward to checking the mail more than to other daily activities such as eating, sleeping, watching television or hobbies.²

This may be one reason the direct-mail fund-raising technique perseveres. One authority on fund-raising letters, Jerry Huntsinger (1982), claims the letters are opened more often than magazine subscription offers, book club promotions, or insurance offers. In fact, fund-raising mail was opened by 72 percent of the people surveyed, Huntsinger reports.³

A clinical psychologist, Carl D. Bauer, had this to say about unsolicited mail: "We are not living in an age of copious letter-writing, a factor which may indeed have a bearing on the popularity of unsolicited mail."⁴

The unsolicited direct-mail piece affects the recipient personally. The letter comes into the home, is opened and read. Since most

direct-mail fund-raising pieces are written in a conversational tone, they are akin to a conversation. One fund-raising professional agrees that direct mail is personal and people react to it personally since it demands commitment.

Commitment is what the fund raiser wants from the greatest number of people. The direct-mail piece must ask for that commitment from as many people as possible. Donald Kuhn (1986) says, "Direct mail is the best medium that exists for producing a broad-based, supportive constituency."⁵

Much time must go into the planning, organizing and testing direct-mail letters. It is claimed that, for every dollar sent by a new donor, the fund raiser must spend two dollars. Don Henry of the American Cancer Society says: "Evaluating a charity on the basis of its fund-raising costs is hardest on the smaller and newer charities because getting started is where the huge costs are, particularly direct mail."⁶

The fund raisers of 1984 (the latest year for which there are complete data) successfully have brought increased individual donations to charitable causes. According to the American Association of Fund Raising Counsel 1985 annual report, individuals responded with an unprecedented \$61.5 billion in 1984.⁷ Compared with the previous year, individuals increased their contributions by 11.6 percent. Individuals were responsible for 82.9 percent of the total \$74.25 billion given to philanthropies in 1984.⁸ "Americans' average contribution was \$650--2.4 percent of their household income."⁹

Despite the sagging economy, Americans responded to need from a variety of fund-raising techniques--telethons, door-to-door solicitation, charity balls and, of course, fund-raising letters.

As philanthropy in America continues to grow, the need for honing tools of professional fund raising grows as well.

The written word continues to influence developments and to shape public opinion...It is a powerful tool for the nonprofit [organization], essential to the development and continuation of community support.¹⁰

A recent study found face-to-face solicitation the most effective fund-raising method.¹¹ Response is higher to a stranger at the door than to any media appeals. The unsolicited direct-mail piece can be a form of the stranger, or a friend, at the door. In fact, more people can be reached this way than through door-to-door canvassing.

There were approximately 323,000 charities in the U.S. in 1978, according to the Internal Revenue Service.¹² More of these charities are utilizing direct mail to solicit donations. "Direct-mail solicitation is a very delicate operation, requiring just the right combination of material, solicitation approach and mailing lists,"¹³ maintains Harvey Katz in his book, Give!

Direct mail is a way to "deliver emotional punch and direct it at groups of people you know will be the most vulnerable to it...."¹⁴ The most important facet of direct mail is that sympathetic people can be identified through previous donations and easily contacted again.

An organization, by virtue of longevity and notoriety, can elicit a large donor following, because habit patterns influence giving by mail. The letter is responded to reflexively once a fixed pattern of giving is established. Huntsinger, in fact, lists habit as a basic reason for giving.

It's habit forming and this is part of the Joy of Sharing, because when a person makes a gift and then receives a letter or note of appreciation from the charity, the donor really feels good and looks forward to repeating that joyous experience, again and again and again. It becomes a positive addiction.¹⁵

Other reasons professionals say people give through direct-mail solicitation is that it is private, convenient and traditional. And some people give to gain recognition, satisfy an urge to join a group, or out of guilt.

Daniel Yankelovich conducted a study in the mid-70s to determine why people give to charity. He found 60 percent of those surveyed gave out of a sense of moral obligation; 35 percent said their motivation was the personal satisfaction from helping others, and 2 percent gave out of guilt.¹⁶

The professional fund raiser must appeal to those social and psychological facets of the American giver's psyche.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

With the continual yearly increase in individual giving to philanthropies, the tools of solicitation are worthy of study. It is assumed professionals are using effective letter-writing techniques in designing their direct-mail pieces. Could not those same letters be improved upon? Are not the recipients the final judges of a letter's effectiveness? The purpose of the direct-mail piece is to move the receiver to write a check or otherwise contribute to the organization.

Focusing attention on methods of composing the solicitation letter, the author consulted several professional fund raisers. Opinions concerning effective letters were solicited.

At the other end of the line, the persons who received, read and responded to those same letters were sought for their opinions. Persons who actually contributed to the charities were chosen to participate. If a person gave to a charity, the letter must have motivated him at some point.

Comparing the writers' with the recipients' opinions could reveal the most effective letter composition by way of combinations of phrases, sentences and paragraphs gleaned from responses.

The phrases, sentences and paragraphs used as possible grist for the fund-raising mill came from actual fund-raising mail. Many charities were represented: the March of Dimes, Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, Father Flanagan's Boys' Home, the American Red Cross, Boy Scouts of America, the Menninger Foundation, the Arthritis Foundation, the Statue of Liberty Foundation, Bishop McGuinness High School, Cascia Hall Boys' Preparatory School, and Oklahoma State University Foundation, to name a few.

Definitions

Since focus of this study was on direct-mail fund raising, the concept warrants elaboration.

First, direct-mail fund raising is always unsolicited. The recipient does nothing advertently to receive a mailing piece initially. Although, consumers frequently find themselves on charitable fund-raising lists just by making a purchase or an initial contribution to charity, having given to a charity previously almost will guarantee a repeat direct-mail piece. Again, neither the initial letter nor the repeat letter is solicited by the recipients.

This underscores the importance of effective copy for the mailing piece. Unless the letter is constructed effectively, the recipient may not read it. Unread the letters go unanswered. The purpose of the letter is defeated.

George A. Brakeley, Jr. defines direct-mail fund raising as "the organized, systematic dissemination of mailed information about, and appeals for, support by a not-for-profit organization."¹⁷

The term "nonprofit organization" appears to be self-explanatory. To broaden the definition apart from the obvious, the nonprofit organization receives, manages, and administers funds or goods and ultimately uses them to help individuals or groups in need. No profit for shareholders or employees is realized.

The professional fund raiser solicits money or goods, from individuals or corporations. He often is familiar with nearly all aspects of fund raising, from demographics to design, from letter-writing to laws, and from psychology to the use of color for stationery.

More importantly, for purposes herein, professionals are always paid (a few are "professional" volunteers) either by the philanthropy for which they work or by an agency hired to construct a fund-raising campaign.

One professional in this study said he "ghost writes" fund-raising letters for one of his church's executive clergy. He is a volunteer "professional." At one time, however, the respondent worked for an advertising agency. Part of his responsibilities there included writing fund-raising letters. Though he no longer is a paid fund raiser, he continues to function in areas related to his former profession.

ENDNOTES

¹"Most Americans Give to Charity, Survey Finds," Higher Education and National Affairs, (March 24, 1986), p. 6.

²Larry J. Sabato, "Mailing for Dollars," Psychology Today, (Oct., 1984), p. 38.

³Jerry Huntsinger, Fund Raising Letters (Emerson Publishers, Richmond, Va., 1982), p. 14.

⁴Quoted by Sabato, p. 40.

⁵Donald M. Kuhn, "Fund-Raising by Mail: Plan, Persevere, Succeed," Fund Raising Management, (Jan., 1986), p. 42.

⁶Quoted in Edward Tinnan, "Bittersweet Charity," New York, (August 15, 1983), p. 38.

⁷_____, Giving USA, American Association of Fund Raising Counsel Annual Report (1985), p. 6.

⁸Ibid.

⁹"Most Americans Give....," p. 6.

¹⁰Robert H. Ruffner, Handbook of Publicity and Public Relations for the Nonprofit Organization (Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1984), p. 83.

¹¹"Study Reveals Best Way to Raise Funds," Tulsa World, (March 13, 1986) p. A-3.

¹²Helen L. O'Rourke, "Direct Mail Fund Raising: Sweepstakes and Other Trends," Fund Raising Management (Aug., 1985), p. 56.

¹³Harvey Katz, Give! Who Gets Your Charity Dollar? (Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y., 1974), p. 60.

¹⁴Ibid, p. 61.

¹⁵Huntsinger, p. 13.

¹⁶Carl Bakal, Charity USA, Times Books 1979 (New York) p. 39.

¹⁷George A. Brakely Jr., Tested Ways to Successful Fund Raising, (New York: Anacom, 1980), p. 116.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The fund-raising letter is, in effect, just a business letter, persuasive in nature, addressed to one individual for the purpose of communicating with several hundred or several thousand individuals.

The business of fund raising utilizes all the techniques relevant to the effective sales letter. Some authors wrote about business letters, some about the unsolicited sales letter and some specifically about fund-raising letters.

Common Elements

Common to all good letters is the effective use of word power recommends Mona Sheppard (1960).¹ "The strength that flows from right words in the right arrangement is a priceless quality of business writing."² The arrangement and choice of words, the slant given a letter as a whole, and how writer relates to recipient are important elements for an effective business letter.

Vagueness particularly is unsatisfactory, Sheppard says. "Use picture words standing for things your reader can see and touch."³

Active verbs add to the definitiveness of a business letter. Subject-predicate-object is the preferred word arrangement. When passive voice is used, frequently more words are needed to express

an idea than when the active voice is used. Too many passive verbs can weaken a letter--not an ideal situation, particularly for a persuasive business letter. Active verbs help make letters more specific, personal, concise, and emphatic.⁴

Word length sometimes is as important as word choice. Words used in ordinary conversation, for example, are preferable to long, stilted, unfamiliar words. Similarity of meaning to sender and receiver thus is made more probable.

