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Love Thy Reader | About Donor Communications | *from Tom Ahern*



If you had more money ... *you could* do more good.
If you do better communications ... *you will* have more money.

Like what you're reading? **Receive** your very own free copy!



Noted by Sean Triner...

Perfection

Jean-Claude Van Damme. Trucks. Going backwards. Over gorgeous singing. [Enjoy](#). I'm headed for the gym. And the Chuck Norris [answer](#), just in time for the holidays.

From the "Karen Osborne approves of this" collection

35 tips for your year end rush

Words of [brief wisdom](#) from some truly wise fundraisers.

Annual fund...

Sweet little "thank you" video

I love the comms coming out of Michigan State U, Simone's alma mater. Here's MSU's [annual fund thank you](#). A complete and vast story in just 33 seconds.

"Lest we forget" department...

Newsletters can outperform appeals as gift generators

And it's not even magic. See this [blog posting](#) by Masterworks SVP, Bob Ball.

For the umpteenth time...

Ahern presents where next?

Webinar: [money-making donor newsletters](#), Dec. 8, 2014
Tucson, AZ, [AFP monthly meeting](#), Jan. 9, 2015
FIA [conference, Brisbane](#), Australia, Feb. 18-20, 2015

"Gift of joy" + Dr. Frankl's pursuit of purpose

"Reciprocity" goes both ways

They gave you their hard-earned money. What can you give them back, to fulfill the psychological dictates of "reciprocity"?

Reciprocity is a very real thing.

Why stats don't work

Here is a good summary from Stanford of the [fundamental research](#) behind why stories raise money and numbers don't. Recommended by the always worth reading [Willis Turner](#).

From the "Now you know" department...

A new infographic on boards

From the ever-curious folks at Bloomerang, here are the [results of their new survey](#). See how your board stacks up against the norm.

FREE from The Agitator....

Install this widget on your website...

...and suddenly you'll be hearing from visitors about their experiences! [It's easy to install](#) (they say). And incredibly revealing to learn from visitors that, for instance, your monthly giving offer is confusing or they didn't get the part about how to honor someone with their gift.

"I wish I'd done that" dept....

Telling a sensitive story powerfully without photos

R. Trent [Thompson](#) shared with me the [story of Kinita](#), an online experience created for [The Children's Center in Detroit](#). The fresh angle? It's animated, which among other things neatly solves confidentiality issues. It's a multichannel campaign. "The reaction to her story on Facebook has been amazing," he reports. The stellar agency [team](#) includes Tammy Zonker.

Better Boards Await You

We humans are a bit hard-wired to give back when we receive. We feel the need to reciprocate, for some obscure evolutionary reason. It's a well-known psychological phenomenon, sanctified by Dr. Robert Cialdini as one of "the six universal principles of social influence."

In his best-selling book *Influence: Science & Practice* Cialdini defines "reciprocation" as "we feel obligated to return favors performed for us." [1]

I would add: even when we didn't actually ask for the so-called "favor," as charities that mail up-front premiums know so well.

Thank reciprocity ... that when a charity sends you yet more unwanted self-sticking address labels for letters you never write (and that thought's making you a bit suicidal right there), even so, even so you despise the things, STILL ... you ARE more inclined to make a gift than if there WERE no so-called "premium" in the envelope.

Those coins taped to appeals? Same thing: reciprocity.

That religious medal that might even be blessed? Reciprocity.

That unsolicited calendar that's too pretty to throw away? "Look at those cute puppies!" Reciprocity.

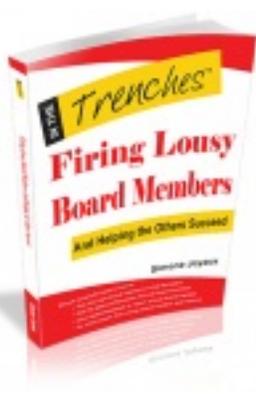
The other shoe

But this is what charities don't always get: once the donor MAKES a gift, then the shoe's back on the other foot.

Your foot to be exact: it's now your charity's turn to reciprocate ... in thanks and reporting.

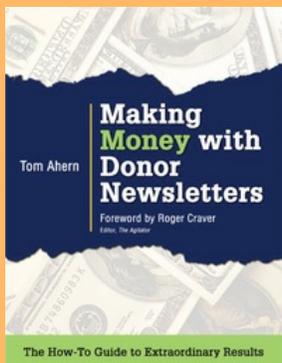
It goes like this: The donor has given you (the charity) something. What will you (the charity) give in return? That's reciprocation, full circle.

