



Direct Mail

Agenda

- Planning a campaign
- Developing messages
- Producing a mailing
- Analyzing results

PLANNING A CAMPAIGN

Appreciate that people give because...

- They're asked
- They have money to give
- They are in the habit of giving
- They want to belong



Get them to...



- Open it
- Read it
- Care about it
- Give money
- Do it again

Understand that direct mail works because...

- It's tangible
- It stands out
- It serves as its own reminder
- It feels official
- It's scalable
- It's personalizable
- It's measurable
- It's testable
- It's habit forming



Recognize the challenges of direct mail



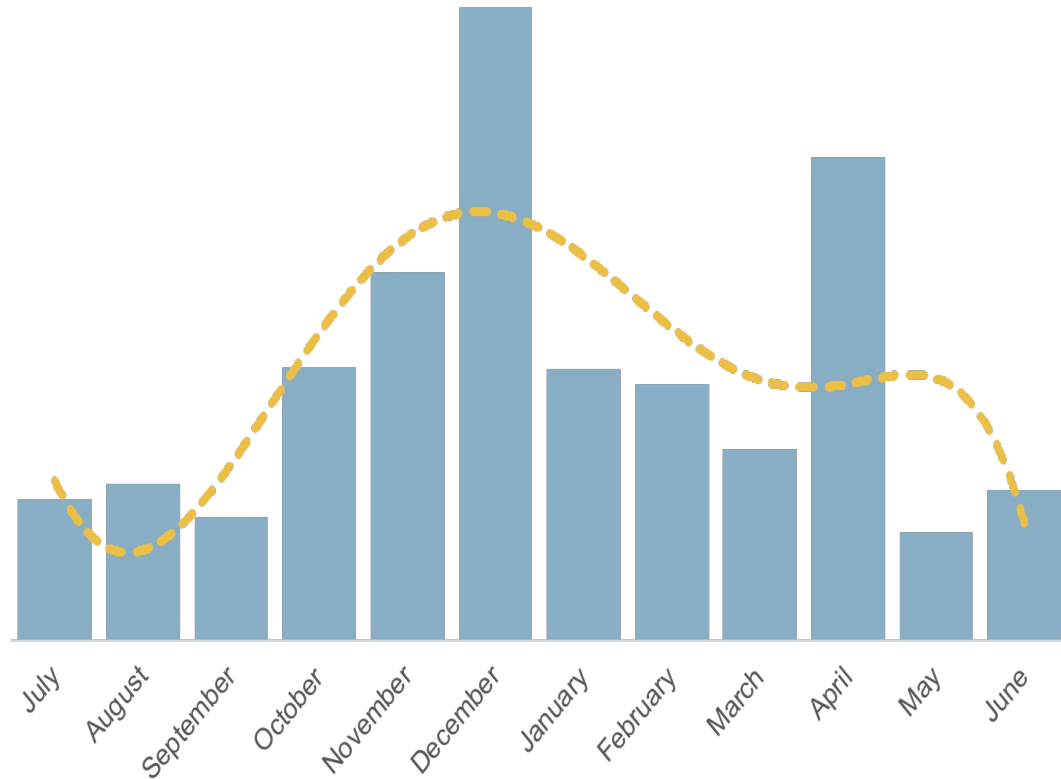
- Not everyone will respond
- Response rates can be lower than other channels / vary within segments
- It can feel irrelevant (e.g., junk mail)
- There's no feedback loop from recipient
- Less effective for younger audiences, non-donors and lapsed donors
- The cost can be significant

Plan in “quarters”

- Summer - planning, thanks, new year
- Fall - renewal, leadership, holidays
- Winter - acquisition, reactivation
- Spring - Giving Day, fiscal year-end



Build on important dates



- Holidays
- Calendar/fiscal year-end
- Homecoming/reunion
- Family weekend/tuition bills
- Commencement
- Giving Day/#GivingTuesday
- Campaign kick-off/wrap-up
- Current events (elections, disasters)
- A donor's last gift

Maintain and share a high level calendar

Date	Campaign	Audience	Key Objective	Signatory
Sept 15	Dean's appeal	Schools/units	Early Gifts Restricted	Deans
Nov 15	Calendar year-end appeal	Prior year donors Leadership prospects	Renewal Leadership	President
Mar 15	Giving day appeals	All alumni, parents, friends	Participation Restricted	Annual Fund Chair
May 15	Fiscal year-end appeal	Non-donors Sybunts	Acquisition Reactivation	Students

Make sure it fits into the overall strategy

- Frequency
- Timing
- Messages
- Brand
- Purpose



DEVELOPING MESSAGES

Begin by asking yourself...