Technical jargon, Latin and old-fashioned phrases should not be used. Contractions sometimes are preferable to two words for verbs. And too many intensives and emphatics can be overwhelming to the reader.⁵

Formal language is acceptable only for "scholarly dissertations, legal documents, and top-level government agreements."⁶ Otherwise, conversational, informal short words are preferred.

Conversation indicates the human element is present. The conversation should be such that it fits into the experience of the reader. If it does that, it commands interest and attention.⁷

Informality is the hallmark of any business communication. Malra Treece (1986) writes:

...the degree of formality differs according to the purpose of the communication and according to the reader or readers. You should plan the degree of formality to best fit the purpose and readership.⁸

In a good business letter, Treece says, there should be "special emphasis on descriptive, vivid, forceful words and phrases."⁹

The Persuasive Letter

Some say all communication is designed to persuade. Solicited business letters, for example, respond to requests for information. The letter writer is then in a position to persuade the reader the information is complete, and from the best source possible. The unsolicited business letter is most often an unsolicited sales letter. This type of letter is more directly and forthrightly a persuasive tool. Both writer and reader know that kind of letter is designed especially to persuade--to sell a product or service, to ask for money or time or an agreement.

The possibility an unsolicited sales letter will not be read completely is greater than for business letters in general. The reader knows the writer is trying to persuade. Resistance will be present. Overcoming resistance is the writer's most important task. Care must be taken, however, not to mislead the reader. Mistrust often will result. The reader usually is skeptical when reading an unsolicited sales letter. If deceived, he will resent it and probably "discount all statements in the letter,"¹⁰ and become antagonistic.

For these reasons, a particular syntactical progression in constructing the persuasive letter is recommended by several authors.

Most business communication experts advise writers of request letters to create sympathy for their need in their readers, develop a theme of mutual benefit, and build the reader's ego by gentle and sophisticated stroking before they ask for a favor.¹¹

Limaye (1983) writes that Wilkinson et al recommend the sequence:

1. Reader interests through benefit theme and involvement.
2. Elimination or minimizing of negative elements.
3. Request for desired action.¹²

Murphy and Peck, Limaye writes, recommend the following syntactical progression:

1. Attention.
2. Interest and desire.
3. Positive handling of negatives.
4. Action.¹³

Bonner and Voyles suggest:

1. Get reader's attention.
2. Create interest for their need.
3. Motivate reader for desired action.¹⁴

Components of the persuasive letter must be present--not necessarily separate entities. They can merge, one into another, with emphasis placed on one part. All parts need not carry equal weight.

Treece stresses special emphasis on the "you-approach" in which reader enjoyment or benefit is described.¹⁵ She calls this approach psychological description. The products or services offered are psychologically-described pictures.

Murphy and Hildebrandt (1984) concur with the "you-approach."
"You-attitude content and reader benefits are most important."¹⁶

Limaye says, "All persuasive communication aims toward building a relationship between the sender and the receiver of the message..."¹⁷
Mutual benefits for both writer and reader should be the ultimate goal of a persuasive letter.

The Fund Raising Letter

Why People Give

The severity of the need often dictates why people give to charities. "The cause is the thing in charitable fund raising."¹⁸ The professional fund raiser must impart that severity to the public. The direct-mail fund-raising letter can impart a wealth of information, and, if done properly, can elicit a maximum response from that same public.

Leslie and Ramey (1985) conclude that university "alumni are most likely to give when the need is greatest."¹⁹ When the economy is faltering, the greatest response will come from individuals.

Huntsinger (1981) says donors want to contribute to causes. "We are the only nation on the face of the earth where people give money away."²⁰

Residual guilt may be a reason for giving, Thomas P. Megan (1985) infers, if individuals first have been contacted by telephone.²¹ Lewis (1985) states, "The four great motivations of the 1985-1990 period are fear, exclusivity, greed and guilt."²²

One respondent in this study stated fund raising had nothing to do with logic. The letters work strictly on emotion, not intellect. Lord (1985) states people give to people. "People give for people--not for endowments or swimming pools."²³

Who--The Audience

Those people most likely to give to a charity are those who are asked. Beyond that, over-50-year-old women are most likely to sign the check responding to fund-raising letters. In fact, "75 to 95 percent

of the checks are signed by women."²⁴ Another fact, equally important, is that men sign the largest checks. Huntsinger (1982) believes both male and female psychology, their similarities and their differences must be understood when writing fund-raising letters. Women respond to feelings and emotions, and their intuition. The individual and the content of the letter are rarely separated in a woman's mind, whereas men pride themselves on being objective.²⁵

The fund-raising letter is a marketing tool and should be constructed as such. Through this tool, the nonprofit organization can meet its obligation to reach as many people as possible. The most effective way of reaching the most people is by knowing and understanding the marketing segmentation. "For our purposes, a 'market' is individuals with needs to satisfy, money to give and the willingness to donate."²⁶

By identifying specific markets, needs of different audience segments can be identified and pinpointed. This viewpoint differs from the more economical, but less effective market aggregation approach in which one letter fits all.

In segmenting the audiences, characteristics of the audience "must be measurable and data must be accessible."²⁷ Another characteristic of market segmentation is its accessibility through existing channels of distribution. That is, there should be enough paid or voluntary personnel to carry out the proposed activities. And last, the segments must be large enough to be profitable.

Thus, knowing the location, lifestyles and numbers of people in various audience segments enable fund-raising personnel to carry out the proposed program efficiently and effectively.

What--Content

Nearly all authors agree that fund-raising letters must appear to be from one human being to another. Even if writing to 10,000 people, the letter should read as though it were to just one person. The letter should not sound like a business letter as Sainsbury (1984) states. That is, it should not sound terse, formal or stilted.

The letter should be written in an "oral" style as though one person were talking to another. "Try to incorporate the flow and naturalness of conversation in your written message."²⁸ Huntsinger (1982) writes, letters should be thought of in conversational terms. "A fund-raising letter is simply a dialogue between you and the donor."²⁹ So there should be liberal use of personal pronouns such as I, you, and we. "The more personalization, the better,"³⁰ Kuhn (1986) says.

The largest response, then, will be to a letter which communicates on a personal level. "People do not like letters from companies, or institutions, or organizations. They like letters from people."³¹

Word Choice and Length

The fund raiser must be careful not to be too informal. Too many slang words or too much casualness can be detrimental, too. According to Lewis (1985), slang can have a neutralizing effect. On the other hand, standard stylebook and grammar rules do not, and often should not, apply, Lewis states. "We're writing force-communication messages to people who don't have style books at their elbows; they have check-books."³²

Another important facet is using simple words. "Simple words do not imply simple thoughts and often get the point across faster and more effectively."³³ The object of using simple words is that they are more easily understood. Huntsinger writes that words should be of five letters or less, maintaining that 75 percent of a letter should contain words of five letters or less. He says 55 percent or less is unacceptable.³⁴ Sainsbury (1984) comments that long words don't impress the reader who understands them and they don't communicate with readers who don't understand them.³⁵

Sentence, Paragraph and Letter Length

Communicating with people can mean knowing what not to say as much as what should be said. "It takes more time to make communication short and to the point than it does to spill forth all our thoughts and ideas."³⁶

Sentences and paragraphs, too, should be short and to the point. Hall (1986) says sentences should be short enough that, when read aloud, the reader won't run out of breath.³⁷ Huntsinger (1982) advises fund raisers to begin "almost every sentence with an action word."³⁸ In addition paragraphs should be indented and no longer than four lines. This "breaks up the monotony of continual left margin use,"³⁹ Huntsinger writes.

Length of a fund-raising letter has been a matter of debate. Many professionals, Sabato (1984) points out, believe "long letters have more influence and produce better results."⁴⁰ Most copywriters agree that letters should be long enough to accomplish the purpose and make the case for support. Short copy can be read quickly, but long letters

are better able to provide emotional impact. "Those readers most likely to give responded better to comparatively long, emotionally-charged copy..."⁴¹

Kuhn (1986) stresses that the less well-known the organization, the longer the letter must be. Conversely, the better known the organization, the shorter the letter can be.⁴² Length, then, is a function of acquainting the audience with the organization, the cause or need, and the appeal or persuasive aspects.

Huntsinger (1985) goes so far as to say, "write long letters if you want a long career."⁴³ He adds that a two-page letter will bring in more money than a one-page letter, and a four-page letter will outproduce a two-page letter. "When in doubt," Huntsinger stresses, "write a long letter."⁴⁴ The basic principle is, if a recipient finishes reading the letter without being motivated to send money, the letter wasn't long enough.

Huntsinger further recommends adding a P.S. because it often is the first part of the letter that is read.⁴⁵ Sabato (1984) writes, "the postscript also may be in the signer's handwriting and usually gives the most important reason for contributing..."⁴⁶

Several authors caution against trying to tell everything about the cause. The whole truth and nothing but the truth will only dilute the emphasis of the message. Lewis (1985) admonishes, "When you emphasize everything, you emphasize nothing."⁴⁷ The reader will become confused. Fisher (1982) advises, "Stick to the facts and preferably one issue. Then after telling your story, tell it again in another way."⁴⁸

On the other hand, there are proponents of short fund-raising letters. Broce (1979) writes, "Every fund-raising letter should be brief (usually no more than one page), well-designed, well-written, and direct."⁴⁹

Ardman and Ardman (1980) also believe the shorter letter is better.

