

Mailing Mistakes that Lose Donors and Donations.

Tips from Andrew Dieckman
from

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Why are we sending mail? Because it WORKS!

- Direct mail marketing on average garners up to 37x times more **responses** than email,
- Average **time** spent reading: email (less than 1 min) – mail (30 minutes),
- Direct mail is the most **preferred** form of marketing by customers (54% preferred),
- Studies show direct mail has a stronger **emotional** impact over digital marketing, resulting in stronger recall,
- 80-90% of direct mail gets **opened**, only 20-30% of email gets opened on a good day,
- 79% of consumers open direct mail **immediately** vs just 45% for email,
- Direct mail ranked as the top purchase influencer for baby boomers,
- 40% of consumers have made a **purchase** in the last 3 months because of direct mail,
- 92% of **millennials** are influenced to make a purchasing decision because of direct mail,
- 48% of people retain direct mail for **future** reference,
- 98% of people bring in their mail the day it's received,
- **Affluent** households prefer direct mail over email,
- Direct mail: still the #1 **influencer of seniors** switching and choosing medicare plans.

<http://www.resourceforsolutions.com/ultimate-list-direct-mail-facts-statistics/>

STORYTIME Don't try this at home

At the end of 2012 the American Cancer Society decided to stop their direct mail acquisition projects and see what the consequences were. They reported their findings to share the results.

What do you think happened?

Here's what happened:

- New donors dropped by 11%
- New donor revenue dropped \$11 million
- **The Relay for Life** raised \$25 million LESS than the previous year

1. NOT MAILING ENOUGH

Bug them until they donate

The amount of times we are asking is not enough to sustain interest and to improve donation-amounts.

SO WHAT CAN WE DO?
Make an annual routine where you are touching on people **more** than once.

- Once a year: means you essentially don't exist
- Mailing out something once a year to donors will typically not keep them aware enough to repeat or improve upon donations.
- Can give the impression that they are relied on only for donations (with little interest in developing the relationship).
- Twice a year: means you're out there and you're active,
- Three times a year: means you're busy, you're very active,
- Four times a year or more: We're really rocking and are doing amazing things and want to tell you so you can keep supporting us.
- Mailing to a lot of people only once a year is not as effective as mailing to fewer people more frequently.
- The latter is going to have more impact on those recipients and gives more leverage in growing them as consistent donors.



2. RUSH PLANNING

Haste Makes Waste

We're late with a mailed appeal and
we have to rush to get it done

SO WHAT CAN WE DO?

Moving backwards from the time you want the money, look carefully and realistically at the time necessary for preparation, review, printing and inserting, travel time in the mail, and your donors' response procedures.

- How long does writing a good message take?
- How long does the design process take?
Ideas, brainstorming, gathering imagery, all take time.
- How many people need to review? This is a big factor, the more people involved, the longer it can take.
- How long does the physical printing take?
Different quantities take different times. Materials need trimming, scoring, folding, inserting, sealing, stamping, etc.
- How long do the mailing procedures take?
Are the lists **clean** and easy to process? Are there multiple segments and variations on the letters?
- Give people the courtesy of time to respond, especially for year-end projects.

Each project is different, but allowing for an estimated timeline will provide you with more schedule control. **I know it sounds simple but not a lot of people do it!**

- Parties, galas, volunteer days: Mailings should be decently spaced from events to give adequate breathing room between touches.
- Make a year-long calendar in advance: not all dates will stick precisely, but these plans give development teams more control and more structure, and that improves planning for each project.
- Mailing at times when people are not expecting to be asked helps exposure reaching prospects. February and summer are great opportunities to test for responses or keep up the momentum from larger appeals with a more casual 'touch.' The mail traffic will be lighter so your message will get more attention.

3. BAD DATA

It's not going to get better all by itself!



Data is the **root** of a mailed project - if it's bad, the project gets worse all the way down the line

SO WHAT CAN WE DO?

