



E-Newsletter for United Ways



April 2008

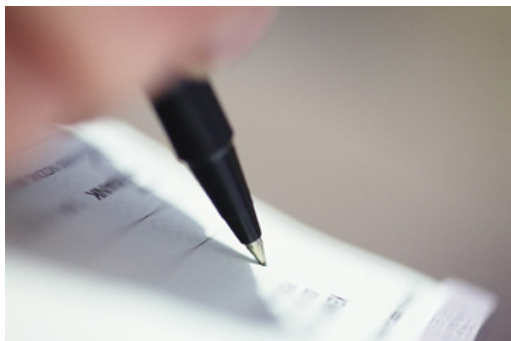
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What Donors Know

By Gary M. Goscenski, Director of Consulting Services



Our company has conducted surveys of donors for United Ways for years. Donor surveys are normally conducted by mail and it is the donor's responsibility to mail back their completed survey and comments. Last month instead of a survey in the envelope, we received this letter:

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for your recent survey regarding the United Way. I am hard pressed to complete this survey because I don't know how to answer the questions. In reading through the questionnaire, I realize I don't know anything about what the United Way does.

I never hear anything about how the money was spent, whom it was spent on, or to what benefit my donation made to the community. In fact, after I send my check, I never hear anything from the United Way until they want money again.

I'm beginning to realize that this doesn't make any sense. I'm not sure why I'm giving money except on the reputation of the United Way. Maybe this needs to be reconsidered.

This was the first time we received a letter like this and we have been working with United Ways for nearly 20 years. It makes me wonder how many other donors feel like this.

Our surveys of United Way donors consistently find about one-third of the donors who respond to the survey want more information, especially information about the impact of their contribution. Fortunately, most donors who want more information generally rate United Way positively.

Featured Article

["10 Ways to Make Your Online Press Room Perform For Your Nonprofit"](#)

A great online media room means the difference between multiple column inches and a mere mention, if that.

Useful Links

[Thirty-Minute Email Newsletter Makeover](#)

Having a better newsletter doesn't have to mean spending a lot of time

[Nonprofit Marketing Tips](#)

Sign up for a webinar that offers tips to understanding what baby boomer donors want from your nonprofit

[Center for Communications and Community](#)

Guides on how to write a public service announcement and press release, telephone, and email accuracies.

[More On Us](#)

Did You Know?

However, our surveys also show that donors who increase their giving to United Way are donors who feel they better understand what United Way does and the impact it has in the community. The relationship is straight-forward; a better understanding of United Way results in better support. If one-third of your donors are unlikely to increase their contribution to United Way because they lack understanding of what United Way does, that makes a strong financial case for investing in communication.

It has been, and always will be important for United Way to maintain their good name. But as the letter from the donor suggests, it is as important, if not more important, for United Way to clearly, effectively, and consistently communicate what they do to all of their donors. For more information please visit our website: www.perspec.com, or e-mail msears@perspec.com.

Communicating Your Efforts: How Well Does Your United Way Measure Up?

With United Way in the midst of changing the way it raises and distributes money, United Ways across the country need to make sure their communication methods are documenting their successes and tracking results. Based on a recent poll, public confidence in charities has declined since last year with only one-quarter of Americans reporting that they feel nonprofit groups do a "very good" job of helping people. The results of the poll, commissioned by New York University Organizational Performance Initiative, shows a setback for nonprofits in comparison to the results of the same survey given in 2006.

Paul Light, a New York University scholar, says "there is not a national messaging campaign about how the nonprofit sector helps people, there's no effort by foundations and nonprofits on how to promote the sector in any way except for the occasional public-service ad," he said during a recent interview.

The first step is to find how to best communicate to your target audience, and the most effective way to do so is research. "Research Rules", by R.C. Hershey and A. Posey, offers a few hints: 1) strong communication methods are in the best interest of both the organization and the people they serve, 2) Being visible means being successful, and 3) Good research always pays for itself. In our experience conducting surveys for United Ways, information can help implement better resources and help to seek out more effective ways of communicating your message. Surveys can offer objective evaluations on how effective your programs have been in accomplishing your goals.

For more information about the services we provide for United Ways, visit our website www.perspec.com, or e-mail msears@perspec.com and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.



•
Fifty-six percent of donors said that charities send too many e-mail messages

•
Seventy-four percent of donors said that it is inappropriate for a charity to obtain their e-mail address from a commercial database

•
Eighty-two percent of donors said they don't think it is right for charities to send them messages about another organization

•
Eighty-one percent of donors dislike messages that take an urgent tone in seeking a repeat donation

•
Forty-six percent of donors said the charity's messages do a good job of making them feel connected to the organization

For more information about this study, visit [The Chronicle of Philanthropy](#)

Featured United Way

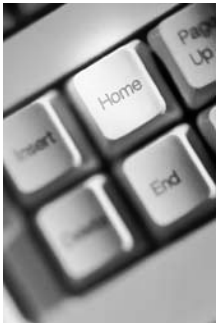
Would you like your United Way highlighted in a future issue? Send information about your organization, accomplishments, and/or goals to info@perspec.com to reserve a spot!

Featured Blog

[Don't Throw Money Away on the Wrong Message to the Right Audience](#)

By Nancy E. Schwartz

We want your Feedback!



Was this newsletter helpful? Let us know what we can do to improve. Contact info@perspec.com.

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Success is going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.

-Winston Churchill

United Way CD-ROM



A resource developed especially for United Ways. CD-ROM includes all the information about Perspectives Consulting Group, Inc.: who we are, and what we do. Request a copy of our United Way CD-ROM by e-mailing info@perspec.com or call (800) 724-9994.

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