

Fundraising Letter Writing

- When writing letters, it is important that each one is tailored to the company you are approaching. Try not to make it read like a standard letter (even if it is!).
- If you are using a family or friends contact, try having a chat to them beforehand so they'll be positively prepared when they receive your letter.
- Ensure you have the specific name and address of your target person, otherwise your letter may appear mass-produced.
- Put yourself in the donor's shoes – what is “in it” for them, what would you want to know about the organisation and project?
- Have a punchy headline / title.
- Keep the letter jargon free and where you do have to use acronyms use the full name first to explain, e.g. Norwich & Norfolk Voluntary Services (NVS).
- Length: should be under two full pages of A4, good quality, paper and cover the following items:
 - Project title
 - Proposal summary (include briefly who you are and what you want from the letter's recipient)
 - The problem or need and who will benefit (may not just be the direct users, may also be, for example, the community, parents, local businesses etc.)
 - What you will do and why you can do it (e.g. experience, good management etc.)
 - How you will do it
 - How much you need to do it
 - How you will get the money
 - The request – be specific about what their donation will pay for
 - Why the donor might be interested
 - How you will know that you have been successful
 - Conclusion – don't grovel and be positive

- Offer additional information such as a copy of your newsletter (if it gives a professional impact), your last report and accounts, a detailed budget of this project, personal stories (i.e. how the project has benefited that person – this has impact if it is in their own words and preferably accompanied by a relevant photograph).
- You don't always have to ask for money. If a company cannot afford to give you money, they may be able to offer equipment or services in kind instead.
- Follow-up. If you receive a donation, remember to thank them and send a report, or better still some photos, of the successful project.

➤ **Top Tips at a Glance**

- ✓ Be clear about what you want and why
- ✓ Pitch the amount asked for
- ✓ Specify who will benefit, how many and how
- ✓ Talk about what you DO, not what you are
- ✓ Make it short – max. 2 sides A4
- ✓ Make it to the point and jargon free
- ✓ Make it personal to the donor
- ✓ Include accurate and realistic costings – don't undervalue
- ✓ Stress user involvement
- ✓ Highlight past successes
- ✓ Send supporting information if necessary and as requested
- ✓ Mention other donors / supporters
- ✓ Get someone else (preferably not from your organisation) to read the letter through before you send it
- ✓ Make a note of who you sent the letter to, how much you asked for, when it was sent, results when you sent any follow-up if appropriate



NORWICH & NORFOLK
VOLUNTARY SERVICES

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