A question with many answers... let's take a look.

- Bad addresses or no addresses, or having the right info entered in the wrong fields, means the package will not reach the recipient.
- Duplicate records cost. The dollar cost is nothing: it's pennies. But the true cost of sending two pieces to one person shows disorganization, and that can create an instant distrust in the mind of the recipient.
- If there are questions about whether a list will work or not, your provider should be happy to look at a list or lists before-hand, well-before-hand in fact, to make sure the data will work in the way it's intended to.
- If it's not, there is then **time** to manipulate the data and make the necessary repairs.
- People move, let's find out where they went. How is that done? NCOA - National Change of Address - the mail finds its way to the recipient and you get back the fresh data to update your database.

How Bad is it?

Multiple lines within a single cell

3135 Easton Turnpike	Fairfield	CT
26 North Street	Greenwich	CT
40 West Elm Street	Greenwich	CT
135 East Putnam Avenue New England Land	Greenwich	CT
54 Greenwich Avenue	Greenwich	CT
104 Clapboard Ridge Road	Greenwich	CT
215 Otter Rock Drive	Greenwich	CT
2 Greenwich Plaza	Greenwich	CT
124 Ritch Avenue West, Apt B202	Greenwich	CT
Endeavour Capital Advisors Inc 410 Greenwich Ave	Greenwich	CT
24 Saw Mill Lane	Greenwich	CT

Correct Info, Wrong Place

Address 1	Address 2	City	ST	Zip
		Knuckleville	PA	12345
5 Bird Court Apt 3K		Spaceburgh	PA	12345
5 Dogwood Alley		Knuckleville, PA 12345		

- or -

121 N Post Oak Ln Apt 304	Houston	Texas	770247755	United States
The Forum 74-80 Camden St.	London		NW10EG	England
350 5th Ave Ste 2412	New York	New York	10118-2494	United States
1410 Broadway Rm 1502	New York	New York	10018-9342	United States
9600 Evening Star Rd.	Eudora	Kansas	66025	United States
100 Winston Drive #12A Cliffside Park, NJ 07010				
535 Avala Ct, Alpharetta, GA 33141				
20 Ocean Ct, #2J, Brooklyn NY 11223				
1046 S Orange Ave, Short Hills, NJ 07078				
452 Fifth Ave, 23 floor. New York, NY 10018				

Non-Duplicate Duplicates

Ben Franklin	1 Main Street	201	Historytown	PA	12345
Benjamin Franklin	One Main St	Suite 201	Historytown	PA	12345
Bejnamin F. Franklin	1 Main St	#201	Historytown	PA	12345

Good duplicate searching software will find non-matches that are *similar*, which leads to better duplicate removal.

4. NO PERSONALIZATION

Donors are people, not numbers

Sure they're our 'Friends,' but let's not address them that way!

People like seeing and hearing their **own name**, it makes them feel special and attended to.

Without a name letters are colder and more distant. We want people as close as possible as quick as possible.

