Thank you for purchasing our webinar on demand. These are the PowerPoint slides. Please click here to access the MP3 audio recording.

The link above will take you to a password protected page on the GIFT site. The password is GIFT2013dm (case sensitive).

Questions? Please contact jennifer@grassrootsfundraising.org or 510-452-4520 X302. Thanks!
The Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training (GIFT) provides training, resources and analysis to help organizations raise more money and be accountable to their communities. We focus especially on groups working on social justice issues and based in communities of color.

Some of GIFT’s programs include:

• The *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*—a bimonthly magazine with tips, tools and inspiration to help you become a better fundraiser!

Call us today 510-452-4520 x303 to start your subscription for just $30!

• Training and Consulting Services

• Money for Our Movements: A Social Justice Fundraising Conference.
Amazing Appeal Letters That Are … Appealing

Chat & raise hand
Mute = *6
Unmute = *7

If you lose your internet connection, reconnect using the link emailed to you. If you lose your phone connection, re-dial the phone number and re-join.

Audio Dial-In Information:
U.S. & Canada: 866.740.1260
Access Code: 4524520

ReadyTalk support:
800-843-9166

Recording

Survey
Amazing Appeal Letters That Are... Appealing!

Presenter: Dalya F. Massachi

Copyright © 2013 Dalya F. Massachi
www.WritingToMakeADifference.com
**MY BACKGROUND:**

| • professional writer, trainer, coach for 20 years | ![Image of a workshop] |
| • authored a host of proposals, articles, websites | ![Image of documents] |
| • trained thousands of workshop and webinar participants |  

| • Involved in 8 books | ![Book images] |

| • 2000-2004: Founding Director of BAIDO | ![BAIDO logo] |

Copyright 2013 Dalya F. Massachi  
www.WritingToMakeADifference.com
Today:
A sampler of what you’ll find in my book
“The letter we all love to receive is one that carries so much of the writer's personality that she seems to be sitting beside us, looking at us directly and talking just as she really would.”

— Emily Post, American author
JUNK MAIL?
JUNK MAIL?

- Only junk if you have no interest in them!

- I often stash the ones I find most compelling and review them at my convenience. I appreciate that “junk”!
THE 2P2R PRE-WRITING SYSTEM

1. Understand your **Purposes**

2. Define your **Priority info**

3. Know your **Readers**

4. Refine your **messages**

“Good writing does not come from fancy word processors or expensive typewriters or special pencils or hand-crafted quill pens. Good writing comes from good thinking.”

– Ann Loring
UNDERSTAND YOUR SPECIFIC WRITING PURPOSES

- **Inspire** your readers to act
- Encourage the view of your org as a solid **investment** that will get **results** they can be proud of (they contributed!)
- Show your **pressing** issue in a compelling way; why are **you** the org to address it?
- **Instill** **trust** in your ability to get the job done
- **Stand out** from the crowd
DIFFERENT PURPOSES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS

Examples:

- Introduce your org to a new potential donor
- Acknowledge a long-standing donor’s generosity, request a renewal/increased gift
- Request a special gift on a project of special concern to the donor
DEFINE YOUR PRIORITY INFO

“Instead of learning to organize my priorities I’ve become comfortable with panic.”
“Your fundraising [appeal] letters will be successful only if they reflect what's unique about your organization and uniquely attractive to your donors.”

—Mal Warwick
YOUR UNIQUENESS

- Under-served clients, location, etc.
- Outstanding credentials or experience
- Extensive collaborations
- Unusual point of view or approach

Ask yourself: When someone hears about your work, what images, feelings, and ideas do you want them to associate with you? What’s amazing, special, and inspiring about your work?
EXAMPLE

IDEX supports economic development initiatives in a way that is quite different from traditional models that are often top-down, paternalistic, and money-centered. We focus on:

- The value of community-based solutions and the wisdom of local leaders who are grounded in their communities
- Providing continued support so that local partner organizations can apply funds where most needed and can plan for the future
ASK YOURSELF:

1) What’s inspiring and intriguing about your organization or program?