Telling too much can be fatal. Pick out the most newsworthy or dramatic elements and leave out the nonessentials. People who are interested will most often be sold by what you say first anyway.⁵⁰

How--The Construction

AIDA

Fund-raising letters have many characteristics in common with business letters, particularly persuasive sales letters. The format known by many professionals as AIDA refers to attention, interest, desire and action.

Huntsinger (1982) mentions as many as five professionals who suggest the above format or a variation of it. He suggests following one of them to insure a smooth flow from letter beginning to letter end and, most importantly, to insure recipient response. The following discussion will utilize the AIDA format as a guideline.

As long ago as 1950 the AIDA format was discussed as tried and true. It still is utilized in advertising and direct-mail sales as well as direct-mail solicitation of funds.

Murphy and Hildebrandt (1984) suggest the AIDA formula for persuasive letters. The four parts are "A-attract the reader's favorable attention, I-arouse the reader's interest, D-create desire and convince the reader, A-make clear the action the reader needs to take."⁵¹

Attention. Businessmen who have been trained in formal business procedures must realize the fund-raising letter is different in many ways from the business letter, but the same in other ways--syntactical construction being the chief one.

The first section of the fund-raising letter must attract the recipient's attention. The first sentence is the most important. "No matter how worthwhile your cause, if you don't succeed in getting your reader's attention in the opening sentence, he isn't going to stick with you, and you have lost a contributor."⁵² The reader must be drawn into that important first sentence through personalization philosophy--the reader is more important than the writer. You must be used liberally. "The degree to which the appeal appears to be personal and individual is in direct proportion to the attention-getting strength of the letter."⁵³

Treece (1986) also stresses a reader-centered, attention-getting message. She further states that whatever is used to attract attention should make sense and relate to paragraphs that follow. Again, the relevant theme emerges as central to attention-getting.

Plung (1980) maintains, "constant for all good writing,"⁵⁴ is the attention step. Attention must be gained at once, with the main theme introduced at this point.

Burd and Miller (1930) place emphasis on good first sentences, also. They maintain if the reader's interest isn't captured and held, the letter will not be read in its entirety, and if not read, there will be no response. "Carelessly constructed first sentences, careless both as to content and construction, kill the inherent curiosity and interest that we have for each letter we read."⁵⁵

The attention-attracting statement, Burd and Miller write, doesn't necessarily need an idea relevant to the letter theme. But relevancy generally is desirable.

Murphy and Hildebrandt (1984) suggest "attract favorable attention with a reader-interest or a reader benefit theme."⁵⁶ They suggest beginning with a relevant theme or a challenging question. "Highlight a point that is close to the reader's interests or needs, instead of talking about yourself or your organization."⁵⁷

Bendixen (1984) writes, "An opening should engage the prospect's interest without raising his blood pressure."⁵⁸ In other words, the attention-getting sentence or section should not be antagonizing even though it may be startling.

Arousing recipient attention will increase recall, Hiebert (1985) maintains.⁵⁹ By emphasizing personal benefits, the recipients will be motivated to give the letter their full attention throughout.

Huntsinger (1985) writes if a good first sentence is written, the letter will flow to the end on its own.⁶⁰ The opening, Hunstinger continues, should be "either dramatic, emotional, or personal."⁶¹

Murphy and Hildebrandt (1984) caution writers "to avoid openings that may outdate a letter soon."⁶² For example, avoid "Dear Graduate: Now that you are out of school for three months..." If timing is off, the recipient may be annoyed at the inaccuracy.

Some authors refer to the opening as a hook. Van Groesbeck (1982) says, "A hook is a word, an idea, or an offer that grasps the reader early, piques their interest, and increases the possibility of a response."⁶³

The hook should be the first thing the recipient sees and should hold his interest by carrying the hook throughout the letter.

Van Groesbeck (1982) suggests using a crisis, emergency, human interest story or case history as the hook or attention section of the letter.⁶⁴

Ardman and Ardman (1980) suggest coming quickly to the point in the opening of the letter. They agree with the other authors that "the first paragraph of your letter is of prime importance."⁶⁵

Burd and Miller (1930) write "attention theoretically precedes interest. Seldom does interest come first."⁶⁶ They add that forced attention cannot be maintained long. Interest must follow closely behind. It is the interest section of the letter, directly following attention, that affords the opportunity to hold reader attention, thus transforming forced attention in voluntary attention.

So for the reader, attention and interest may overlap. "Usually that which secures attention is interesting and vice versa."⁶⁷

Interest. After the letter successfully attracts and holds the recipient's attention, the fund-raising letter should create further interest in the organization/need in the recipient. Here, emotional copy is given full rein.

Sabato (1984) states the language of direct mail is "emotional, often filled with invective."⁶⁸ Appealing to emotions is even more important when asking for material goods because people are more reluctant to part with those than donating their time, for example. Recipients may give because a combination of conscious and subconscious emotional motivations have been triggered by the letters.⁶⁹

The interest section of the persuasive letter presents details relevant to reader interest. Human interest is vital in a fund-raising letter. It may involve the telling of a story or the use of photography or both. The central theme should be developed, through physical descriptions or photographs as well as values or benefits to the reader.

The need must be made to seem immediate and graphic and the benefit to the recipient must be reiterated to hold his interest. "You can place the benefits first or later, but usually they are interwoven with physical description."⁷⁰

Huntsinger (1982) recommends including a detailed description of what the money will be used for. He suggests slanting the copy as well to create interest. For example, when writing to a major donor, the copy may read, "In the past your gifts were such a help." To the frequent donor, "You've already proven your love by your steady support of our work..."⁷¹

Huntsinger (1985) says it is important for the entire letter to carry an emotional tone undiluted by logic.⁷²

Heibert (1985) suggests asking questions to stimulate interest. By making the recipients curious, he maintains, long-term recall increases along with the chance to persuade them.⁷³

In summing up the interest facet of the fund-raising letter, Fellows and Koenig (1950) write:

Every person, at some time in his life, experiences this feeling, for the instinct to give of oneself, one's time and money, is present to some degree in all persons and needs only to be stirred to become active. Obviously it is to this instinct, this emotion of kindness and willingness to help others, that you must appeal if you are to touch your prospect's pocketbook. And if you are to touch his pocketbook, you must first touch his heart.⁷⁴

Desire and Conviction. Once attention and interest are firmly established in the reader's mind, a desire to follow the writer's suggestions must be established. In the desire sequence, the reader must be presented proof he will benefit from the writer's proposal. Evidence of truth should be included--facts, figures, tests or testimonials. This part of the letter is logical rather than emotional. "Conviction is primarily factual--rational."⁷⁵ Bendixen (1982) believes the most effective fund-raising letters "combine an emotional appeal with specific facts."⁷⁶ Use as many specific facts and figures as necessary. Being concrete will establish conviction with the reader. Statistics can be geared to show proof of need. Theoretically, if need can be proved, recipient's desire to help can be realized.

If statistics are used in the letter, the writer must be aware that the effect will be minimal. Lewis (1985) advises replacing statistics with episodes and victims--human interest. A properly constructed episode works--it personalizes the communication, establishes rapport through the ring of truth, and involves the reader.⁷⁷ The audience must believe in the truth of the need.

Credibility is an important aspect of conviction. Hiebert (1985) suggests using familiar language and building on points of agreement.⁷⁸ He further recommends being "specific, concrete, and personal."⁷⁹ In this way, general ideas can be recalled through use of specific images. The recipient can use his imagination, picturing himself helping with the cause. The central theme often is stressed through use of specific facts and figures. This establishes the case through convincing evidence.

Often dramatizing the case can be convincing to the recipient, and can create a certain amount of tension as well. Trust in the organization should be built in the mind of the donor.

This job must be done by backing up your opening paragraphs with facts about your agency and its qualifications to handle the problem. These statements must not only be true, they must sound true and incontrovertible.⁸⁰

Sincerity must somehow be conveyed through mode of expression. Words should be chosen carefully. Vague, generalized statements are not convincing. Specific, dramatic stories can create conviction. It is important to convince the reader the proposed solution is correct and ultimately will eliminate the problem.

Burd and Miller (1930) maintain that "all conviction material, regardless of how factual it may be, probably creates some emotional effect."⁸¹ It is then only a small step to the persuasive material--the emotional appeal. "Persuasion removes any remaining resistance by creating a desire..."⁸² If the reader is persuaded to say yes, it will be easier to get him to act. Establishing reader conviction creates mental pictures leading to action.

If a reader clings to resistance, persuasive material, by emotional appeal, should remove any objections to following through with suggested actions:

Persuasion material should arouse the emotions of the prospect, after he is convinced of the quality of the product, so that he will desire it. Persuasion material is primarily emotional in effect.⁸³

Action. Once the fund raiser has succeeded in attracting and holding the recipient's attention as well as convincing him the cause and the organization are credible, creating in him a desire to help, the recipient must be given specific, easy instructions on the action to be taken.

Carol Enters (1985) claims there are three failures in direct mail fund raising: "(1) Not asking for the gift, (2) Not asking for a large enough gift, (3) Not asking for the gift often enough."⁸⁴

As mentioned earlier, there are people who claim they would give more if only they were asked. This section of the letter is vital to accomplishing the letter's purpose. Without it, the recipient is left with the desire to help but no way to do so. Huntsinger (1982) recommends, "Tell the donor exactly how much money you are asking the donor to send and exactly when you need that money. Use a precise deadline."⁸⁵

Here, a sense of urgency must be conveyed in the form of an effective appeal. "People tend to be subject to laws of human inertia. A sense of urgency, along with importance, has the best chance of moving them,"⁸⁶ Gurin says.