SO WHAT CAN WE DO?
Personalize! It's easier than we think

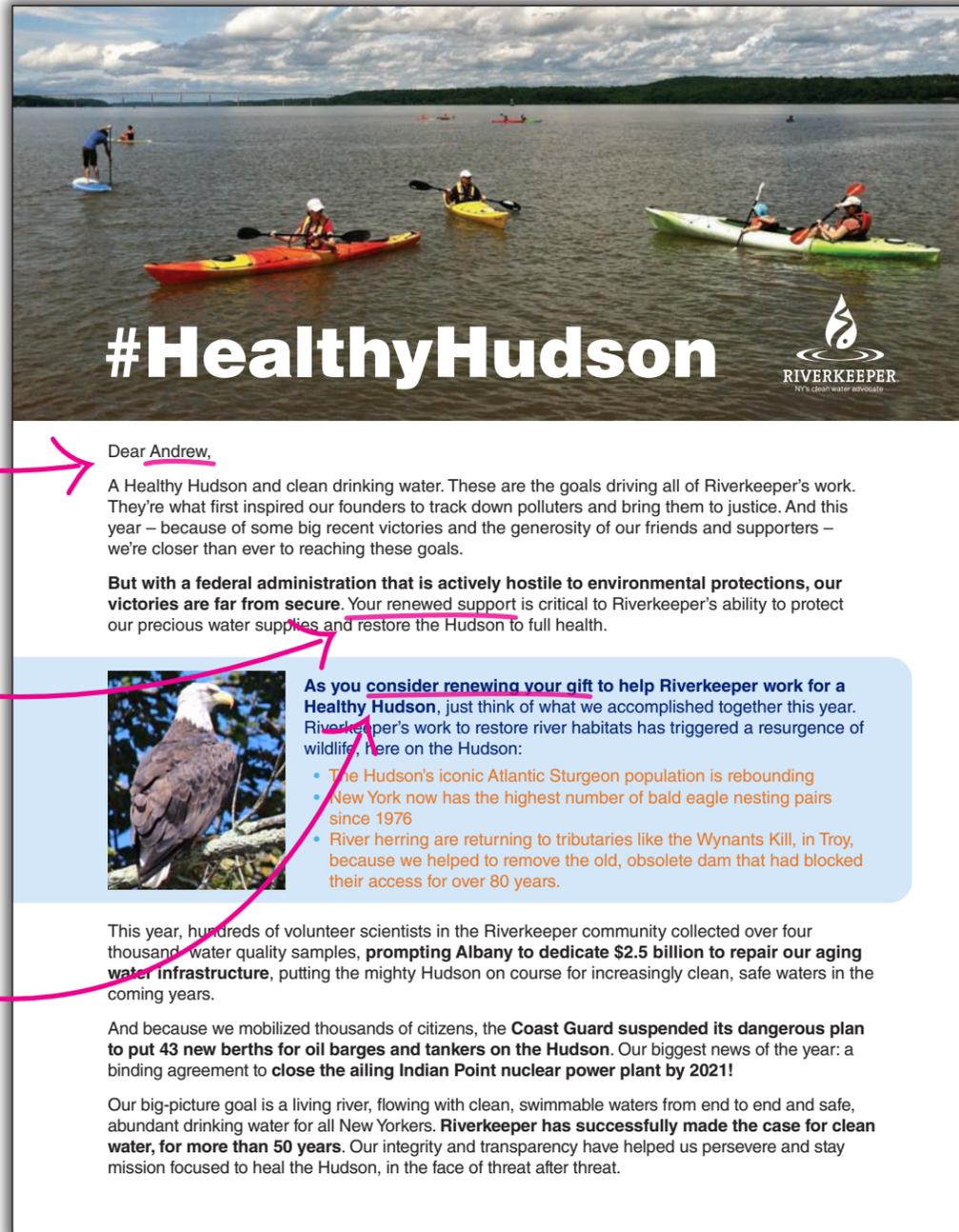
- We've mentioned emotional connection, one sure-fire way to instantly and easily make a strong connection is to use the **recipient's name**.
- Sure it's on the envelope, but when it's on the inside of the package we're showing we care about them and their donation, we're making it a **one-to-one** ask.
- Personalized letters increase responses and increase donation-amounts because they strengthen the sense of **participation**.
- We go from an industrial-ask ('Dear Friend') to a personal-ask with one simple tactic.
- Good personalization is going to depend on **good data**. Do we have salutations, that is: Good salutations that makes sense when they appear on a letter?
- **Do we have past gift amounts?**
This is a biggie: people **do not remember** the amount they gave last time.
- Reminding them how much they gave tells them that you really *appreciate* that gift.
- That **past gift** is also the key starting point to having Excel make a simple calculation to create **Suggested Gift Amounts**.

...your gift of \$25 last year,
would you consider \$50 now?

