

Analysis of direct and indirect mail from the salvation army and oxfam



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Many charities use the mail system to solicit donations from the general public. Charity advertising is very different from other forms of advertising, as the main purpose of charity ads is to persuade target audiences to donate money, rather than buy a product.

Oxfam uses many techniques to entice the reader to pledge money, just as the Salvation Army does but both in entirely different ways. The Salvation Army writes their letters personally whereas Oxfam write their letters formally to the household owner. These examples use quite different techniques to persuade the reader to sign up for a "regular gift". After studying the letter from the Salvation Army, it was obvious from the first glance, the objective of the letter, which was for the reader to donate money. The Salvation Army name and logo is a large feature in the corner of the letter. The reader would immediately recognise the logo and the charities name because they both represent a well known and respected company which has a long standing history in the community.

This shows clearly whom the charity is, so you know before you read the letter, where your money will go. This also informs the reader that the charity is a major organisation which is known worldwide. Before the letter begins, the reader is drawn to the bold text; "For Christ's sake, to care for the poor, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, love the unlovable and befriend the friendless". This quote is repeated throughout the letter. The letter begins Dear ..

.... and uses the reader's surname. They use the surname of the reader instead of Sir or Madam because this gives the impression of the letter being less formal and as if it was written personally for the reader.

The words promise/oath/pledge appear frequently. By doing this, the reader feels as though it is their responsibility to donate money to this charity because they lead you to believe that you are the only one who can help their cause. Parts of the letter are underlined as though someone has gone to the trouble of personally doing this "personal touch" which emphasises the importance of your donation to this charity. The repetition of the word "promise" encourages the reader to commit to the charity and donate at regular intervals. This also furthers the idea that the charity needs the readers help. Throughout the letter, inclusive language is used so that the reader automatically includes themselves.

This makes the reader feel that the director of the charity is talking to them on a one to one basis, rather than through a letter. Anecdotal evidence was included into the letter to inform the reader the work that they do in the community and to prove their success. The quote which was the opening to the letter was referred to reinforce the idea that they care. By emphasising the phrase "Regular gift" it provides evidence of what a small donation could do and furthers the idea the charity needs your help more then ever. When the charity informs the reader of what small donations could do, they use sympathetic language to encourage the reader to donate such a small amount to this cause.

Personal issues are included in the letter because most readers can relate to them in some form. The end of the letter is very important because this is the last chance the company has to make an impact before the reader decides whether or not to donate the money. By thanking the reader instead of just signing it, it gives a lasting impression of the politeness of the charity. The politeness may make the reader feel more obliged to pledge the money asked of them.

It is signed by the director of the Salvation Army because this makes the reader seem more important as the director has made time to write to you for your support and hand written their own signature. The sentences of the Oxfam letter are quite short, therefore easy to read. This means that people won't get bored of reading it, and will probably read the whole letter, rather than the first couple of lines. Straight away your eyes are drawn to the bold or underlined writing.

This is most often the important information, or the information that they want you to pay most attention to. The first paragraph uses the repetitions of apologetic language. In the first sentence the company has already apologized in advance for Oxfam writing to the reader. ' I hope you forgive my writing to you like this'. This technique of writing is appealing to the readers. Information is given to let people know the extremes of poverty and illness/disease, and why they need your money.

Also, because the information is quite graphic, the realisation of how bad some people's lives are, and how lucky they, themselves are, would shock people into giving a small donation. Images are used throughout the letter to

leave “lasting images” with the reader. ‘As director of Oxfam I often write to people like yourself to ask you for help.’ This gives the reader a sense of importance as the director of this large company has had time to write to them for help.

This use of flattery is to make the reader feel privileged that they are in a certain category, which makes charities’ such as Oxfam successful because readers find them approachable. It goes back to apologise once again. ‘I hope you can forgive the intrusion and spare a minute to read the letter’. The use of repetition emphasises how guilty the charity feels by writing to them for help.

This is a clever technique because the first paragraph is very significant. It is usually in the first few sentences that the reader decides whether to read on or not. But by being so apologetic and flattering the company makes the reader more interested. If the first paragraph was just a whole section of information to begin with, the reader would get bored quickly and not read it. In the next paragraph Oxfam asks the reader to reply within 10 days. This emphasises how urgent your donation is to the charity.

There is a donation form on the letter which means the reader has no reason not to pledge money as all they have to do is fill in the form. Oxfam has made it very convenient for the reader to do give money. They even included a free post envelope along with an ‘inexpensive pen’. They made a point of saying it was ‘inexpensive’ because otherwise the reader would think they were using the money we pledged for things as irrelevant as a

pen. The main objective of both letters was the same because they both were asking for a “ regular gift”.

The companies were asking for different amounts. The bold fonts are used to attract the eye to important information. The main different between the two letters was their use of techniques, for the reader to donate money. Oxfam apologised frequently throughout the letter for using the readers time.

Oxfam used flattering language to almost bribe the reader. ‘ I often write to people like yourself to ask for help’. It nearly makes you feel guilty enough to pledge the money asked of you. The Salvation Army doesn’t apologize for the time the reader gives to read the letter. The technique they use the most is emotional bribery, by keep referring to the suffering and images of poverty/death.

They do this to form a greater impact on the readers’ emotions. The two charities’ have had their letter written by people in different position in the company. Oxfam’s letter seems to be written by a less important person in the company compared to the Salvation Army. I believe that the letter sent from Oxfam is the more affective of the two. It has a polite tone, I think that it is very considerate of the director to apologize for the time the reader takes to read the letter. I think the tone of the Red Cross is considerably less friendly.

This is noticeable from the beginning when it addresses the reader as ‘ support’. There are many other ways of addressing the reader such as, dear friend or by his or her first name. Oxfam makes it much easier for the reader to pledge money. The reader is given a pen, envelope and a donation form, <https://assignbuster.com/analysis-of-direct-and-indirect-mail-from-the-salvation-army-and-oxfam/>

The Salvation Army only includes a donation form. Overall I think Oxfam put their cause over to the reader more successfully than The Salvation Army.