**Give Forward’s 8 Donation Request Tips for Beginner Fundraisers** <http://www.giveforward.com/p/donations/donation-request>

Getting the word out may be the most important thing to remember when it comes to asking for donations. And now that the internet’s become a platform for individual fundraising efforts, it’s easier than ever to get a support group together to help fund your cause.

Now, before online fundraising websites took off, charitable organizations were the big players in donation requests. In fact, there are countless articles across the web giving tips on how to write traditional donation request letters. But if you’re trying to ask for donations for an individual fundraiser, these guidelines must be revamped.

Appealing to human donors isn’t necessarily harder than appealing to an organization, but it does take a bit more creativity. So we’ve come up with a few tips to help you rework a traditional donation request letter for a human audience.

**Tip #1: Write personalized letters.**

One thing that does translate from organizational to individual fundraising is the effectiveness of personalized letters. While creating an online fundraising page and sharing it online is a must, sending a personal letter to potential donors can increase the number of donations you receive. Try to use the potential donor’s name a few times in the letter, and mention a few specific instances where the donor interacted with the beneficiary.

**Tip #2: Maximize your reach and write for your audience.**

Think of your social networks as concentric circles: The inner circle are close friends and family members who know the beneficiary well, the middle circles include work friends and casual acquaintances and the outer circle includes everyone else. Posting updates to your fundraising page will reach all circles—you can also create a Facebook page for friends and family to receive constant updates on your fundraiser. Send more frequent and specific updates directly to inner circle members, especially when relevant to them. For example, if the beneficiary has been getting comfort from a gift from a specific person, send the person a personal message thanking and updating them.

**Tip #3: Don’t get bogged down in formalities.**

While formality is a sign of respect when asking for donations from organizations, it’s not as effective in engaging donors for your individual fundraiser. Using conversational language in your letter reminds potential donors that their donations will help an actual person whom they know. Stay away from generic openers and signoffs, like “Dear potential donor” or “Sincerely.” When it comes to individual fundraisers, appealing to a person’s humanity is most important—so make sure to use language that will remind them their donations can change someone’s world.

**Tip #4: Be explicit.**

Of course we’re not advising you to send out online donation request letters filled with swear words. But you should be explicit in giving reasons why the person you’re writing to should donate to your cause, and being vague won’t help. Some clever ways to be specific include using numbers, making a checklist, and listing expenses. Check out other fundraising ideas here.

**Tip #5: Stay positive.**

The point of online fundraising websites is not only to raise money, but to create a loving and supportive community around a person who is need of a helping hand. So staying away from negative statements and projecting a positive outlook will help boost morale and keep more donations coming in. At GiveForward we’re all about positive thinking and creating unexpected joy, and we think it’s the best way to make a difference in someone’s life.

**Tip #6: Experiment with different approaches.**

Some of our most successful fundraisers have taken their thinking outside the box. So we think you don’t need to adhere to any formula when it comes to writing successful donation request letters. Mix it up by starting your letter with the beneficiary’s favorite poem or song lyric. Include photos or videos. Try using formatting, like underlining and boldface to make your letter interesting to look at. Veering away from traditional formulas will make your fundraiser stand out.

**Tip #7: Make it easy to donate**

This is a no-brainer but can be very easy to forget amidst all the other tips on the list. It’s important to remember not to make your potential donor have to work too hard to leave a donation. Include the link to your fundraising page in the letter and don’t be afraid to point out exactly where the donation button is located on your fundraising page.

**Tip #8: Follow up.**

Following up can be as easy as sending a simple thank you letter to donors. But it’s also important to continue to update all your potential donors, even if they do not respond to your first letter. In our experience, people who don’t respond aren’t being rude, they’re simply busy. Persistence is key, and if you can put in the time to reach out to potential donors throughout the length of your fundraiser, you’re more likely to get the donations you need to help your loved one.