Enclosed is my gift of

\$50 \$75 \$100 \$ _____

Along with the name, change a sentence or two to make that letter's language *closer* to the recipient's status and relationship to the organization.



NAME RIGHT THERE IN THE FRONT

REFERENCING STATUS OF DONOR

LANGUAGE SPECIFIC TO DONOR'S STATUS AS A CALL TO ACTION

Pre-populating a reply slip or reply card means the recipient has **less work** to do to get that donation made.

It can also help make the processing of donations easier (because you do not have to read every individual's distinct handwriting).

Stay on board with Riverkeeper!

In 2014, your gift of \$40 helped us achieve extraordinary victories. Please support us again for a #HealthyHudson, from source to sea.

Andrew Dieckman C
Executive Printing & Direct Mail, Inc.
8 Westchester Plz
Elmsford, NY 10523-1604

Email _____

Mobile Number _____
12345 MYE17 DRP

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift in the amount of
 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$ _____

My check is enclosed

Charge my credit card one time

Charge my credit card monthly in the amount of
\$ _____ (12 payments annually)

Charge my Visa Mastercard Amex
Card # _____
Exp. Date _____ / _____ Sec. Code _____

My company would like to make a matching gift.
You will be receiving this gift from:

REMINDE THEM OF WHAT THEY GAVE (THEY DON'T REMEMBER!)

BASE A VARIABLE-SUGGESTED GIFT AMOUNT ON WHAT YOU'D LIKE THEM TO GIVE, WITHIN REASON, BASED ON THEIR LAST GIFT.

DONT OFFER ANYTHING LOWER!

NEED EMAIL ADDRESSES? MAKE IT THE FIRST THING RECIPIENTS HAVE TO FILL OUT, DONT BURY IT AT THE BOTTOM.

5. WRONG POSTAGE

Don't pay full postage price for your mail!



First Class gets us there faster, but costs more, and we're running out of time...

SO WHAT CAN WE DO?

Time for a big-picture review on the timeline to get some dollar-savings

- First Class costs **\$0.50 each** mail-piece, 1 oz and under.
- Presorted First Class is roughly **\$0.39 each**.
- Nonprofit rate is a roughly **\$0.17 each**.
- If it's bigger than **6 inches tall and 11 inches wide** it will be a different cost (different mail handling)

FOR EXAMPLE

1,500 RECORDS

PRESORTED FIRST CLASS
POSTAGE

\$570 (\$0.38 EACH PIECE)

NONPROFIT POSTAGE
\$255 (\$0.17 EACH PIECE)

DIFFERENCE: \$315

• The best option is to [plan to mail earlier](#), so those possible extra days with nonprofit mail won't be of consequence, and the [postage savings](#) of the nonprofit rates are yours.

They are there for YOU – please plan on using them, otherwise you are throwing dollars away.

• No permit? Permit expired (\$225)? Use someone else's. A mail provider will have their own permits that can be used. As long as you are identified as a nonprofit by the USPS anyone can mail on your behalf at nonprofit rates.

6. WRONG PACKAGE

If we lose their interest we lose their donation

A cluttered and busy package loses interest in an instant,
A spare and desolate package can do the very same.

SO WHAT CAN WE DO?

Tidy up and **put ourselves in the recipient's shoes**

- Is our envelope doing its job - we need to be OPENED!
- Are we giving the recipient too much to figure out, or too little to understand why we're contacting them?
- Is our letter long enough? Is it too long?
- If you see something someone else does, and it resonates with you... ~~COPY~~ EMULATE IT!

You can easily put stuff on your outer envelopes, either images or words, that will inspire **curiosity**.



