

Oh, CHARITIES? If you had more money ... you could do more good.
If you do better communications ... you WILL have more money.



Lost one of our best

[Tony Elischer](#), the charismatic founder and director of [Think Consulting Solutions](#), died on January 12, 2016, of cancer. Too young: he was in his 50s. With far too much provocation left undone: Tony was a vigorous change agent on a global scale, with fresh and challenging perspectives on fundraising and its future. He was a lovely person to spend time with: fun, enthusiastic, loving and warm. Tributes poured in. Left: [Blakely](#), the Canadian agency where Tony also served as VP, International Strategy, quickly renamed its boardroom.



Eminently re-quotable

When sending an appeal, say "Your gift will...." When sending thanks, say "Your gift is...." When sending a newsletter, say "Your gift has...." The "sagecraft" of [Steven Screen](#), first heard at the 2015 [Nonprofit Storytelling Conference](#). PS: 2016 is in Chicago.

Letters from you & yours...

Dear Tom...

Below: US ED digs deeper into Facebook fundraising, gets crazy impressive results, generously shares her hard-won tips. ¶ AND an already outstanding print newsletter wonders: Is the envelope worth the cost?

I met Denise Cohn in June 2015 at a training day hosted by [the Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut](#).

She was excited by my field report re: what Australia's [Pareto](#) agency had done on Facebook for [Soi Dog](#), a client of theirs. Soi Dog now raises a jaw-dropping \$300K-400K a month **through Facebook fundraising alone**.

Denise was already doing stuff on Facebook for *her* animal welfare charity (she's now the ED of [Dogs Deserve Better](#), in Virginia). But she was eager to do lots more. She also promised to share how her adventures in Facebook fundraising evolved.

She recently wrote me:

"I LOVE this [Facebook] stuff and can talk about it for hours. I am certainly not an expert but WOW! have I learned a lot, and every bit of it brings in donations.

"Prior to this our typical Facebook post asking for donations brought in between \$300 and \$700 dollars.

"Our last big one brought in \$15,000 in 6 days."

How Denise got a 3,000% improvement in her Facebook revenue

Here are her tips so far (she's always experimenting):

1) Every Facebook page should have a DONATE NOW button. It's easy to do, takes two minutes. If they don't have a Paypal account (or something similar), open one!

2) Every Facebook post should have a line on the bottom which states something like: "if you would like to help more dogs/kids/whatever like [name], click here to donate now."

3) Every Paypal donate link should be set up to include the ability to make it a recurring donation (monthly). Again, it takes two minutes to set up.

4) **Post often.** Every two hours. If you have a large following (we have over a million), posts only reach 7-11% of the audience. The majority of people who are on Facebook don't go to individual pages: less than 6% do. They watch their newsfeed. Duplicates are irrelevant in newsfeeds.

5) All posts should be simple, easy to read, and not a lot of text. No one reads them. A good photo, 3 lines of text - that's it.

6) Set Facebook up so it automatically posts on your Twitter account.

7) Open an Instagram account and set it up the same way. (I have yet to do this but it's on my list).

8) Create a marketing budget for sponsored ads on Facebook - they work.

9) Create tabs on your page (you are allowed three, on the left of the page). Make them easy to use and require no more than two clicks.

10) Use the NOTES section on Facebook, people actually look at them.

Denise concluded her email:

"The results for us are hundreds of dollars generated every day from Facebook. Just by adding the text on each post to donate has added thousands. I am still learning with lots to go but I wanted to keep you informed as I said I would.

"Our page is Dogs Deserve Better - still a work in progress but it is our best fundraising tool right now."

Why is an envelope important for a print donor newsletter?

Also in my email in-box was this note from the astounding Patti Defilippis, director and screenwriter at [St. Luke Productions](#), a Catholic film production nonprofit. Patti's over-the-top newsletters pulse with donor-love. I've always admired her zest and passion.

But she had a question:

"You have mentioned (and Jeff Brooks recently cited you) that sending the newsletter in an envelope is better. I find this hard to understand. We moved to a self-mailer a few years ago, and I don't have any data to support it, but it

seems to make sense that if a self mailer is captivating on the outside, it will get set aside for breakfast reading at the very least, and may stop the recipient in her tracks to read right then. If it is in an envelope, there is no way to demonstrate, unless the person has experienced already of how entertaining and "feel good" your newsletter is, that it is worth reading. A teaser on the envelope is hard to compare with a full color, provocative image on the outside of a self-mailer. Besides being more expensive, it seems like it doesn't make logical sense. New readers have to have an "opening the mail moment" to not put it in recycling. Can you explore your logic a bit farther? Is this position based on experience or psychology that I have missed? So fascinated by your point of view."