2) What is the unique value it adds to the community?

3) What makes your org a good investment—NOW?
LET’ S MAKE A DEAL!

Ask yourself: “What valuable benefits do we offer readers?”

They want to know: “What’s in it for ME and US?”

- Convenient opportunity to make a difference/give something back
- A sense that they are part of a winning team/sum is much greater than the parts
- Feelings of being kind, generous, important
- Improved morale, excitement, or inspiration
RESULTS/IMPACT

This year’s accomplishments; plans for next year

Examples:
- How you are surviving/thriving in this economy
- How you are poised to implement your new strategic plan

So what? HOW does your work make a difference?
EXAMPLE: SLOW FOOD USA

Slow Food USA reconnects Americans with the people, traditions, plants, animals, fertile soils, and waters that produce our food. We seek to inspire a transformation in food policy, production practices, and market forces.

So what?

...so that together, we can ensure equity, sustainability and pleasure in the food we eat.

©2011 Dalya F Massachi
www.dfmassachi.net
WHERE THE MONEY GOES

How far will you stretch each gift (esp. in these tough times)?

$XX will:

- Deliver a meal to a hungry person
- Acquire a new resource for a community in need
- Offer a disadvantaged student a scholarship
- Educate decision-makers about a pressing topic
- Provide materials for a volunteer cleanup
HOW CREDIBLE ARE YOU?

- Who’s already on board? (endorsements)

- Mentions in the press

- Excellence ratings: CharityNavigator, BBB, greatnonprofits.org

- Transparent about everything (e.g., get more details on website)
ENGAGE BOTH THE HEART & THE HEAD

- Even left-brained people need an emotional understanding

- Your reader will remember how you make her/him feel more than anything else
CONNECT PERSON-TO-PERSON

- Be reader-centered
- Think and write in terms of “you” (the reader), “I” (your friend)
- Briefly communicate shared values, needs, interests
- Act the host giving a tour of the most inspiring parts of your “home”
- Use their language, intimate voice
EXAMPLE: IMAGINE...

“Imagine what it would be like to walk at a pace you really enjoy because you don't have to count steps or worry about what's in front of you. To have the freedom to think your thoughts, or carry on an engrossing conversation as you walk with a friend.

And now, just imagine the joy of companionship, of feeling the comfort of having a trusted canine by your side—a beautiful animal that wins the admiration even of complete strangers. What a conversational icebreaker—what a friend-maker!”

(www.guidedogs.com)
SENSE OF URGENCY

- Did something happen in the news that you need to address right away?

- Are you seeing a trend that will only get worse if not dealt with now?

- Can you use a deadline to spur action now? (before the winter comes/a challenge grant)
WHAT’S ON THEIR MINDS RIGHT NOW?

EX: Appeal letter from the Union of Concerned Scientists

Envelope teaser: “There are too many environmental groups. Why don’t you folks work together?”

- Collaboration is a “guiding principle”
- Strengthen the entire Enviro. Movement
WHAT’S ON THEIR MINDS RIGHT NOW?

EX: Pesticide Action Network

Envelope teaser:
“Do you want pesticides in your body? Better speak up now!”

“Did anyone ask you if you wanted pesticides in your body? Well, they’re here! Deep inside your body there’s evidence of direct exposure to some of the most toxic chemicals known…”

©2012 Dalya F Massachi
www.WritingToMakeADifference.com
KNOW YOUR READERS

- New or existing donor?
- What is her relationship to your org?
- What do you know about his hopes, goals, motivations and interests?
- What does your reader already know about you?
- What dollar amounts are appropriate to ask for?

Group your readers accordingly.
THEY WANT TO KNOW...

- Is your work related to my life/how I feel?
- How have you benefited my community?
- Do I agree that your activities will accomplish your mission?
- Exactly how will my money be spent?
- Who else is already behind this?
- How much can I afford? And can I give in installments?
Make one gift now and we’ll never ask for another donation again.

