How to Write and Design Effective Direct Mail Fundraising Reply Devices.

Alan Sharpe

Attract the gifts you need by making the donation process quick and painless for your donors (and you).



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mailing envelope to save even more money. This also ensures that a donor's name and address are legible when the reply device arrives back at your office.

### Coding

If you are mailing to people who are not on your house file, be sure to key code each reply device with a series of letters or numbers, or both, that identifies the source of the name (such as the mailing list and mailing campaign).

#### Instructions

The easiest way to instruct the donor what to do in such a tight space as a reply device is to phrase your instructions in the donor's voice. So instead of saying:

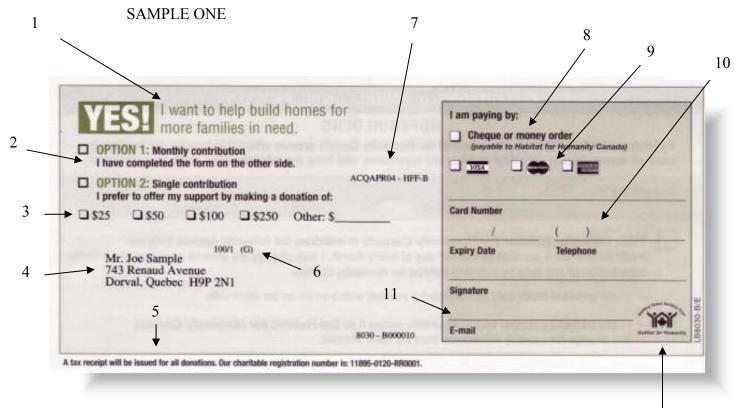
"Complete this form and we will validate your membership and start sending you your member benefits and our monthly newsletter. You do not need to send money now. You will be billed later."

you instead say

 $\Box$  Yes, I accept the President's invitation. Please validate my membership and start sending me all of my membership benefits, including *Tower Magazine*. I understand that I do not need to send any money now. I will be billed for the annual dues of \$55 later.

# Mistakes to avoid

- 1. Introducing new ideas or taking a new direction
- 2. Making the donor do too much
- 3. Leaving insufficient room for donors (particularly elderly donors) to complete the form
- 4. Using the same reply device for every appeal. Because they are printed several at a time on a sheet of paper, reply devices are inexpensive to produce. So design one for each appeal so that each reply device supports the case for support and appeal for funds in each appeal package
- 5. Forgetting to include the donor's unique identification number



## Reply device front