Regarding emotional material, the appeal must center on "people's general sense of social responsibility,"⁸⁷ identifying a specific motive for suggested action.

Once the barriers are down, it's time to suggest a method of action. It will be easy for the reader to say yes to any action suggested by the writer. Reader resistance will have been removed.

Suggested action must be clearly stated. Action must be easy and stated in terms of reader interest. But, above all, action must be clearly, definitely and positively requested. "Almost 15 percent of Americans would give more to charitable organizations if somebody asked them"⁸⁸ (author's emphasis). Be positive, not negative, in tone. The writer should not be pushy or demanding. Attention should be given

to any remaining resistance which may lead to procrastination. The writer should suggest action immediately.

In the last sentence or paragraph, it must be made clear to the recipient exactly what is expected of him. "There must be a clear, cogent reason given why a gift should be sent today..."⁸⁹ And in addition, "...state simply, concisely, and concretely just how your reader can help you."⁹⁰ For example, the action statement might say, "Just send your check for (x amount) in the enclosed envelope today."

There are times when it is desirable to put the action sentence into the P.S. as well as in the ending of the letter. The P.S. is an opportunity for a final word, so it may as well be effective in achieving the desired response. The P.S. can be the final opportunity to motivate action. In the P.S., the recipient can be told exactly what to do and asked outright for the gift. He can be told how to use the reply device and asked for immediate action. There are other ways the P.S. can be used, but it must always include asking for action.⁹¹ The P.S. may be worded, "P.S. Can you send your gift today, Mrs. Jones? Every hour's delay means a longer line at the bush clinic."⁹²

Burd and Miller (1930) recommend the above sequence--attract favorable attention, create interest and desire for the product and suggest appropriate action. They maintain "the mind travels the route suggested"⁹³ whether the person is conscious of the fact.

The rationale for the suggested arrangement is that the persuasive letter should correspond to the reader's mental steps.

Conviction and persuasion material arouse desire for the product. Conviction material usually should precede persuasion. Because persuasion material is emotional rather than rational, the effect created is apt to be dissipated unless action follows immediately.⁹⁴

An illogical arrangement, Burd and Miller say, "can easily nullify an otherwise good letter."⁹⁵ It is in leading the reader "step by step through a series of logically arranged ideas"⁹⁶ that the letter's objective is reached.

Since the purpose of the letter is to motivate giving, readability should be the writer's chief concern. Without readability, communication may not take place. The recipient may be left with unanswered questions and the fund raiser may be left with unanswered mail.

Lewis's (1985) concern is for audience comfort more than any other factor. "Reader comfort is the overriding criterion of the effectiveness of our writing."⁹⁷

It isn't the fund raiser's employer or the board of directors to keep in mind when designing the fund-raising letter. The recipient is the only one which should be considered.

Summary

There are basic principles common to business letters, direct-mail letters of persuasion and fund-raising letters. All should contain the specific elements of attracting attention, creating interest and conviction and motivating action.

Specific to fund-raising letters, the writer should remember letters should be well-planned and attractive. "Direct mail is the best means of cultivating and reminding the reader you want to reach."⁹⁸

The fund raiser should keep in mind the basic elements recommended by other professionals, remembering to structure their letters in precisely the order in which they were presented. Copy is the one facet

in fund-raising letter-writing over which the professional has the most control. "The more powerful and compelling the mailing package copy, the greater the funds raised."⁹⁹ According to Van Groesbeck (1982), it is vital for the fund raiser to motivate while communicating.¹⁰⁰ Keeping this in mind will affect the quality and effectiveness of each section of the fund-raising letter.

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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

With the large number of fund-raising letters arriving daily in mailboxes, the method for this study seemed predetermined. Over a period of one-and-a-half years, letters from foundations and charitable causes across the U.S. were collected--some 52 in all.

It was decided the Q-methodology would lend itself to better utilize the collected letters and to better answer the question: What is the relationship between fund-raising professionals and fund-raising letter recipients and their perception of an effective fund-raising letter?

Q-methodology allows statements or items to be ranked in a formal, simple and fast way. This method allows a few persons to be tested over a wide range of items or subjects. William Stephenson (1953) writes it is possible to study "a single person or a single group of interacting persons."¹

The study undertaken here treats the statements in terms of people and makes correlations between them.

Stephenson explains the method this way: "First a 'universe' of statements or the like is defined. A sample of these is then quantified by operations upon them, relative to one another, constituting a Q-sort."²

The items for the Q-sort came from the 52 collected letters (see Appendix A). The items were chosen on the basis of their characteristics

conforming to the four facets of persuasive, fund-raising letters mentioned earlier--attracting attention, creating interests, establishing conviction and motivating action. Twenty items were selected for each facet, thus totaling 80 statements.

Each statement was put on a separate card. They then were used for the ranking procedure forcing symmetric distribution. The number of piles was set at nine. The score for each pile was determined by whether the person considered the statement or item to be effective in the body of a fund-raising letter. Figure 1 depicts the distribution and scores for each.

Most Effective									Least Effective
Score	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Number of Cards	4	6	10	12	16	12	10	6	4

Figure 1. Distribution and Scores for 80 Q-sort Cards

Fred Kerlinger recommends the number of cards to be between 60 and 90 for statistical stability and reliability.³ The highest score per item is set at nine, the lowest at one and the median at five, simulating a normal curve. Thus each person will have the same total score for the group of 80 statements.

The two groups used in this study, 10 fund-raising professionals and 10 recipients of fund-raising letters, were asked to distribute the cards in the above prescribed manner.

The people comprising the professional group were chosen on the basis of their accessibility and area of fund raising. For example, five of the 10 professionals were accessible as they are connected with Oklahoma State University in some way. Three are members of the OSU Foundation staff, one in charge of athletic fund raising for OSU, and one is the director of OSU's alumni association. The remaining five were chosen for their diversity of causes for which they routinely wrote fund-raising letters (see Appendix B). Each professional was given the same set of instructions--sort the statements according to whether you would include it in a fund-raising letter you would write.

The recipients were chosen on the basis of Yes answers to three questions: Do you receive fund-raising letters? Do you read those letters? Do you ever respond by contributing to the organization or need?

There were other less formal criteria used in choosing the recipients, however. Five males and five females made up the recipient group with ages ranging from approximately 25 years to 60 years old. Education consciously was selected as well. Two had a high school education, four bachelor's degrees, two master's degrees and two Ph.D. degrees. The rationale behind evenly splitting the sexes was to prevent the perceptions of all one sex skewing the data. The rationale for choosing varying educational levels was to prevent perhaps advanced educational savvy from skewing the data as well.

Instructions to recipients were to sort the cards for their perceived effectiveness: If you were to read the statement in a fund-raising letter, would you be likely to contribute? Are you motivated or not?

Hypothesis and Data Processing Procedures

The hypotheses for this study were: There will be no significant differences between respondent groups in the way they perceive the statements representing the four facets of appeal (attention, interest, conviction, action), and, the mean perceived effectiveness of any one facet of appeal will not be related more to one type of respondent than another.

The independent (or stimulus) variables in this study were categories of the statements used in the Q-sort. They comprised four categories reflecting the four facets of persuasive and/or fund-raising letters. The code for each facet is--AA (attract attention); CI (create interest); EC (establish conviction); and MA (motivate action). There were 20 statements in each category for a total of 80 statements.

Professionals were one group of independent variables. Recipients as the chance receivers of fund-raising letters comprised a second group of independent variables.

The dependent (or response) variable was simply the subjective ranking of statements on perceived effectiveness. The Q-methodology lends itself to accomplishing the grouping by providing clusters of statements (treated as persons) which fall under a typical heading by preference.

The stated hypothesis puts this Q-sort in the structured arena. "In a structured Q-sort, the variables of a 'theory' or of a hypothesis... are built into a set of items along...analysis of variance design principles."⁴

In other words, a structured Q-sort has a theory built into it. It isn't the individuals or respondents who are tested, it is the theory that is tested.⁵ The statements, repeated measures, used are exemplary of four particular types of statements. The respondents in turn rank those statements for perceived level of effectiveness in motivating action to contribute to an organization or need.

Data analysis of a Q-sort was through analysis of variance and factor analysis by "the factoring of matrices of correlations between (statements/persons) over variables for a single occasion."⁶

A Type I analysis of variance was used because two groups of people (professionals and recipients) were asked to respond repeatedly to several statements. That is, the same respondents were asked to rate more than one aspect of the chosen stimulus (the statements). The interaction of facets with the respondent groups is possible to ascertain with this type of analysis also.

	AA	CI	EC	MA
Professionals				
Recipients				

Figure 2. Type I Analysis of Variance Paradigm

t-tests then were done to compare the two groups' perceptions on each statement. The t-tests were used to determine if perceived effectiveness differed significantly between the groups on each of the 80 statements.

Pearson-r Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients were run between each pair of statements across the 20 respondents. The purpose was to determine the relative effectiveness of each statement compared to every other. The correlations would be used also in a matrix for McQuitty's Elementary Linkage and Factor Analysis. From this information, a typical representative/s could be determined and any clusters of statements (seen as similarly effective) could be extracted. The factor analysis gave a basis for classifying the statements.⁷ In this way the theory built into the Q-sort could be used rather than proved directly.⁸

McQuitty's Elementary Linkage and Factor Analysis utilizes the Pearson r correlation in a matrix 80-by-80 (the number of statements). The highest correlation is located to determine the reciprocal pair. Then all other correlations are matched against this one in the row in which one of the reciprocal pair is found. Linkages of this kind will point out types or clusters of statements. This is sometimes called factoring or clustering.