Ms. Dalya Massachi  
PO Box 5607  
Berkeley, CA 94705-0607

Dear Ms. Massachi,

Today may be the most important day in the life of a child born with a cleft...

...because today may be the day when he or she receives free cleft repair surgery funded by generous donors to Smile Train’s 2011 California Annual Appeal!
REFINE YOUR MESSAGES

Match your READERS’ interests with your writing PRIORITIES

STEP 1: Get in your reader’s “zone”

Ask yourself: What would make your reader want to read or skim those letters?
CREATE A JUICY HEADLINE

- Called a “Johnson box” (named after the copywriter who designed it)

- Brief 1-3 sentences above the salutation that tells the story in a nutshell: your offer, the most important benefit, biggest news

EX. from Feeding America:

In the greatest food-producing nation on earth, more than 17 million children face hunger. YOU CAN HELP! Every $1 can help provide 7 meals for hungry kids.
PERSONALIZE YOUR SALUTATION

- Use actual name if you can

- OR get more specific than “Dear friend”:

  “Dear hiking enthusiast”
  “Dear classical music lover”
  “Dear animal lover”
  “Dear environmental activist”
  “Dear organic foodie”
"WITH YOU EVERYTHING STARTS WITH A HUMOROUS ANECDOTE."
DON’T START OUT WITH A FOCUS ON “WE” (the org)

EXAMPLE

Original: We want to bring native plants back to the community. But we need your help!

Suggested revision: Native plants bring many benefits to our community and help avoid eco-trouble down the line. With just a few simple steps, you can help improve our neighborhood’s environment!

©2012 Dalya F Massachi
www.WritingToMakeADifference.com
SHARE STORIES

Capture the essence of your work with short scenes and quotes from 1-2 people similar in values to your readers, or people they would care about.

How have they/the community benefited: results and importance?
USE QUOTES WELL

Capture the essence with short quotes from your clients

Ask: “How did you benefit from the experience? What changes did you see happen? And why is that important to you? What other changes did it lead to?”

Is there a juicy piece of dialogue that illustrates the scene?
Juan Romagoza Arce:

“When I testified, a strength came over me. I felt like I was in the prow of a boat and that there were many, many people rowing behind—that they were moving me into this moment. I felt that if I looked back at them, I’d weep because I’d see them again: wounded, tortured, raped, naked, torn, bleeding… Being involved in this case, confronting the Generals with these terrible facts—that’s the best possible therapy a torture survivor could have.” (www.cja.org)
SHOW, DON’T JUST TELL

- **Ask yourself:** How would you illustrate the concept in a photo or video?
- Convey 1-2 striking details
- Show HOW your solution benefits folks
- Use word pictures:
  - **NOT** “affordable housing and good nutrition”
  - **BUT** “roof and 3 healthy meals a day”
1 COMPELLING STATISTIC

- Must be hard to believe
- Make it easy to understand (without too much background)
- It has to show the context or importance of your work
- Must be illustrated in the story
ASK FOR THE MONEY!

Trap: “Just laying out all the facts should be enough to make the request obvious!”

EX:
We need your help to continue our work.

To investigate and file a legal case, we must devote an average of $80,000 in expenses plus 2,000 staff attorney hours. We rely on individual donations for almost half of our operating budget. For every dollar received, we deliver four dollars in value because of our network of pro bono attorneys, investigators and researchers.
ACTIVATE WITH YOUR ENDING

“You have to hold your audience in writing to the very end—much more than in talking, when people have to be polite and listen to you.” — Brenda Ueland

Ask yourself: “If your readers were to take away just one thing, it would be ________.”

- Re-read your opening & closing. Do they work together?
- Your “call to action”:
  - Simple details they need to know
  - Limited-time offer or deadline
  - Reminder of the benefits they will enjoy NOW
TOP PERSON SIGNS

• Add: handwritten note to friends/colleagues

• Include something personal about the signer

• Idea: Join me as we fulfill our mission; I will ensure that $ will be well-used.