But here's the thing.



NEW! By Simone Joyaux, ACFRE. **Subtitle promise:** "And helping the others succeed!" This book is for real. You'll learn how to fix a misbehaving, underperforming board for good. [Amazon...](#)

Make More Money



Heavily revised and illustrated 2nd edition. From [Emerson & Church](#).

When can I see you again?
I'm around, speaking
[Calendar](#) of upcoming Ahern workshops. For an occasionally entertaining downloadable PDF of workshops I currently offer, [CLICK ME](#).

Ahern [website](#)

Working on....
Got all these neat things lined up for the new year: a great case project for PPSNE; WWF webinar worldwide (weally); conducting my first

You might not realize it ... but you actually DO have something to give back to the donor that's of great - probably inestimable - value for many of them ... all those at least with standard-issue psychological software and hardware. Give them ...

Your love.

Your respect.

Your admiration.

Your jaw-dropped, awestruck belief that super-humans do in fact walk the earth in disguise all the time: and they are your particular donors.

They are your family (even the crazy ones).

They are your tribe.

They are your people (and it takes all kinds).

They are heroes. Your heroes. Everybody's heroes.

Donors help others. They are the NON-psycho- and sociopaths in our society (until proven otherwise).

I believe that every donor communication should deliver the "gift of joy" instantly.

With their very first glance, donors should feel honored, welcomed, and thanked. They should know that this communication is about them! more than any other thing. They should know in the BIG TYPE that they are ESSENTIAL.

"You complete me!"

Neurologist and psychiatrist Viktor Frankl concluded, "Humans are driven by a will to establish meaning in their lives. They need purpose."

Young Dr. Frankl, an Austrian Jew, was interned for almost three years in such unthinkable hells as Auschwitz

"live audit" (done on site, without prep) for a risk-taking client; Tucson speaking, Australia speaking.

France [website](#)

"Stop!"

The Little Words Mean the Most...

My stupid [blog](#). Includes "Worksheet Confidential," a gappy documentary of my work methods.

Joinme?

¶ [LinkedIn](#): 1,242 connections

¶ [Twitter](#): 1,885 followers

Handle: thattomahern

¶ [E-news](#): 9,135 subscribers

¶ [Facebook](#): 271 friends

Could they take the heat? Well, they came into my kitchen...

Enter a **GALLERY** of **FRANK critiques** ... solely for your **error-avoiding, idea-stealing pleasure**

Brave people sent me samples of their donor comms, for a **free, nitty-gritty** - and **public** - critique. Find out exactly what they did wrong or right, and learn from their mistakes or victories.

Available as [downloadable PDFs](#) with pop-up comments.

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International expertise at down-to-earth prices. Fund development, board development, strategic planning. [Lots of free resources](#), too!

and Dachau. His wife, mother, and brother perished in Nazi death camps. Except for a sister who'd emigrated earlier to Australia, none of his immediate family survived the Holocaust.

Viktor Frankl knew more than most about the search for purpose and meaning in life.

Listen to him.

Your job, as a donor communicator, is to bestow purpose and meaning in exchange for support. That's "all" you have to do. It's simple. Most charities don't do it very well, I guarantee you - yours included, probably.

Bestowing purpose and meaning is a high calling. That's what you can give your donor. Aside from tote bags (will we ever have enough?), that's really ALL you can give your donor: purpose.

And, hey, when you do it well, what do you know?!?

The reciprocity wheel spins again in your favor. It is a perpetual motion machine.

How do you make a lot more money for your charity? Reciprocate well.

[1] p6, *Yes! 50 Scientifically Proven Ways to Be Persuasive*, Goldstein, Martin, Cialdini, Free Press, 2008

Back issues of this newsletter? [Here...](#)



FYI, below: a sample of unedited questions, asked and answered, that came up LAST TIME inside our exclusive, attendees-only Facebook group. Facebook plays a critical role in DONOR NEWSLETTERS THAT RAISE MORE MONEY webinars and coaching. It's where YOU talk.

"Dear Tom: could you recommend a book on reclaiming lapsed donors? How about a nice e-clinic? Please? Pretty please? PLEASE?!!!"

"Dear Tom: could you recommend a really good church bulletin to look at and imitate? Our parish wants to start a newsletter...."

"Tom: you mentioned that a story has to start so we feel empathy. I'm sure I'll be able to recognize it when I see it, but not sure I know exactly how to go about writing for it. Could you give some tips? Thank you!"