Types of statements then are placed in their own matrices, the number depending upon the number of types found. Totals for each column in each matrix are done. The highest total becomes the representative type in that matrix. The statement which represents that highest scoring column is the reference for other statements of the type.

And finally, raw mean scores for each group on each statement were compared to see if there was any agreement on those scores for the highest and lowest three statements.

By following the above procedures the questions stated earlier were answered and the hypothesis tested for confirmation. After all

is said and done, what emerged would be the most effective (in terms of response) fund-raising letter a professional could write or a recipient would receive in his mailbox.

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CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Effectiveness of Four Facets of Fund-Raising

Appeal: by Respondent Types

Variance analysis of perceived effectiveness of the four facets of appeal letters addressed two questions:

1. Were there any significant differences between mean perceived effectiveness of the four facets of appeal (attention, interest, conviction, action)?
2. Was the perceived mean effectiveness of one or more facets of appeal significantly more dependent upon one type of respondent than was the effectiveness of one or more other facets?

Regarding the first question, no facet of appeal was perceived as significantly more effective than another by any one of the 20 respondents ($F = .19$, $df = 3$, $p > .05$). As shown in Table I, the 20 Establishing Conviction statements netted a 4.90 effectiveness rating, while the 20 Motivating Action statements received a 5.12 effectiveness rating. The .22 difference between the highest and lowest ratings was not significant (critical difference - .68, $df = 76$, $p > .05$).

TABLE I
MEAN PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS SCORES GIVEN FUND-RAISING
APPEAL FACETS BY PROFESSIONAL FUND RAISERS
AND RECIPIENTS OF APPEALS

Facets of Appeal	Type of Respondent		Mean Differences*
	Professional Fund Raisers (n=20)	Recipients of Appeals (n=20)	
Attracting Attention (2)	5.15	← 4.66	-.49
Creating Interest (20)	5.25	← 4.82	-.43
Establishing Conviction (20)	4.57	→ 5.22	+.65
Motivating Action (20)	4.93	→ 5.30	+.37

*Post-hoc t-test critical value for interaction - .27, df = 76, p < .05.

The lack of any significant differences between respondents' perception of the four facets of a fund-raising letter was obscured by the interaction of facet appeals and respondent types.

In looking at the Mean Differences column in Table I, a summary of the interaction can be seen. That is, the "plus" and "minus" entries summarize the interaction picture.

Specifically, the attention and interest statements were perceived more effective by professionals than recipients. The conviction and action statements were perceived more effective by recipients than by professionals. Effectiveness ratings depended on which group was doing the rating.

This interaction indicates professionals over-estimated effectiveness of the average attention and interest statements, but underestimated effectiveness of the average conviction and action statement.

Recipients viewed those statements directly asking for action more appealing than did professionals. On the other hand, professionals preferred the "hook" and interest-arousing statements over the other kinds. Recipients were not as impressed with the "hook" kind of statement.

It is important to note, however, professionals and recipients alike moderately agreed on the effectiveness of all statements in the four facets ($r = .58$, $df = 78$, $p < .01$). Coefficient of determination indicates about 34 percent, or one-third, of the variation in professionals' perceived effectiveness of the statements was shared by the recipients, leaving 66 percent, or approximately two-thirds, of the variation unexplained.

Of the 80 statements, 12 yielded mean effectiveness-rating differences 1.5 or greater, as shown in Table II.

TABLE II
MEAN EFFECTIVENESS RATING DIFFERENCES
1.5 OR GREATER

Statements (See Appendix A)	Professionals	Recipients	Differences
AA9	6.7	4.9*	1.8
AA16	5.2	3.2*	2.0
CI11	6.1	4.3*	1.8
CI14	4.4	6.3	-1.9
CI18	6.1	3.9*	2.2
EC10	4.5	6.0*	-1.5
EC18	2.2	4.1*	-1.9
MA3	4.5	6.6*	-2.1
MA8	3.7	5.2*	-1.5
MA14	6.6	5.1	1.5
MA18	3.6	5.9*	-2.3
MA19	5.7	4.2	1.5

*The starred means account most for interaction.

The largest mean difference was -2.3 on statement MA18, "In the true spirit of Christmas...." The difference in the professionals' and recipients' rating of this "Action" statement's effectiveness differed considerably. Recipients gave the statement a slightly-above-average rating (5.9), while professionals rated the statement considerably below average (3.9).

There were 11 other absolute differences between the respondent groups' mean ratings of the 80 statements, as well as differences in

the relative rankings of several facet statements by professionals and recipients. These will be discussed in later sections, particularly in the following section on t-tests for statistically significant differences between the types of respondents on individual statements.

t-Tests for Differences Between the Respondent Groups' Means

Simply observing differences between the respondent groups' means on the four facets of a fund-raising letter did not give the entire picture, nor did merely ferreting out statements with differences between their means 1.5 or greater. To view the comparison between each group's means on each statement microscopically, the t-tests were used. The question asked at this point was: On which statements did the respondent groups' differences vary more (95 times out of 100) than would occur by chance?

All 80 statements were compared each with the other in a difference-between-the-means comparison of the two respondent groups. Ten statements were found to have differences greater than those expected to occur by chance 95 percent of the time. In other words, the professionals' opinion of the effectiveness of the statements and the recipients' opinion of the effectiveness of the statements differed enough to make a difference on eight percent of the questions (see Table III).

A comparison with Table II shows some of the same statements, while others from Table II do not show up in Table III at all. The statistical t-tests show if the differences are greater than would occur by chance.

TABLE III
SIGNIFICANT (.05 LEVEL) MEAN GROUP RATINGS AND DIFFERENCES

Statements (See Appendix A)	Professionals	Recipients	Differences
AA9	6.7	4.9	-1.8
AA11	5.7	4.5	-1.2
AA16	5.2	3.2	-2.0
CI11	6.1	4.3	-1.8
CI14	4.4	6.3	+1.9
EC15	3.8	5.2	+1.4
EC18	2.2	4.1	+1.9
MA3	4.5	6.6	+2.1
MA7	3.6	5.0	+1.4
MA18	3.6	5.9	+2.3

Of the ten statements with significantly different mean ratings by professionals and recipients, the last six, "During this time, tens of thousands of Americans will make their annual contribution to fight cancer through American Institute for Cancer Research," "This year our fund drive must be more successful than ever because we are expanding both our program to house homeless families and our professional counseling services," "In the next several weeks, I will be meeting with several members of the AICR Board of Directors to plan our coming year's budget. During these meetings, it would be a big help to know what programs we will be able to afford next year," "Whatever you feel you can spare will be appreciated, and some day I hope you can visit the ranch to see what your help really means," "We invite you to help

us at this critical time by sending a contribution to our work," and, "In the true spirit of Christmas and keeping in mind that we have given all care thus far without charging for the care, won't you consider making a Christmas donation to Hospice to directly help care for a patient and family in tremendous need of our services," were rated higher by the recipient group. Though professionals may not view those statements as particularly effective, the recipients do see them as such. It is the recipients' opinions that count (literally) in the long run.

These differences between the professionals' mean ratings and the recipients' mean ratings, then, reflect the relationship between the dependent (statements) and independent (respondents) variables.² Since there are significant differences between the mean group ratings, the correlation between the respondents and statements is significant, that is, to the extent that a correlation exists.

The interaction between the independent and dependent variables discussed previously reflected an important relationship. The t-tests pointed out exactly where those important relationships (albeit differences) actually lay.

Relative Effectiveness of Statements

As an index of the magnitude and direction of statement relationships, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was calculated for every pair of statements (3,160 pairs). Total mean ratings of all respondents were used in the calculations. In other words, it was simply one statement's overall rating pitted against every other statement's overall rating.

The highest correlation ($r = .91$) was between statement AA14 ("Find out what valuable prize you may already have won...") and CI15 ("Over \$25,000 in cash and prizes is guaranteed to be awarded."). Both statements refer to sweepstakes and prize money. Professionals and recipients alike highly agreed in their low rating of the two statements. Apparently professionals perceive writing about sweepstakes and prizes equally as distasteful as do the recipients who read about sweepstakes in their appeal letters. Recipients and professionals were in 83 percent agreement on the relative effectiveness of the two statements. Only 17 percent of the variation between the two groups' ratings were left unexplained.

The next most highly correlated statements ($r = .80$) were AA20 ("...I loathed writing the appeal letter asking for membership fees.") and EC15 ("This year our fund drive must be more successful than ever because we are expanding both our program to house homeless families and our professional counseling services."). Professionals, in fact, gave statement AA20 the lowest rating of all 80 statements. Recipients were not far behind in their rating of the statement. Professionals and recipients are in agreement, once again, as to an ineffective statement. Both groups simply didn't care for the mention of "loathing" of the letter-writing task or a fund drive designed to cover more than one cause.

Variation in respondents' perceived effectiveness of AA20 and EC15 accounted for 64 percent of their perceived effectiveness of both statements. Nearly half the variation was unexplained. This would be expected when one statement is rated very low (mean total = 2.2) and the other in the mid-range (mean total = 4.5), on average.

Clusters or Types of Statements

Using those same Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients, types of statements were extracted from the group of 80 statements. Originally, this study began with four operational types. That is, four types identified and defined. But, it was statistically possible, with McQuitty's Elementary Linkage and Factor Analysis, to extract 17 types of statements.

For ease of interpretation, only the five types with the highest mean total ratings and the five types with the lowest mean total ratings will be discussed. Table IV shows the ten types and the total mean effectiveness for each respondent group and for both groups combined.