Example:
“As always, if you have any questions or suggestions for how we can become an even better community resource, please feel free to contact me directly.”
INCLUDE A P.S.

- Studies: P.S. is 1 of 2 most commonly read pieces (other one: Johnson Box)
- Repeat your strongest points here:
  - Specifics of what you are asking for
  - What it will mean to your community
  - Reminder of the urgency
  - Any special offer
- Unusual example from The Carter Center:
  “PS: If at any time you’re not satisfied with the Carter Center results, I’ll refund your donation.”
LET IDEAS GERMINATE

"The beautiful part of writing is that you don't have to get it right the first time, unlike, say, a brain surgeon."

—Robert Cormier

- Wait at least 24 hours before starting to revise
- Keep a notepad & pen on your nightstand: invites creative ideas
CULTIVATE CONCISENESS: LESS IS MORE

“I didn't have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead.” —Mark Twain

- 1-2 pages/1-2 screens
- Sentences: 14-20 words max.
- KISSS: Keep It Short, Simple, Skimmable
- Focus on the action and the ending
- Appeal letter ≠ grant proposal or essay
PROOFREAD!

- Check your document for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and other slip-ups

- Always read your piece out loud (even if it’s only to yourself)

"I’m really not much of a proof reader but I did catch most of your B.S."
PLEASING TO THE EYE

Use:

- White space/chunks
- Subheads that tell the story
- Legible font
- Color (if you can)
- Bullets
COMPLEMENT WITH GRAPHICS

- Not just cherry on top: integrated

**EX.** from Plenty International:

“The enclosed photos convey the essence of our projects more clearly and directly than anything we could say. As you look at them, remember: None of this would be happening without your support.”

- Captions (“micro-copy”): summarize, ID left to right, double-check, present tense vivid verbs

- Photos: people accomplishing/benefiting from your mission

Copyright 2013 Dalya F. Massachi
www.WritingToMakeADifference.com
DON’T FORGET OTHER PIECES

Reinforce the message of your letter with:

1. **Response card**: Yes! To signer or clients; reminder of impact $ will have; different possible $ amounts (including “other amount”); return address

2. **Return envelope**: Stamp/ask for a stamp to save $


4. **Outer envelope**: Teaser w/question answered in the letter; highlight special offer
This heat map shows where users’ eyes traveled on a screen. Red and yellow are where they spent the most time.

- Most critical info: upper left-hand corner, left column
- 1st 2 words of a sentence or paragraph: most seen

Source: Jakob Nielsen, useit.com
WRITING WORKOUT

**STEP 1:** Does it answer the reader’s questions:

- Is your work related to my life/how I feel?
- How have you benefited my community in the past?
- Do I agree that your activities will accomplish your mission?
- How will my money be spent?
- Who else is already behind this?
- How much can I afford? And can I give in installments?

**STEP 2:** What do you like most? How could it improve?
"Find a subject you care about and which you in your heart feel others should care about. It is this genuine caring, not your games with language, which will be the most compelling and seductive element in your style."

— Kurt Vonnegut
MANY OTHER WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR RESULTS:

- Writing coaching (indiv. & group)

- Editing services (proposals, books, etc.)

- Free newsletter
WRAP-UP QUESTION

What is the most valuable thing you are taking away from today? And how will you use that info?
✔ FREE feedback session by conference call

✔ 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month

More info at:
WritingToMakeADifference.com
YOUR SPECIAL DISCOUNT!

20% off a Paper or E-book copy ~ BONUS thru 3/8/13 ~

WritingToMakeADifference.com/GIFT

Gold Winner, ForeWord Reviews Book of the Year
Silver Winner, Independent Publisher Book Award
Gold Winner, Elit Electronic Book Award

Copyright 2013 Dalya F. Massachi
www.WritingToMakeADifference.com
WANT YOUR APPEAL LETTER REVIEWED?

- 1-2 pages, single-sided
- MS Word
- Full comments and suggestions

GIFT SPECIAL OFFER: $29
(regularly up to $50)
WritingToMakeADifference.com/GIFT