"Tom: What do you think about putting a message on the donor newsletter reply envelope that says...."

"Tom: If people only read the headlines/big text, how do we tell an emotional story? In the hospital setting, it's a bit unsettling to show some of the 'before' pictures or images of patients while in the hospital to really illustrate the 'after'/success part of the story."

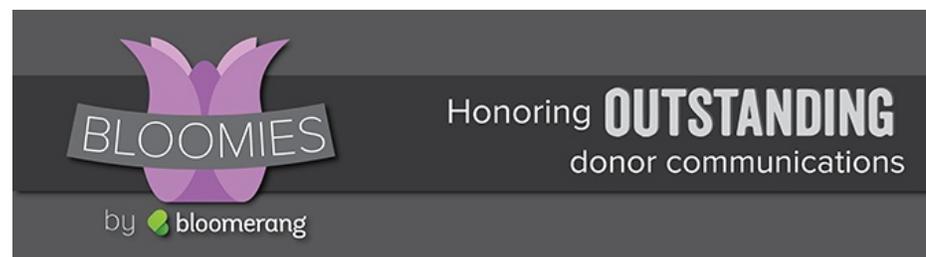
Get *your* donor newsletter questions expertly answered.

Get Started With Donor Newsletters
Learn the Proven Formula for newsletter success
Register for Webinar 1 only
\$99 [SIGN ME UP!](#)

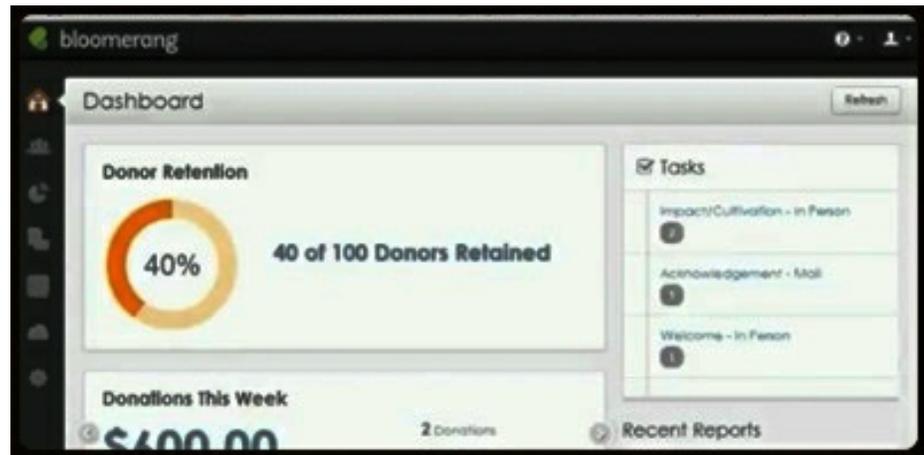
Learn Proven Formulas and Create Effective Content
Register for Webinars 1 & 2
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Get Both Webinars on Formulas and Content, Plus One-on-One Coaching with Tom
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Only \$449 includes Facebook.



Are *you* doing GREAT donor communications? Want a **prize** and international recognition?



Can your charity *easily* track donor retention, the most profitable metric in fundraising?

Yes! If you use [Bloomerang's](#) "rethought from the ground up" donor management software, for "modern fundraisers."

Built to be so simple and intuitive you don't even need a manual. And yet ... built to give you unprecedented insight into your donor data, in the office or on your mobile. Retention expert Dr. Adrian Sargeant is a key member of the Bloomerang team, so you know the thinking behind it is state of the art. Are you willing to invest 30 minutes in something that could change the future of your nonprofit? Then watch Bloomerang's "[how it works](#)" [video](#).

[2014 Dear Santa Donor-Comm Ts](#)



Wear your heart on/near your sleeve

Writer-wear©. *Advice-wear*®. *Reminder-wear*™. **Customize!**

PICK your very own colors, sizes and styles ... huge range for women & men! Statement T-shirts for the wordy wise. And really well-made leggings (Simone adores hers).

[Click here to see for yourself!](#)

Charity job openings around the world.

Sign up for free weekly job postings sent via email. From one of the most respected names in fundraising, Daryl Upsall Consulting International.

global **charity** jobs



How to write a case for support. Read the **Kool-Aid**.

[See what Amazon reviewers say...](#)



How to write fundraising materials
your donors will love.

See what Amazon reviewers say...

'Til next time...
donor communications
true believers!

