

Effective E-Appeals – Checklist

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Personalize to your audience and the individual.	Personalize - one study found personalization increased email opens by 244% and click throughs by 161%			
	Make it about your reader. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imagine who you're writing to, and simply talk to <i>them</i>. Use their first name. Use the MAGIC words YOU and YOUR 			
	Follow Up! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is how you'll retain donors. Create a custom, personalized thank you email that folks receive immediately. Follow up with a mailed thank you that reports on the gift's impact. Plan for ongoing cultivation and stewardship throughout the year. 			
Tell your story well.	Tell one story of who the gift will help.			
	Provide a compelling visual which tells a story.			
	Coordinate all of your actions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep content, images, and design integrated across multiple emails and channels – website, social media, and offline communications. Repetition works and reinforces your message, reassuring donors that you are consistent, and they can trust you. 			
Make it easy to read.	Optimize for mobile <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 50% of those whom you send your appeal to will likely use a mobile device to read your emails. 			
	Keep it short <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep your appeal “above the scroll” as much as possible Try to keep your email asks to 400 words or less You can include links in your website to explain additional information. 			
Encourage people to open.	Comes from a respected individual at a respected institution			
	Pay Attention to 'From Sender' and Subject Lines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your sender a recognized person who your reader will trust? Is your subject line benefit oriented and/or does it raise your reader's curiosity? Both things can improve open rates 			

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Give a clear call to action.	Set specific dollar and purpose goals for your campaign. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much do you want to raise, for what purpose and within what time frame? • What will the donor’s money accomplish? • Prepare to offer specifics and make them about impact, not your monetary campaign goal. 	
	Make your call to action urgent. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage your appeal with a time specific challenge grant. • Don’t let folks put your appeal aside for later. 	
	Ask is repeated more than once. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People skim emails. You want to make sure they see your call to action. • Phrase it a bit differently each time: “Please help.” “Donate.” “Invest now.” “Give.” 	
	Make your call-to-action clear <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask yourself: “What do I want folks to do when they receive this message?” • Include just one call to action per email. If you offer too many choices, folks are likely to choose none. • Show your donor exactly how they can become your hero. People like to know what is expected of them. 	

Jenn Hayslett adapted, reformatted, and edited with permission from Claire Axelrad. See more of Claire’s work at Clarification.com.