The statement most typical of the type rated highest (Type XI) by both groups was: "Your generous giving does make the difference" (C12). The statements statistically relevant (.25 or higher) to Type XI could be characterized as "you-oriented." Of the 12 statements highly correlated with the typical statement, all but two get the recipient personally involved by using pronouns such as you and your. The remaining two statements imply personal involvement. One asks, "What is a dollar worth?" calling for the recipient to become involved by responding with an unspoken answer. The second statement, not mentioning you or your directly, was: "A \$5 contribution will be greatly appreciated," implying "thank you."

Interestingly, the typical statement for Type XI came from the original Create Interest category. All the relevant statements came from either the Attract Attention facet of statements or the Motivate Action facet. None of the statements in the Type IX group rated

high by both professionals and recipients came from the Establish Conviction facet of statements. Apparently facts and figures are not rated as effective by either group. Those kinds of statements do not lend themselves to a You-oriented approach either. The groups of people rating the effectiveness of the statements did not relate to those fact-filled kinds of statements. That is, they could not identify with the facts and figures--sometimes referred to as cold, hard facts.

TYPE IV

FIVE HIGHEST AND FIVE LOWEST (TOTAL MEAN RATINGS) STATEMENT
TYPES RESULTING FROM LINKAGE ANALYSIS

Types	Professionals	Recipients	Mean Total
-----Highest-----			
IX	6.03	6.10	6.07
XIII	5.20	6.03	5.62
XII	6.35	4.75	5.55
III	5.95	5.05	5.50
VII	6.03	4.88	5.46
-----Lowest-----			
VIII	4.50	4.50	4.50
II	3.90	4.91	4.41
XVII	3.75	5.00	4.38
X	4.02	4.52	4.27
I	3.23	2.90	3.07

The statement most typical of the next highest-rated type (Type XIII) of all the statements by both groups was: "Won't you help... exceptional boys and girls all over Oklahoma? Your contribution will be an act of kindness...that may change the life of one of our special youngsters" (MA10).

There are eight statements which highly correlate to this typical statement for Type XIII. They could be described as: "Reader involvement and effectiveness shown." Of the nine Type XIII statements, five came from the original Establish Conviction facet and four from the Motivate Action statements, predominating the preferences of effective statements by both groups in this type. Professionals prefer telling recipients what to do and showing, through words, how their responses can make a difference. Recipients apparently prefer this technique as well.

The third highest-rated type of statements (Type XII) comprised only two statements characterized by drama. One statement was: "Where does a life of crime begin for a boy only 11 years old?" (AA2) The other, "That was the end of the war for me. When I woke up in a field hospital with pain I've tried to forget, I reached instinctively for where it hurt most and found nothing there" (CI18).

The typical statement for the fourth highest-rated type of statements (Type III) was: "This project gives us a chance to honor those who came before us and the values they cherished: individual enterprise, hard work and voluntary sacrifice" (CI11). This type of statement can be described as "Belief and Value-oriented." The representative statement for this type came from the original Create Interest

facet, as did five of the statements in the type. Of the 13 statements, four came from the Attract Attention facet, one from the Establish Conviction facet and two from the Motivate Action facet. Stating beliefs and values is perceived as effective by both professionals and recipients.

The typical statement for the fifth-highest type of statements (Type VIII) as perceived by professionals and recipients was: "Every step and every movement is a challenge. It isn't easy for them, but then, a lot of things aren't easy for disabled boys and girls" (CI13). This type of statement has the common thread of eliciting emotion. There are 11 statements which significantly correlate with this typical one. Of the total of 12 statements, five are from the original Attract Attention facet, six from the Create Interest facet and one from the Motivate Action facet. As might be expected, none of the statements categorized as emotion-eliciting came from the Establish Conviction facet since this one dealt with numbers and facts. While these kinds of statements were able to draw pictures in people's minds, emotion isn't evoked with facts and figures. Again, the readers can't get involved.

For a complete picture of the five highest-rated types and the statements included in each, refer to Table V.

The five lowest-rated types as perceived by professionals and recipients are Types I, X, XVII, II, VIII with the lowest rated being Type I.

The typical statement for the lowest-rated type (Type I) of statements was: "Find out what valuable prize you may already have won" (AA14).

TABLE V
HIGHEST-RATED TYPES OF STATEMENTS
(SEE APPENDIX A)

	Type									
	XI		XIII		XII		III		VII	
	CI2 Correlation		MA10 Correlation		Typical Statement AA2 or CI18		CI11 Correlation		CI3 Correlation	
Statistically Relevant Statements	AA4	.30	EC10	.57	Only Two in This Type Correlation = .63		AA5	.49	AA3	.54
	AA7	.30	EC13	.27			AA11	.35	AA10	.36
	AA8	.37	EC15	.32			AA16	.35	AA13	.51
	AA9	.42	EC16	.27			AA19	.51	AA14	.34
	AA12	.63	EC20	.43			CI4	.34	AA18	.43
	MA1	.44	MA3	.35			CI7	.52	CI1	.63
	MA2	.51	MA13	.25			CI9	.40	CI5	.49
	MA6	.39	MA16	.60			CI10	.25	CI6	.40
	MA7	.37	MA18	.56			CI16	.30	CI12	.36
	MA8	.35					EC3	.38	CI15	.31
	MA9	.26					MA14	.74	MA11	.63
	MA12	.39					MA19	.29		

There are a total of eight statements in the lowest-rated type. They can be characterized by their attempt at logic. One of the statements highly relevant to the typical statement mentions cash prizes, two others are so simplistic ("Everyday tasks take a little bit longer and can hurt a lot more when someone has a disability"), the reader is left with an "Of course" attitude. Two other statements in the lowest-rated type are exclamatory sentences from the Attract Attention facet. Both professionals and recipients rated the statements low. They did not gain favorable attention, rather were a turn-off at the outset. The last two statements in the lowest-rated type could be said to be absurdities. One claims a dollar will redeem lives, another said a gift will show the reader cares about the health of unborn babies.

The next lowest-rated type (Type X) of statements was typified by the statement: "Africa is suffering from the worst drought of this century" (AA10). This type with 10 statements can be categorized Abstract-Unrelatable.

The statements in this type were typified by abstractness. There is very little a reader could relate to in the group of statements. Half were from the Attract Attention facet, three from the Create Interest facet, one from the Establish Conviction facet and one from the Motivate Action facet. The attempt at attracting attention in an abstract way apparently left the respondents up in the air.

The typical statement for Type XVII could be either one of two statements in the group: "We invite you to help us at this critical time by sending a contribution to our work" (MA7), or, "Your prompt

response to this letter and generous support are indispensable in helping to make the Richard J. Stull Memorial Learning Resources Center a success" (MA6).

Interestingly, the recipients rated these statements higher than did the professionals. There was a difference between the mean total effectiveness of 1.25. The recipients gave the statements a slightly above average rating (5.0), the professionals a below average (3.75) rating. The statements are typified by their simplicity. They simply ask for a donation, nothing more.

The fourth-lowest rated type statement (Type II) was typified by: "This year our fund drive must be more successful than ever because we are expanding both our program to house homeless families and our professional counseling services" (EC15).

This typical statement had the highest relevancy rating of all the typical statements (4.17). That is, there was more agreement, and higher correlations, within this type of statement than within any of the other 17 types of statements found. The next highest cumulative correlation for a typical statement was 3.34 for statement EC5 ("Crippling lung diseases--like Emphysema and Asthma--are a serious threat to many people in the Payne county area.", Type II. The difference between the two statement cumulative correlations was .83--a relevant distance between the types. The amount of agreement in Type II was considerably higher than in all other types.

There was a total of 12 statements in Type II. Five of the statements were from the Establish Conviction facet and five from the Motivate Action facet. An important common characteristics all statements of this type had was their lengthiness. Professionals rated this

type lower than did recipients (difference between the means = 1.0). Apparently professionals consider lengthy statements less effective than did recipients. However, recipients gave these type statements only a slightly above average mean rating (4.9).

All statements in this type were typified by their duality of purpose as well as lengthiness. In most cases, two subjects were discussed. The statements thus are confusing. Frank Hall (1986) mentioned in an interview never to bring up more than one cause per appeal. The typical statement, for example, refers to homeless families and professional counseling services.

Rated fifth-lowest type by both respondent groups was Type VIII typified by the statement, "Along the way, his eye caught the gleam of American tradition and he put those dreams in trust to serve the red, white and blue" (CI4). This group of 13 statements can be summarized, "Melodramatic." There is a blatant attempt to tug on the recipients' heart strings. Both professionals and recipients gave these statements in Type VIII a mean rating of 4.5--just average--perceiving them to be neither effective nor ineffective.

Of the 13 statements, eight were from the Create Interest facet, three from the Attract Attention facet, one from Establish Conviction, and one from Motivate Action. Apparently, in an effort to be interesting, the authors of the eight statements went too far. There seems to be a fine line between interesting and effective.

For a complete picture of the five lowest-rated types and the statements included in each, refer to Table VI.

Finally, the statements with the three lowest and highest mean ratings as determined by each group were pulled from all 80 statements.

TABLE VI
LOWEST-RATED TYPES OF STATEMENTS
(SEE APPENDIX A)

	Type									
	I		X		XVII		II		VIII	
	Typical Statement									
	AA14	Correlation	AA10	Correlation	MA16 or MA17		EC15	Correlation	CI4	Correlation
Statistically Relevant Statements	AA6	.53	AA3	.35			AA20	.81	AA1	.30
	AA7	.26	AA4	.60			CI14	.52	AA2	.32
	CI1	.50	AA18	.63			EC7	.38	AA16	.37
	CI15	.91	AA19	.39			EC9	.57	CI5	.40
	CI16	.33	CI3	.36	Only Two in This		EC10	.29	CI6	.58
	CI19	.36	CI8	.56	Type		EC11	.32	CI7	.52
	MA11	.39	CI18	.32	Correlation = .45		EC14	.32	CI9	.68
			EC5	.45			EC16	.39	CI10	.29
			MA4	.44			EC18	.63	CI11	.35
							MA3	.36	CI20	.30
							MA5	.34	EC4	.45
							MA10	.32	MA2	.38
							MA17	.49		
							MA18	.75		

Professionals gave their highest mean rating (7.3 out of 9) to the statement, "Your generous giving does make the difference." The statement with a mean rating (7.2) very close to the highest was, "Every step and every movement is a challenge. It isn't easy for them, but then, a lot of things aren't easy for disabled boys and girls." The third highest-rated (7.1) statement by professionals was, "Give some very special children a new life."