Provoke... The left half of a #10 envelope is yours



Abbott House
100 North Broadway
Irvington, New York 10533

Inside...
**you'll see what
it takes to fight**

Grip hearts



Touch hearts



250 Mamaroneck Avenue
White Plains, NY 10605



**You Make the Difference
and Together We are Community!**

Melt hearts



27 Columbus Avenue
Mount Kisco, NY 10549
www.neighborslink.org

Non Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
White Plains NY
Permit No.
49456



**Many Cultures
Many Backgrounds
ONE Community**

- Sending too much stuff can be a problem especially for acquisitions. We don't want it to look like we've thrown everything in a basket and sent it out.
- A solid letter can give the necessary info and make the personal-connection without the use of extra components (like a brochure).
- Clutter = Confusion
- General brochures CAN work but only if you're tying it well enough with your letter and reply device.
- A great additional component is a **story piece**, (if you're not telling the story in the letter) a stand-alone sheet or a card that showcases an example of what you do and how awesome it is.
- Stories about volunteers or consumers who have grown or benefitted, **real images** make the real connection, even if it's a lousy photo (seriously - people relate to lousy photos too!).

Donors use heart-over-head to give.

People consistently give more when there is a match in place (doesn't matter what the match is) more than for purposes of a tax rebate. They also give more based on making an emotional connection to the message and the ask.

This means that scrambling to get donations at the end of the year is not always worth the pressure and corner-cutting it will necessarily require.

Dear Neighbor,

At the age of three years old, I was introduced as a ward of the court and thrust into the foster care system.

I had been abandoned on a doorstep. My mother was young and drugs and partying took precedent over caring for her child. Left on a doorstep on a hot summer's day, I was discovered after some time by a neighbor. It was my father's doorstep however and the neighbor let him know that I was outside. With no family to claim me from my neglectful parents, I began my arduous journey into the foster care system.

When you are stripped from everything you know, your world becomes extremely scary. You become a scared and hurt and confused beyond belief.

So now I had a home with essentially strangers. I was scared and hurt and confused beyond belief.

I can remember clearly being in my first foster home with other kids, one of them whom was my sister. I was scared and hurt and confused beyond belief. I thought as long as I have her everything would be okay. Scars do remind us that the past is real. If I could only wish the flashlight being crushed on my sisters' skulls. Not only was I abused, so was my sister and a new type of hurt, and I also was lacking.

These necessities that were deprived from me were basic necessities. I hated everything about life at that home in Hillburn, NY. I had no trust in anyone. My sister kept me and my sister together at the new foster home. The one comfort outside of my sister was my sister, and an incredible amount of purpose. I had no direction, and an incredible amount of purpose. I had no direction, and an incredible amount of purpose. I had no direction, and an incredible amount of purpose.

me to assimilate. My sister and I had to eat at a safe haven and told that we were to remain outside. I was not allowed inside the house to play. I was not allowed inside the house to play. I was not allowed inside the house to play.

wanted me outside all the time she was going to get me. I ran away from the stress, I ran away from the stress, I ran away from the stress.

love. I ran away from the stress, I ran away from the stress, I ran away from the stress.

Around the age of 12, I became a patient at Rockland Hospital. I was running away, and fighting was the last straw. I never thought that I was a bit different than the typical patient. I'm not a typical patient. I'm not a typical patient.

two kind individuals came to visit me one day and explained that I would have the opportunity to go to college. I was a bit skeptical. I was 13 at this time. I was skeptical. I was a bit skeptical. I was 13 at this time. I was skeptical. I was a bit skeptical. I was 13 at this time. I was skeptical.

they would visit about once a month and that I would see them. I was completely sold on the idea. I wanted stability and I never had here were two people willing to give that to me.

Song's Story

I was 30 years old, about to get married, had no health insurance, and found a lump in my breast. I was just starting cosmetology school, working two jobs and money was tight. It was scary and I had no doctor.

I called several hospitals and doctors and explained my situation. The response was cold. One nurse told me that it would cost thousands of dollars for the mammogram and sonogram, and if I needed additional treatment, it would even be more. There was no offer to help find me a doctor I could afford. It felt inhumane. I felt invisible. I just cried the whole time.

