



Practical Resources for Community Groups

## CHECKLIST 29

### Writing a Donor Request Letter

*Make sure you...*

- Have a good reason to contact this person. They should either be an existing donor, or someone you have identified as a potential donor for a specific reason. Sending letters to random people is not usually effective – you need to find a connection to your cause first.
- Make it personal. Make sure every letter is addressed to the individual, not 'Dear Friend' or 'Dear Supporter'. If you don't know their name, you haven't done enough homework yet.
- Set the context. Begin your letter by putting what you do into context and state how it relates to them. Define the need you meet in the community and explain your purpose for being.
- State specific achievements. Be specific about what you have already achieved in the community. Donors like to support organisations that are already succeeding. This makes them feel confident that their money will be used effectively.
- Avoid 'poor us' statements. If a donor thinks you are desperate for money, they will wonder how much of a difference their donation will make.
- Set a goal. Tell your donor what you want to achieve in the future, and therefore what their money will be used for. Every donations letter should be for a specific appeal – not just for your organisation generally.
- Relate the donation amount to something tangible. Let your donor know exactly what their donation will buy or enable you to do in the community, and always relate the cost to the end service or user.
- Give them options. Let the donor know that while this request is for a specific campaign, they are able to allocate their donation to a different programme if they wish. They may have a specific connection to another one of your services.
- Include a freepost envelope and donation slip. Make sure your donation slip includes tick boxes for specific amounts, and make sure the options are relative to donations you have already received from this person. Give payment options such as cheque, credit card or direct credit, and tell the donor what you want them to do.
- Say Thank You. Always acknowledge the support they have already given you and show genuine appreciation.
- Invite them to contact you. Provide contact details for a specific person and invite them to get in touch for more information. Make sure that person knows to expect a call.

For more useful information visit [www.exult.co.nz](http://www.exult.co.nz) and sign up to be an Exult Network Member.

The Members Area is full of articles and templates and it's completely FREE!

For more information about Exult and the services it provides for community groups, email [kerri@exult.co.nz](mailto:kerri@exult.co.nz)