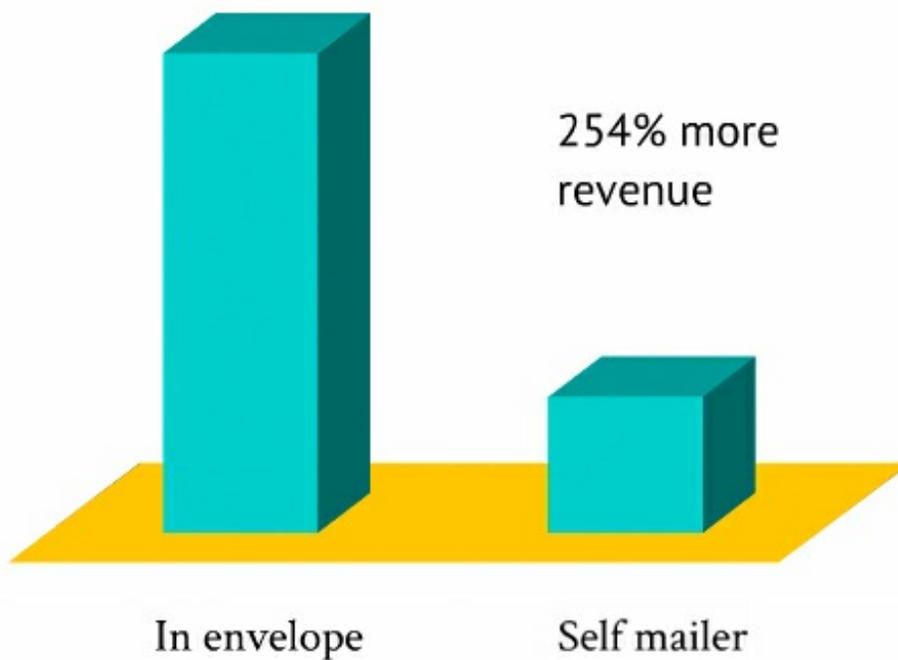
Dear Patti:

[Jeff](#) and I depend on something called the Domain Formula, developed in the 1990s for print newsletters by one of the great fundraising agencies of that day, the Domain Group in Seattle.

The Domain Formula tested all aspects of donor newsletters (content, packaging, size, color, etc.) and found, to everyone's surprise, that in almost all cases, a print newsletter placed in a #10 envelope with a teaser ("Your donor newsletter enclosed....") brought in far more revenue.

Why? Domain's response: "Because the envelope creates higher perceived value." But that's just a guess. Like many things in direct mail, testing found it works ... and we're not quite sure why. Here's a recent chart from Jeff Brooks showing the "envelope advantage":

Revenue



The Domain Formula is re-tested all the time. The last fresh data I heard was in November 2015.

Putting your newsletter in an envelope continues to outperform self-mailers ... 99 times out of 100. But there are exceptions. And your newsletter is SO exciting and emotionally gratifying start to finish, Patti, that you might well be that one in 100.

"Every person should be able to choose the thing they want" is now grammatically correct.

¶ In another setback to grammar authoritarianism, "they" used as a gender-neutral alternative to the ever-awkward "he or she" is now accepted by such godly editorial gatekeepers as the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post. So voted the 127-year-old American Dialect Society at its January 8, 2016 annual meeting in Washington. See [how the Society voted](#) on "most useful new words," "most unnecessary new words," and other language matters.

This infographic will increase your revenue

¶ From Mark Phillips, founder of [Bluefrog](#), this visual [examination](#) of "Things a charity wants to tell a donor" vs. "Things a donor wants to hear." Herein: the crux of one very big problem.

A subject line so good I almost opened the email

¶ "Have a nice and warm winter storm" was the subject line of an LL Bean email, as "snow-pocalypse" winter storm Jonas bore down on the East Coast of the US. Lesson learned: make your subject line as relevant as you can to what's in my mind now. And rhyming helps.

Damian O'Broin makes sense of the nonsense



¶ For any of you who haven't gone shopping in Ireland for a fabulous direct mail agency, allow me to introduce you to [Ask Direct](#) (celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2016) and its founder/director, Damian O'Broin.

Damian is the generous author of one of the best SlideShare shows you can use to defuse clueless opinions. **It's called [Mythbusters](#)**. In it, Damian answers with science commonly debated puzzlers like "Should we attempt our own ice bucket challenge?" or "Do statistics beat stories?" or "Should we remove major donors from of our direct mail appeals?" Or. Or. Or.

Most popular links from the last issue....

¶ [Headline Writing 101](#): How to Uncover the Right Words to Make Your Conversion rate Climb Like Crazy

¶ [The Truth About Nonprofit Storytelling](#), from npENGAGE

You know who's got a terrific fundraising

Pinterest board?

¶ Beth Ann Locke. Go [browse](#). For that matter, search the term "fundraising" in Pinterest and [see what happens!](#) Or how about Mark Phillips' pins about [books worth reading](#). Or his [THINKS](#) pins. Or his all-time classic, [Old Charity Ads](#), for those of us who missed the first 100 years or so of strong, solid, mission-building direct response work. And then there's Colleen Piluso, who's good on [career](#) and [love](#).

How to think about young donors

¶ In this thoughtful, well-grounded [post](#), 13 real-world, front-line experts (young, midstream and older) talk about the science and statecraft of engaging young donors. I automatically read anything that quotes Karen Osborne, as this post does. And the notables list continues: Rory, Jen, Maeve, Marc, Beth, [the Drunk Chef...](#)

Storm warning! Oncoming Ahern speaking gigs



San Antonio, TX ~

Thursday Feb 25, 2016

[An afternoon of training for AFP San Antonio](#)

On the program, from 1:20 PM - 4:30 PM: (1) LOVERIZING, The Lucrative Difference A a Few Words Can Make; (2) Writing a Powerful Case Statement; and (3) Direct Mail for Small NGOs.

OTHER appearances....

FEB 3 lunch workshop, [Women in Development](#), Boston

FEB 22 Bloomcom, Orlando, FL (SOLD OUT)

FEB 23 international webinar, AFP: [Storytelling for Fundraisers: It Ain't All Bourbon and Whittlin' in Your Rocker](#)

FEB 29 morning workshop donor newsletters, [New London \(CT\) Library](#)

MARCH 4, speaking, Economics Literacy annual conference, Atlanta