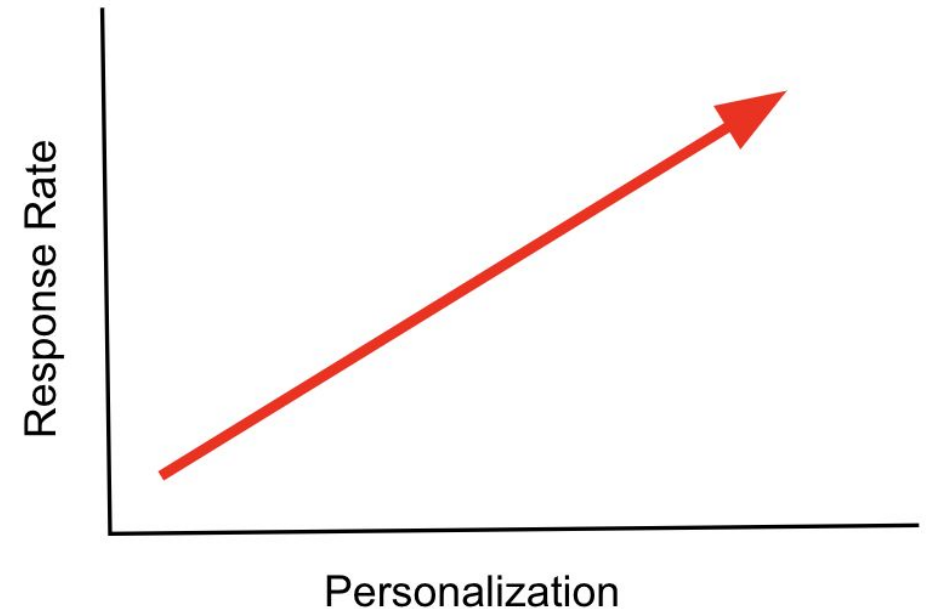


- Why are you doing this?
- Who are you sending it to?
- Who will it be from?
- What are you asking them to do exactly?
- What's going on around you?
- What is in it for the donor when they give?
- Why do they need to give now?

source: Mal Warwick

Segment to increase personalization

- Constituency
- Donor segment (RFM)
- Interests (past designations, majors, clubs, teams, occupation, etc.)
- Affinities (age, gender, region, ethnicity)
- Preferences (channel, time of year)



Build a messaging matrix

Segment	Purpose	Tone	Signatory
Non-Donors	Inspire a first gift	Informal, optimistic, excited, inclusive, proud	Student
Current Donors	Renew past support	Purposeful, appreciative, impactful	Peer
Lapsed Donors	Win them back	Ambitious, collaborative, nostalgic, progressive	Staff
Leadership Donors	Secure larger gifts	Formal, important, exclusive, constructive	Dean

Add a personal touch



- Name/Address
- Salutation
- Relationship
- Class year
- Past gift
 - Amount
 - Designation
 - Time

Create an outline

- Introduction
- Case for support
- Call to action
- Conclusion
- Signature
- Postscript



Introduction



- Grab the reader's attention
- Ask a question
- Share a quote
- Make a controversial statement
- Connect to a memory
- Tell a story about a student, a faculty member, or an alum

Case for support

- Avoid “save our sinking ship” or “reach our goal”
- Focus on the needs and motives *of the reader*
- Tap into motivators - fear, access, guilt, greed, anger
- Make it relevant and believable to them
- Describe the impact of support now
- Explain that this opportunity may not be here later
- Illustrate the consequences of no support
- Make them the hero of the story

Call to action

- Ask for money, not support
- Be clear and direct, but also polite and positive
- State a specific amount, purpose and deadline
- Request an amount that is accessible, easy to consider, more than their last gift
- Frame it as a question that speaks to them specifically
 - *Would you consider making your first gift today?*
 - *Would you please renew your gift today?”*
 - *Can we count on you to continue your leadership with a increased gift?*
- Explain what their money will achieve today
- Convey why they may not have an opportunity to have this same impact later

