



# MULTIPLY 417

Passion: The Bridge between People and Purpose

## Development Skills Series Effective Emails Part 3 of 3

Howdy, Rick,

While email communication certainly has a host of other mediums to compete with, it is still consider one of your strongest tools, especially when spanning across multiple generations.

The past two weeks I've shared tips on how to make your emails more effective especially pointed at writing requests For the final week I wanted to wrap up the Effective Email tip with just some general purpose comments. Hope they help.

### *Clear*

When writing emails, try to keep them short and concise. More than 50% of emails are now read on mobile phones and the ideal length is about two to three paragraphs or 50 to 125 words. Cut out the unnecessary details and language in favor of fewer, stronger words that clearly convey your message.

Pro tip: Write a lengthy email first with plenty of details and then edit ruthlessly from there.

### *Concise*

Stories about an individual receive a better response than about a group, nothing new there, according to a study from the University of Pennsylvania. But in that same study (and others) presenting general statistics of a group alongside an individual's story decreases gifts. Write to the right side of the brain, not the left. Finally, emails that convey positive or happy sentiments receive 15% more responses and moderately negative emails receive 13% more.

### *The Curiosity Gap*

The curiosity gap is the gap between what you know and what you want to know. In your subject lines, you can pique your partners' interest by withholding key information. This is similar to pausing a story at a climactic moment. Tapping into the curiosity gap can improve your email open rates — just don't overpromise and underdeliver.

Subject line examples: "A new trend we are seeing," "A big change at the land trust," "Our cutest puppy of the week," and "What this student accomplished."

### *The Impact Gap*

Similar to the curiosity gap, the impact gap is the difference between what you need and what you have. Your job in writing will be to get your partners to understand what is newly possible with their help. To do this, define the present situation for your organization, the problem you're facing, and the solution. For example, you could say: "Right now, our school is working hard to transition online. But some students don't have adequate devices to engage. If we can get laptops and tablets in their hands ASAP, they can still have a productive year."

Pro tip: As much as possible, emphasize the tangible impact your donor could make (i.e. "\$25 will provide two families with winter blankets").

### *Personalization*

Always address your partners by name in your emails. Hearing your own name triggers greater brain activation, particularly in the parts associated with social behavior and long-term memory. Personalized experiences also give people a greater sense of control and reduces information overload. When you can, go beyond name as well. Remember and refer back to the personal information your donors or partners have shared with you.

### *Personal*

Now more than ever, your writing and emails should be empathetic to your partners and their situations. Start by being vulnerable with them, updating them on your life, to create an authentic, human connection. Acknowledge the current crisis, and be conscientious about your asks. Unless writing from multiple people, remove the 'we' as much as possible and speak from the 'I.' For example, you could say: "I'm working from my couch while my fifth-grader attends online classes at our kitchen table, but I'm writing because [mission] matters more than ever."

### *Social proofing*

Social proof is a powerful, persuasive tactic for getting your partners to consider giving. When people see that someone else has taken an action, they often assume that action is correct and are more likely to copy them. To use social proof in your writing, you can invoke other donors and how they gave. For example, you would say "Someone in the class above you, also from California, just donated stock, and got an almost 80% tax benefit" and not "You can save up to 80% on taxes through giving stock."

Another version of Social proofing is to actually have/allow someone else to speak for you. For example, see my simple social proof note in the yellow below.

Pro tip: Avoid negative social proof, which won't persuade your partners (i.e. "Only a fraction of our partners respond. Will you be one of them?")

**Next Week:** 2021 Giving Trends you should note

Passionately,

Rick

Rick was incredibly helpful to our staff while editing our monthly newsletter correspondence. His ability to edit each staff member's letter to make the content direct and poignant was a valuable coaching tool for our chapter. We are grateful for his thoughtful time spent helping us to improve the future materials we send out.

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