My boss told me about Open Door. I called and immediately got an appointment. The doctor was caring and thorough. She asked me all kinds of questions about my general health, my plans for the future, my upcoming wedding. She explained that the mammogram would be free based on my income, and that the sonogram would be at a reduced fee. Open Door set up everything and walked me through what I needed to do. They also asked if I needed a primary care doctor and dentist because Open Door also has both at a sliding scale. And they offered to sign me up for insurance. It had been so long since I took care of myself.

7. WRONG AUDIENCE

Why are they mailing this to me?

Unfocused data or messaging means you may be spending extra by mailing to people who are not viable donors.

SO WHAT CAN WE DO?

Focus... focus... focus...

- We want to reach the people who are likely to provide the biggest return.
- Current donors: no-brainer, making sure that they haven't JUST given (suppress them out)
- Lapsed donors, LYBUNTS: if we can, survey them
- Acquisition prospects: where do we start?
- The message or letter tailored for the LYBUNT records can literally ask them why they didn't give (the level of tact is up to you). If they haven't given cash they can give an answer. Tailor their reply materials to act as a mini-survey. Takes time and writing but these are some low-hanging fruit.
- We need new donors: think about buying a list: the available parameters dig deep: income, political preference, past donation tendencies, age, etc.
- Consider geography carefully, just because things are close-by doesn't mean they can connect... neighborhoods, communities have a vibe.



Clean, geometric, evenly spaced, the goal is to make it **easy to use**.

Leave adequate space for things like long emails and credit card numbers, no one likes to crunch up their writing, and crunched writing makes it impossible for you to process when you can get the piece back!

Stay on board with Riverkeeper!

In 2014, your gift of \$40 helped us achieve extraordinary victories. Please support us again for a #HealthyHudson, from source to sea.

Andrew Dieckman C
Executive Printing & Direct Mail, Inc.
8 Westchester Plz
Elmsford, NY 10523-1604

Email _____
Mobile Number _____
12345 MYE17 DRP

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift in the amount of
 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$ _____

My check is enclosed

Charge my credit card one time

Charge my credit card monthly in the amount of
\$ _____ (12 payments annually)

Charge my Visa Mastercard Amex

Card # _____
Exp. Date _____ / _____ Sec. Code _____

My company would like to make a matching gift.
You will be receiving this gift from: _____

Sponsorships & Ads Due April 21, 2017

<input type="checkbox"/> Presenting Sponsor	10 tickets, inside front cover or back cover color ad, name on event poster & PR materials	\$5,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Platinum	10 tickets, premium color ad	\$3,500
<input type="checkbox"/> Gold	6 tickets, premium color ad	\$2,600
<input type="checkbox"/> Silver	4 tickets, full page b/w ad	\$1,900
<input type="checkbox"/> Bronze	2 tickets, full page b/w ad	\$1,600

<input type="checkbox"/> Back Cover	7 x 7", color	\$2,200
<input type="checkbox"/> Inside Front Cover	7 x 7", color	\$1,850
<input type="checkbox"/> Inside Back Cover	7 x 7", color	\$1,850
<input type="checkbox"/> Premium Page	7 x 7", color	\$1,500
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Page	7 x 7", black & white	\$1,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Half Page	3.5h x 7w", black & white	\$650
<input type="checkbox"/> Quarter Page	3.5 x 3.5", black & white	\$375
<input type="checkbox"/> Business Card	black & white	\$250

Preferred files: high resolution pdf, jpeg, tiff or eps.
Please e-mail copy or art to jinfante@vns.org.

Tickets Due April 26 _____ # Requested @ \$350 each
Tickets will be held at the door.
Tax deductible portion of each ticket is \$258.
Individual tickets may also be purchased online:
www.vns.org/donate/order-spring-gala-tickets

I am unable to attend, but please accept my donation of \$ _____

Name _____
Email _____
Company _____
Address _____
Phone _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

Enclosed is check payable to VNSW Foundation, Inc.
Please charge: Visa Mastercard Discover

Card Number _____
Exp. Date _____ Security Code _____
Signature _____

Thank you Jill Singer Graphics: the above floral-themed example shows how proper organization can make lots of information clear and easy to read.

