



Pledge Campaign Letters – Best Practices

“Don’t use that language with me!” It is the plaintive cry when we try to ignore the fact that the best methods of direct marketing can be utilized in creating effective stewardship programs in the parish. Here are several suggestions for writing to folks in the church.

- Always write from the perspective of our need to give and not the needs of the parish
- Highlight the benefits of giving and the end result: how will my giving impact the lives of others?
- Make paragraphs a maximum of five lines
- Ask for the gift or the pledge three times in the letter copy
- Keep the use of humor to a minimum
- Use short words and simple sentences
- Use underlining and "bold" print when needed but keep it to key elements of the letter. Overuse will not get the letter read
- If you save the best for last the results will be less. You aren't writing a novel; don't make folks read the whole letter to find out why you are writing. Most will not read that much
- Remember, no copy is too long but it can be very boring. Say what you need to say. If it takes two pages that is fine. Despite what a stewardship committee may think, longer is better if you really have something to say
- If you have enclosures be certain to mention them in the letter
- One person should write everything. A letter is personal and with the exception of the family Christmas letter I don't share letter writing duties with others. A committee letter always reads like a committee letter

John Hoskins is the Senior Philanthropic Advisor at Saint Francis Academy in Salina, Kansas. He is a Certified Direct Marketer, a Fellow Church Business Administration, and a Certified Financial Educator. He has worked in the church administration, stewardship and planned giving arena for the past 30 years.