Conclusion

- Synthesize your main points
- Restate your case for support
- Repeat the ask
- Be positive and express gratitude
- End with something about them



Signatory



- Give your message a voice
- Have someone who will resonate with the specific audience
- Use it as an opportunity to engage volunteers and donors
- Plan for their involvement and possible edits

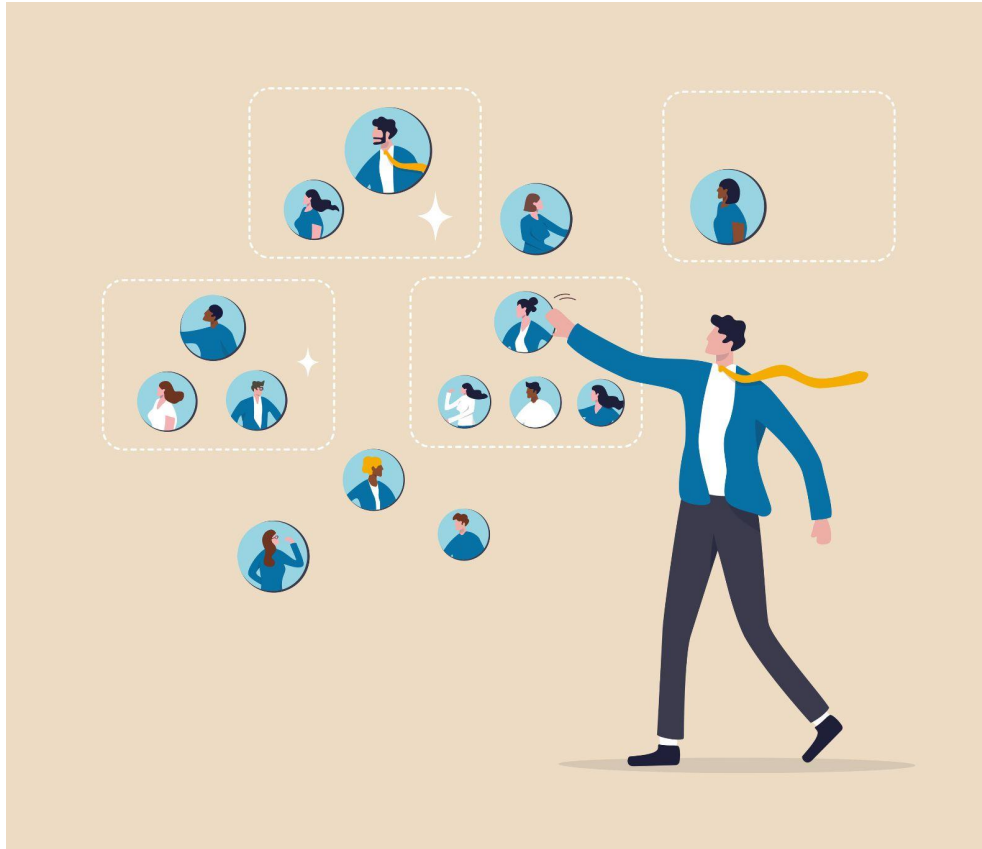
Postscript

- Know that it may be the first (or only) thing someone reads
- Highlight something important from the content
- Introduce something new



PRODUCING A MAILING

Identify various needs and stakeholders



- Writer
- Editor
- Designer
- Printer
- Paper supplier
- Lettershop
- Postal system
- Data manager
- Gift processor
- ***Project manager***