9. WRONG DESIGN

Industrial-looking materials turn off the emotions fast.

Bad design buries your message and confuses the recipient.
It's guaranteed to lose interest fast, especially when it looks too industrial.

SO WHAT CAN WE DO?
Get a designer

- How does the text flow, does it work with the imagery, is it cluttered, does it look too spare? Think about the **first glance**, the very first look. Does it inspire curiosity? Does it inspire urgency?
- Know your paper thicknesses, how something feels in the hand (which sends signals to the brain) will effect your donors.
- For what we're trying to do, design is ultimately way more important than paper: a great design on blah-paper is going to work much better than a blah-design on super premium paper.
- No smiling people if the letter is urgent or grim. No frowning children when the letter tells of accomplishments and goals achieved (seriously I've seen this).
- If you see something someone else has done, and it resonates with you... ~~COPY~~ EMULATE IT!
- Seamless integration – **EVERY** letter should look like it was created individually, there's no reason for it not to be and it is a **MUST** for drawing in the eye to fully read the letter.

Which version do you prefer?

00000000883

NATURE OUTREACH
environmental education
40 Penfield Lane
Albatross, NY 12345

October 25, 2017

00000000883
Amanda Dieckman
14 Scenic Dr Apt I
Croton on Hudson, NY 10520-1726

Dear Amanda,

Trail Tuning 2016 was a major success. A first over 120 individuals volunteering over a two-

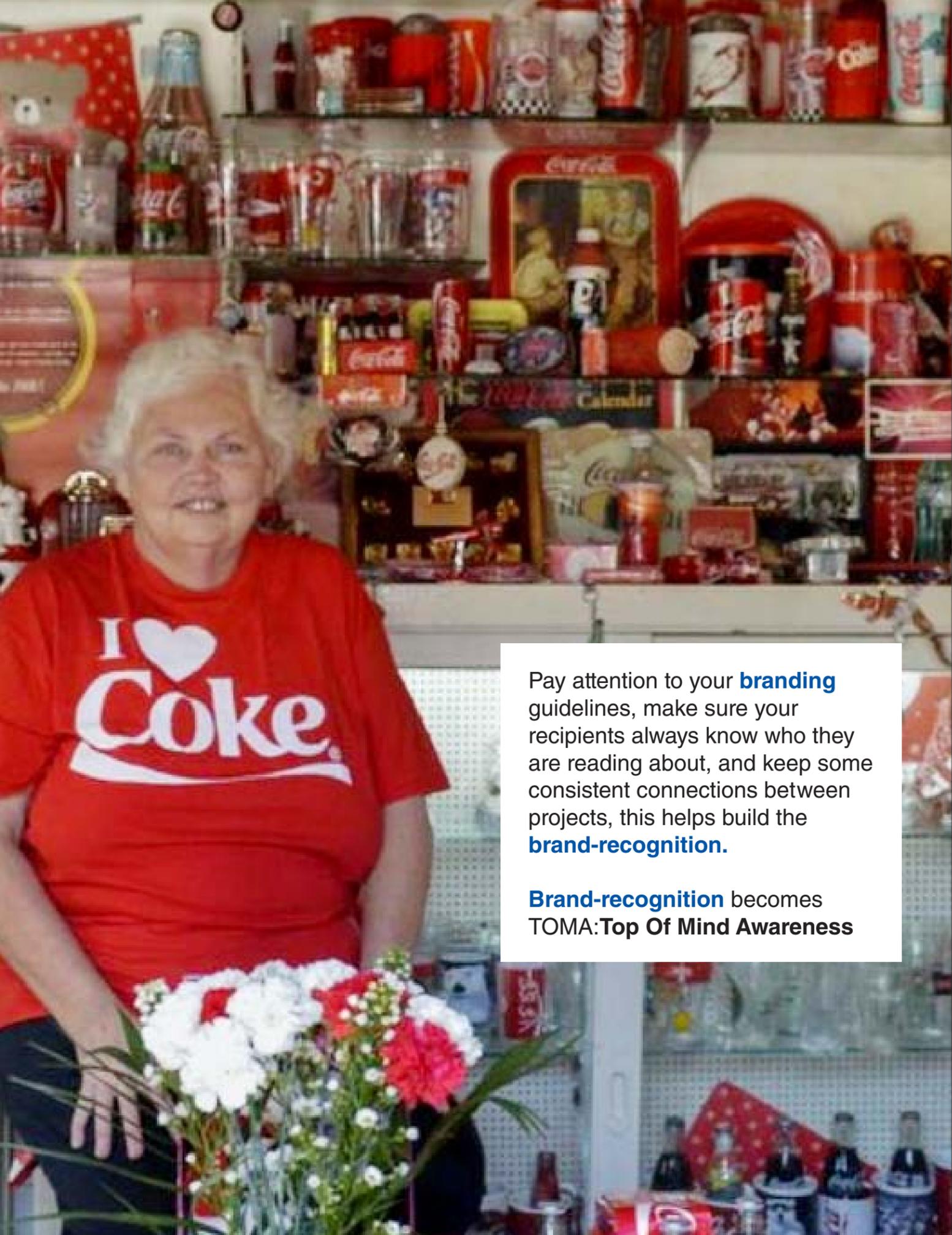
NATURE OUTREACH
environmental education
40 Penfield Lane
Albatross, NY 12345