Rated the lowest (mean rating of 1.6 out of 9) by professionals was, "...I loathed writing the appeal letter asking for membership fees." The second-lowest rated statement (2.0) was, "I cannot overemphasize how dire the situation is." And the third-lowest rated statement (2.2), "In the next several weeks, I will be meeting with several members of the AICR board of directors to plan our coming year's budget. During these meetings, it would be big help to know what programs we will be able to afford next year."

Recipients and professionals agreed on the most effective statement. Recipients gave the statement a somewhat lower mean rating (6.9). Two statements tied for second-highest (6.6) as rated by recipients. They were, "Won't you help...exceptional boys and girls all over Oklahoma? Your contribution will be an act of kindness...that may change the life of one of our special youngsters," and, "Whatever you feel you can spare will be appreciated, and some day I hope you can visit the ranch to see what your help really means."

Rated the lowest (2.3) by recipients was the statement, "Find out what valuable prize you may already have won..." The statement, "...I loathed writing the appeal letter..." was given a 2.7 mean rating,

closely agreeing with the professionals' opinion of the statement. The third lowest rated (2.9) statement according to the recipients was, "Over \$25,000 in cash and prizes is guaranteed to be awarded." Recipients apparently find sweepstakes an unappealing attention-getter in a fund-raising letter.

At least two of the recipient respondents said the organization named in the statement frequently affected their rating of that statement.

ENDNOTES

¹Frank Hall, personal interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, (February 20, 1986).

²Fred Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, 1973), p. 146.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

To determine the most effective form for a fund-raising letter, 10 professional fund raisers and 10 recipients of fund-raising letters were consulted. Each respondent was asked to Q-sort 80 cards.

The Q-sort comprised a quasi-normal distribution and ranking of the cards to determine the relative effectiness of the 80 statements.

The study was designed specifically to answer the question: "What is the relationship between four facets of appeal (in fund-raising letters) and their effectiveness as perceived by professional fund raisers and recipients of those appeals?

The statements were taken from actual fund-raising letters. They were chosen on the basis of their conforming to the four facets of the persuasive letter recommended by several authors: attention, interest, conviction and action.

The two respondent groups generally agreed on the effectiveness of the four facets of the letter (see Table I, page 41). On the surface, no difference was found in the groups' perceptions of effective statements.

Differences did emerge, however, when the ratings were tested for the interaction of respondents and the four facets (see Table II, page 43).

In other words, perceived effectiveness of appeal facets was related significantly to whether the respondent was a professional fund raiser or recipient.

Professionals more than recipients preferred the facets, Attract Attention and Create Interest, while the recipients preferred the facets, Establish Conviction and Motivate Action.

It should be noted 15 percent of the statements had total mean effectiveness-rating differences of 1.5 or greater. Not a large number out of the 80 statements.

Statistically significant differences between the statement ratings were found in even fewer--13 percent (see Table III, page 45).

Through McQuitty's Linkage and Factor Analysis, 17 types of statements were found. Of these, 10 were discussed--the five highest as determined by their mean totals, and the five lowest, determined by the same method (see Table IV, page 48).

The type of statement most preferred by both groups of respondents was characterized by its "you-orientation."

The type of statement rated lowest by both groups contained statements referring to sweepstakes, prizes and attempts at logic.

Both respondent groups rated the same statement, out of all 80, as the most effective. The statement rated the least effective by the professional group was found among the three lowest-rated statements by the recipient group.

Conclusions

Many authors recommended liberal use of the pronoun you and your. The findings bear this out as an effective technique in a fund-raising letter.

Professionals place much more importance on gaining the attention and holding the interest of the readers than any of the other four aspects of a fund-raising letter. Being professionals in a somewhat creative endeavor, it seems understandable they would place more emphasis on the parts of the letter which show the most inventiveness. Stating facts and figures and telling a reader what to do are cut and dried. Creativeness isn't as vital in these sections of the letter.

The recipients, on the other hand, prefer to be shown the extent of the cause and exactly how they can help. Either the recipients aren't as aware of the attention-getting and interest-holding sentences, or they simply do not deem them as important as the last part of the letter, picturing (literally or in words) the cause and asking for action.

As mentioned previously, some recipients give to a cause or preferred a statement because of the name of the organization and their familiarity with it. In those cases, particularly, gaining and holding their attention and interest isn't as critical. Frank Hall, a professional respondent, pointed out the veracity of these comments when he said, "Direct mail identifies you."¹

Overall, both groups did agree on the most effective statements. No wonder philanthropies are able to report an increase in their yearly income. Individual giving steadily has increased since 1970 when the amount was over \$16 billion to well over \$61 billion in 1984.²

Hall said, "There are three parts to the anatomy of a gift: warm feelings, needs are communicated, asked to give."³

He was right on target, particularly regarding the last two parts. Recipients in this study certainly agreed with him. The needs must be communicated, either verbally or photographically, and the reader must be asked.

An interesting finding was the recipients' dislike of sweepstakes and prize offers in connection with an appeal letter. Sweepstakes are a trendy, controversial approach to fund raising--enjoying some success by certain organizations. O'Rourke (1985) says the trend is confusing and offensive to some recipients.⁴ And so it was.

AMVETS, O'Rourke reports, have found substantial advantages to using sweepstakes mailings.⁵ The success must depend on who the recipients are. The American Kidney Fund has used the sweepstakes in their mailings at some extra expense. It appears to be a gamble on the part of the organization using it, however, as the recipients responding aren't really interested in the organization, but in the sweepstakes. Repeat donations are unlikely from those particular recipients.

My hypothesis was supported on the one hand and disproved on the other. The respondent groups agreed on the effectiveness of the 80 statements. It was the different facets of the letter where disagreement was found.

Recommendations

The recommendations resulting from this study should be of interest to that area of public relations known as fund raising. All recipients need do is sit back and wait. There is no doubt the appeal letters will show up in their mailboxes.

Primarily, fund raisers should construct their appeal letters to conform to recipient preferences. That is, the liberal use of sentences and photographs picturing the organization or the particular need for which the donation is being solicited. And emphasis should be placed on the "Action" statements in which the method of responding is specifically spelled out.

Professionals should always include a P.S. in their appeal letter. As stated previously, it is another opportunity to ask for a donation and tell how it can be done as well.

Since agreement was relatively high on the "attention" and "interest" facets of the letter, those sections shouldn't be neglected. Simply, the emphasis should be placed later on in the letter.

Another important aspect of an effective letter is the liberal use of personal pronouns. The extent to which a letter is made to seem written for just one recipient greatly affects the perceived effectiveness. As Van Groesbeck (1982) commented, he always writes his letters as though they were going to a favorite aunt.⁶

Exaggerated, simplistic statements should be avoided. Most recipients realize a single dollar won't change someone's life. And never tell recipients you "loathed" or otherwise disliked writing the letter.

Sentences should be kept short. Recipients don't care for long-winded sentences. Short, drama-filled sentences, in fact, were a preferred type, both groups agreed.

It is suggested, in the event of further study in this area, the organizations' names be deleted from statements or letters. In the case of the recipients, the organization's being identified in a statement affected the ranking.

A somewhat same effect may have occurred in the case of some professionals. They may have recognized a statement or statements that they have written. That certainly would have prejudiced the outcome of the ratings on those particular statements. For example, statements were included from the Oklahoma State University Foundation and the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation. There were several professionals who participated in the study from both organizations.

As government subsidy to charitable and educational causes declines, the need for corporate and private donations increases. The techniques for cultivating those donations continually need improvement and updating. As Lewis says, "What worked in 1970, won't work in 1990."⁷

With increased use of computers to acquire donor lists, the need for effective ways to reach them becomes more acute. Continued research and studies in this area are warranted.

ENDNOTES

¹Frank Hall, speech to Stillwater Medical Center Foundation Board, (February 20, 1986).

²Giving USA Annual Report 1985, American Association of Fund-Raising Counsel, Inc. (The Algonquin Press, Inc., N.Y., 1985), p. 11.

³Hall.

⁴Helen L. O'Rourke, "Direct Mail Fund Raising: Sweepstakes and Other Trends," Fund Raising Management, (Aug., 1985), p. 56.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Kevin Van Groesbeck, "Copy is King and Here Are Ten Steps to Prove It," Fund Raising Management, Vol. 12, (Feb., 1982), p. 40.

