

How to Write a Donation Thank-you Letter



Adapted From Materials by Alan Sharpe

Thank-you letters are one of the most important letters that your organization mails to donors. They remind donors that they made the right decision in supporting your organization. They show that you are grateful for their gift. As a bonus, thank-you letters increase donor loyalty, strengthen relationships with your donors and increase your chances of receiving more gifts in the future. So here are some pointers for writing effective thank-you letters. Remember: Political contributions are considered “gifts” from the donor’s perspective.

- **Never Miss Saying Thank You**
Every donor needs to receive a thank you note. Avoid email “thank yous” when possible. It is okay to do both.
- **Be personal.**
Address the thank-you letter to your donor by name. Don’t say “Dear Friend.”
- **Say thank you, thank you, thank you.**
Show your gratitude by repeating, in a few different ways, that you are thankful for your donor’s gift. Use the words thank you and appreciate in at least one sentence.
- **Be specific if possible.**
Mention the size of the gift, or the date that you received the gift, or at least say “Thank you for your recent gift.” Donors are busy people who need to be reminded that they responded to your appeal.
- **Show how the donor’s gift is being successful.**
Reinforce in your donor’s mind that sending a gift was a wise investment in the work of your organization. Describe a recent success that was made possible by the donor’s generosity. Or show in other specific, tangible ways, how or where the donor’s gift is going to be used and make a difference in the campaign.
- **Thank the supporter as an individual.**
Avoid generic language where possible. No one likes being treated like an automated banking machine. Be fresh. Make your letter unique. Avoid language that sounds like it was churned out by a bureaucracy.
- **Encourage dialogue.**
Show a genuine interest in your donor by inviting them to write you, or phone you, or visit your website, or drop by your mission, or in some other way strengthen your relationship.
- **Be soft in asking for more funds.**
Your thank-you letter should say thanks. Note: If you follow your thanks with an immediate and aggressive appeal (blizzard of impersonal emails) for more funds, you may cheapen your thanks and offend your supporter. So be gentle, and soft-sell the request for another gift.
- **Be on Time**
Send out the thank you note within 2 weeks of the donation. Sooner is better.
- **Look Sharp**
Use a high quality and simple business type of thank you note (All you need are the words thank you on the cover and no text inside). Always spend a little more on this card. Regular business cards can be enclosed.