October 25, 2017

Amanda Dieckman
14 Scenic Dr Apt I
Croton on Hudson, NY 10520-1726

Dear Amanda,

Trail Tuning 2016 was a major success. A first over 120 individuals volunteering over a two-
impact on some of the more neglected Albatross
some of the more diverse areas of the preserv



Pay attention to your **branding** guidelines, make sure your recipients always know who they are reading about, and keep some consistent connections between projects, this helps build the **brand-recognition**.

Brand-recognition becomes
TOMA: **Top Of Mind Awareness**

10. POOR FOLLOW-UP

We can lose them as fast as we get them!

A great mail package was sent out, it brought in some really nice donations and some new names, but they were not thanked and acknowledged quickly enough.

SO WHAT CAN WE DO?
Build follow-up at the front of the project

- Make acknowledging and thanking your donors, especially the new ones who are giving for the first time, an absolute priority.
- Thanked donors are more likely to give again.
- Do we call or do we write? A thank you note or letter goes a long way, even beyond phone calls, because it's a keeper-piece (could serve as a receipt for tax purposes, but let's not forget that's NOT the main reason people donate)
- Let them know AGAIN how important their participation is and that their donation is appreciated and respected (no matter what the amount is).
- A quick letter reinforces the professionalism and attentiveness of the organization and paves the way for future gifts from that individual.
- **Thank 'em fast, they're more likely to come back.**





MAIL IS GREEN

You're not destroying the Earth with paper



OLD COMPUTER COMPONENT 'PROCESSING'

- Paper is made from a natural resource that is renewable, recyclable and compostable.
- These features, combined with the North American paper industry's advocacy of responsible forestry practices and certification, use of renewable, carbon-neutral biofuels and advances in efficient papermaking technology, make paper a product with inherent and unique sustainable features.
- Paper is based on wood, a natural and renewable resource that can be planted, grown, harvested and replanted.

Each year forests in the U.S and Canada grow significantly more wood than is harvested.

← A SMALL PORTION OF THE INTERNET

In the course of preparing a fundraising mailing there are no silly or insignificant questions. Never hesitate to ask your print or mail provider questions about any details at all.

If the point in question seems like it is of no consequence at first, chances are it is of **significant consequence!**

Always ask questions, asking improves your bank of knowledge and you can then share that knowledge with others.



MAIL ON!

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