⁷Herschell Gordon Lewis, "What Worked in 1970 Won't Work Anymore in 1990," Fund Raising Management, Vol. 16, No. 5, (July, 1985), p. 64.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

STATEMENTS FOR Q-SORT CARDS

Attract Attention (AA)

1. Life's battles do not always go to the strongest or fastest; sooner or later those who win are those who think they can.
2. Where does a life of crime begin for a boy only 11 years old?
3. Each year 250,000 American babies are born with birth defects.
4. I'm sure you'll agree that one of the greatest joys in life is the creation of new life--the birth of a healthy, bouncing baby.
5. Give some very special children a new life.
6. Five years ago they said we were nuts!
7. We hope you haven't forgotten us!
8. What is a dollar worth?
9. Our children depend on you!
10. Africa is suffering from the worst drought of this century.
11. Every step of the way is a challenge to be met.
12. Your past gifts are truly appreciated.
13. Help back a fighter!
14. Find out what valuable prize you may already have won...
15. This year, the world will be short of many things--among them oil and food...and love and peace.
16. A shipwrecked sailor was struggling in the water. The shore was near, but his strength was almost spent.
17. There's a revolution going on in the world today: a biological revolution that will touch virtually every area of our lives.
18. As we look out upon our world today, storm-tossed, and confused on every continent, the anguished cries of our brothers and sisters, weak with hunger, victims of oppression and violence, come to us from all sides.
19. Christmas is a time to appreciate the blessed light of goodness shared.
20. ...I loathed writing the appeal letter asking for membership fees.

Create Interest (CI)

1. Everyday tasks take a little bit longer and can hurt a lot more when someone has a disability.
2. Your generous giving does make the difference.
3. Every step and every movement is a challenge. It isn't easy for them, but then, a lot of things aren't easy for disabled boys and girls.
4. Along the way, his eye caught the gleam of American tradition and he put those dreams in trust to serve the Red, White and Blue.
5. Arthritis is not limited to any one age or sex. The disease often strikes between the ages of 20 and 45, the most productive years of life.
6. There is darkness in our world--darkness as perceived in hunger, war, a searching after God, and in the blindness called illiteracy.
7. Since that historic morning when our forefathers first resisted tyranny, a heroic succession of devoted Americans have stepped forward to perpetuate their unyielding spirit.
8. I cannot overemphasize how dire the situation is.
9. This majestic monument to freedom stands as a shining beacon of hope for every man, woman and child who longs for a better, freer life.
10. We are trying to keep alive a symbol that, for nearly one hundred years, has given form and substance to one of the most powerful forces within man: the desire to be free.
11. This project gives us a chance to honor those who came before us and the values they cherished: individual enterprise, hard work and voluntary sacrifice.
12. What if the baby is born with a serious birth defect?
13. But in the goodness of your heart, perhaps you'll find that sending a dollar or two to help paralyzed veterans will give you just as much pleasure as the cards.
14. During this time, tens of thousands of Americans will make their annual contribution to fight cancer through American Institute for Cancer Research.
15. Over \$25,000 in cash and prizes is guaranteed to be awarded.

16. As Americans, you and I share a belief in the value of human beings, whoever and wherever they are.
17. He was a skinny mite of a boy when he came to us; a boy who had never known love, happiness or parental security.
18. That was the end of the war for me. When I woke up in a field hospital with pain I've tried to forget, I reached instinctively for where it hurt most and found nothing there.
19. A dollar can be used to redeem people's lives.
20. We who love God and country will be sorry if we sit back and do nothing.

Establish Conviction (EC)

1. It will take over two years to complete and cost a total of \$45 million to rebuild and preserve the Statue and Liberty Island.
2. Through your generous support, Easter Seals can continue making available speech therapy, physical therapy, special medical equipment and other care and treatment services.
3. Concerned Women for America has grown to almost 180,000 women nationally--women who care--women who will speak out.
4. We are fighting inflation as best we can at home and overseas (where it is so much worse). We can use the fastest, most economical machinery to print Scriptures at the lowest possible cost.
5. Crippling lung diseases--like Emphysema and Asthma--are a serious threat to many people in the Payne County area.
6. For more than 40 years CARE has responded to human suffering and the emergency need for food, clothing, shelter, and medical supplies.
7. Their combined support keeps the heritage strong, the memories rich.
8. Thanks to Intensive Care nurseries, we've helped cut the newborn death rate due to low birth weight by 47%, since 1964.
9. Early damage assessment reports indicate more than 600 single family dwellings and 141 mobile homes were destroyed or seriously damaged. Red Cross shelters fed some 8,000 meals by April 29.
10. The council is entirely dependent upon the community for its funding. Although the United Way is a significant supporter, approximately one half of the budget must come from other sources.

11. Unselfish generosity by Boys Town supporters has helped make life more promising for more than 15,000 troubled boys.
12. Today, nearly 400 boys from 5 to 18 years of age live with us. ...so it is a tremendous responsibility to promise a boy a good home and 12 years of education along with the hundreds of "little things" it takes for a 24-hour, year-round home.
13. For more than 35 years, AMVETS has proudly resolved to "Keep Americans Forever Reminded..."
14. Child care in 1985 is more complex and specialized and geared to the individual. Thus, it is necessary to seek and employ professional staff in child guidance and counseling and specialized education.
15. This year our fund drive must be more successful than ever because we are expanding both our program to house homeless families and our professional counseling services.
16. I have read the report from a team of engineers, architects and government officials which identifies the areas of deterioration and lists the major repairs that are urgently needed.
17. Through the Center, health care executives will be able to enhance their managerial competence through participation in an expanded process of self-assessment.
18. In the next several weeks, I will be meeting with several members of the AICR Board of Directors to plan our coming year's budget. During these meetings, it would be a big help to know what programs we will be able to afford next year.
19. During the first three decades we responded to the requests of Bishops and people in mission lands to establish schools, hospitals, clinics for health and social welfare.
20. When you support PVA you are backing the nation's #1 organization of paralyzed veterans. And I'm proud to tell you not one penny of your money goes to outside fund-raisers--we manage the greeting card program ourselves.

Motivate Action (MA)

1. So please help if you can. Every dollar makes a difference.
2. Your gift of \$5, \$10, \$15 or larger tribute will go a long way toward letting our heroes know they didn't trade in tomorrow for yesterday.

3. Whatever you feel you can spare will be appreciated, and some day I hope you can visit the Ranch to see what your help really means.
4. Please. You can help find a cure through research. Give to the Arthritis Foundation--before arthritis becomes a PAIN in your life.
5. Your first gift to the Friendship Fund (of any amount) can help make a difference.
6. Your prompt response to this letter and generous support are indispensable in helping to make the Richard J. Stull Memorial Learning Resources Center a success.
7. We invite you to help us at this critical time by sending a contribution to our work.
8. A \$5 contribution will be greatly appreciated.
9. Please share, dear friend, in our works and hopes for the future by sending a contribution.
10. Won't you help...exceptional boys and girls all over Oklahoma? Your contribution will be an act of kindness...that may change the life of one of our special youngsters.
11. If you care about the health of unborn babies, please send your gift right now.
12. Your tax-deductible contribution of \$20 or \$25 will be used to seek the cause behind the mysterious killer--sudden infant death syndrome.
13. Won't you help us obtain the dollars required for us to keep probing the deep mysteries of Cancer, Heart Disease and Arthritis--among the bitterest enemies of mankind?
14. Act now and experience the satisfaction of knowing your gift has enriched OSU in a very special way.
15. That's why I ask you now to renew your support of nationwide activities against lung disease, air pollution and smoking.
16. We are asking you to make a serious gift that will affect the lives of our young people in this season of joyful giving.
17. We ask you to examine this brochure remembering our commitment to a better life for the youth and give generously.
18. In the true spirit of Christmas and keeping in mind that we have given all care thus far without charging for the care, won't you consider making a Christmas donation to Hospice to directly help care for a patient and family in tremendous need of our services.

19. You can leave a portion of the gifts God has given you in this life through a simple codicil to an existing will.
20. Won't you take action now while my letter is before you?

APPENDIX B

RESPONDENTS

Professional Respondents

1. Kurt Carter - Oklahoma State University Foundation
2. John Hopkins - Oklahoma State University Athletic Gifts
3. Dolores Fowler - Oklahoma State University Foundation
4. Jerry Gill - Oklahoma State University Alumni Association
5. Dale Ross - Oklahoma State University Foundation
6. Frank Hall - Los Angeles Orthopaedic Foundation
7. Mary Simpson - Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation
8. C. C. Nolen - Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation
9. Don Mahlmeister - Catholic Foundation Archdiocese of Oklahoma
10. Shelly Hartman - Stillwater United Way

Recipient Respondents

1. Craig Chappell - Oklahoma State University Public Information Office
2. Zane Quible - Oklahoma State University Management Science Professor
3. Phyllis Barnes - Homemaker
4. Linda Phillips - Homemaker
5. Lynda Brown - Payne County Court Clerk
6. Mary Bea Drummond - Oklahoma State University Public Information Office
7. Galen Goeden - Pharmacist, U.S. government Indian Agency
8. Richard Berberet - Oklahoma State University Entomology Professor
9. Francis Zipple - Stillwater Starting Point II
10. Michael Monnot - Stillwater Medical Center

VITA \

Gail Echols Monnot

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: THE ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT OF EFFECTIVE FUND-RAISING LETTERS
AS PERCEIVED BY PROFESSIONALS AND SELECTED RECIPIENTS

Major Field: Mass Communications

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Los Angeles, California, November 29, 1941.
Married LeRoy Dean Severe, November 21, 1962. Four children,
Christopher Lee, Ammie Marie, Stephen Elliott, and Thomas
Donald. Widowed, April, 1970. Married Michael Roger Monnot,
September 30, 1972. One son, Timothy Michael.

Education: Graduated from Bishop McGuinness High School, May, 1959;
received Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Oklahoma
State University, May, 1963; completed requirements for Master
of Science degree at Oklahoma State University, July, 1986.

Professional Experience: Public Relations Intern, Stillwater
Chamber of Commerce, Stillwater, Oklahoma, Summer, 1984;
writer, College of Arts and Sciences and Public Information,
Oklahoma State University, 1985-1986.