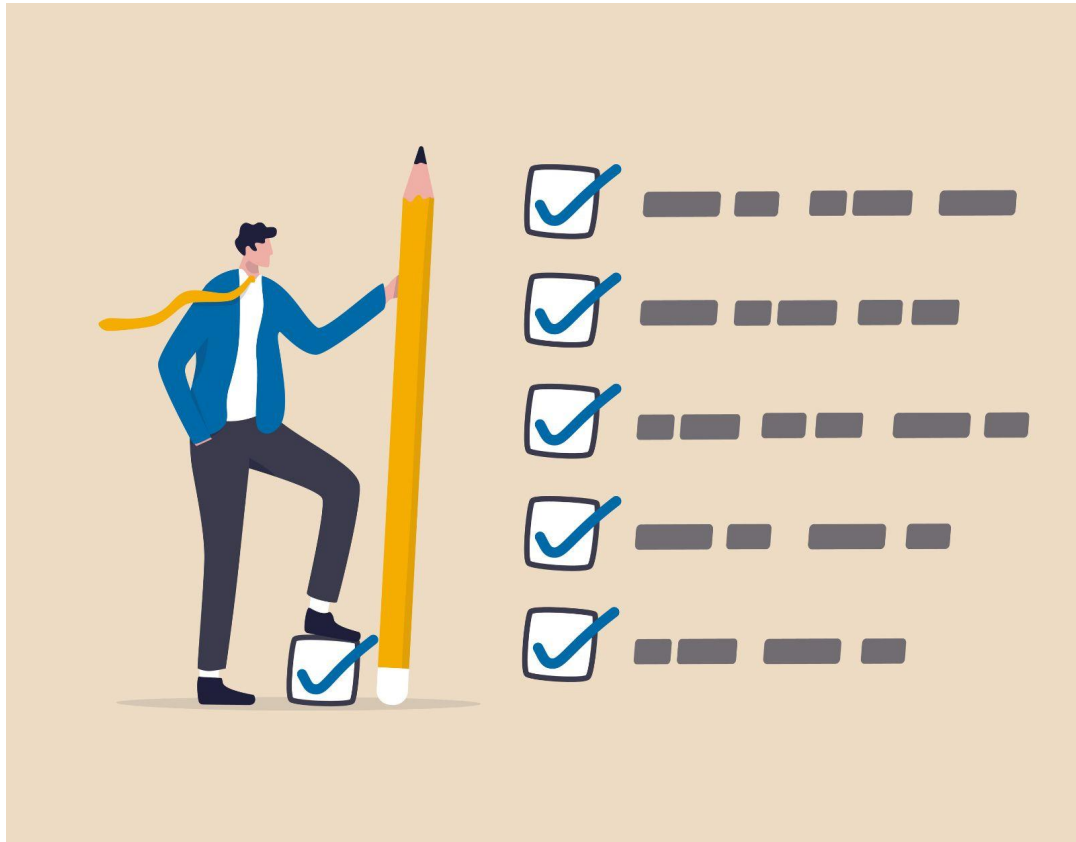
Create a project schedule

- Define a list of requirements (a recipe)
- Begin with the end in mind
- Allow 8-10 weeks
- Determine who is responsible
 - for the project overall
 - for each individual requirement
- Know that execution is the hardest part

Example

- Kick-off meeting - 7/15 (All)
- Data request - 7/20 (Bob)
- Draft of copy - 8/1 (Sue)
- Draft of design - 8/1 (Chris)
- Feedback on copy - 8/7 (Sue)
- Feedback on design - 8/7 (Chris)
- Copy finalized - 8/10 (Sue)
- Design finalized - 8/10 (Chris)
- Data to vendor - 8/15 (Bob)
- Proofs from vendor - 8/25 (Pat)
- Final sign-off - 9/1 (Pat)
- Suppression file due - 9/9 (Bob)
- Drop date - 9/15
- In-homes - 9/20

Develop a good prospect list



- Pull the data on time in a usable format
- Make sure all the key fields are there
- Clean it up
- Verify counts to prior estimates and projected costs
- Format it for production
- Add codes (package, reply)

Create a segment key with counts and codes

Package	Segment	Universe Counts	Exclusive Counts	Appeal Code
A	Leadership prospects	275	275	AGN0001A
B	Reunion alumni	525	490	AGN0001B
C	Prior year alumni donors	2,100	1,973	AGN0001C
D	Young alumni	300	225	AGN0001D

Design an envelope to do its jobs

1. Get delivered

- Use correct name and address
- Comply with rules
- Optimize postage postage

2. Get opened (in 8 seconds)

- Don't be plain
- Know where their eyes go
- Use teasers

Postage

- First class mail (1-5 business day) for postcards, letters and large envelopes
 - Live stamp (personalization)
 - Metering (convenience, cost savings)
 - Nonprofit discount (permit required)
 - Data presort (cost savings)
- Unusual shapes
- Express delivery
- International



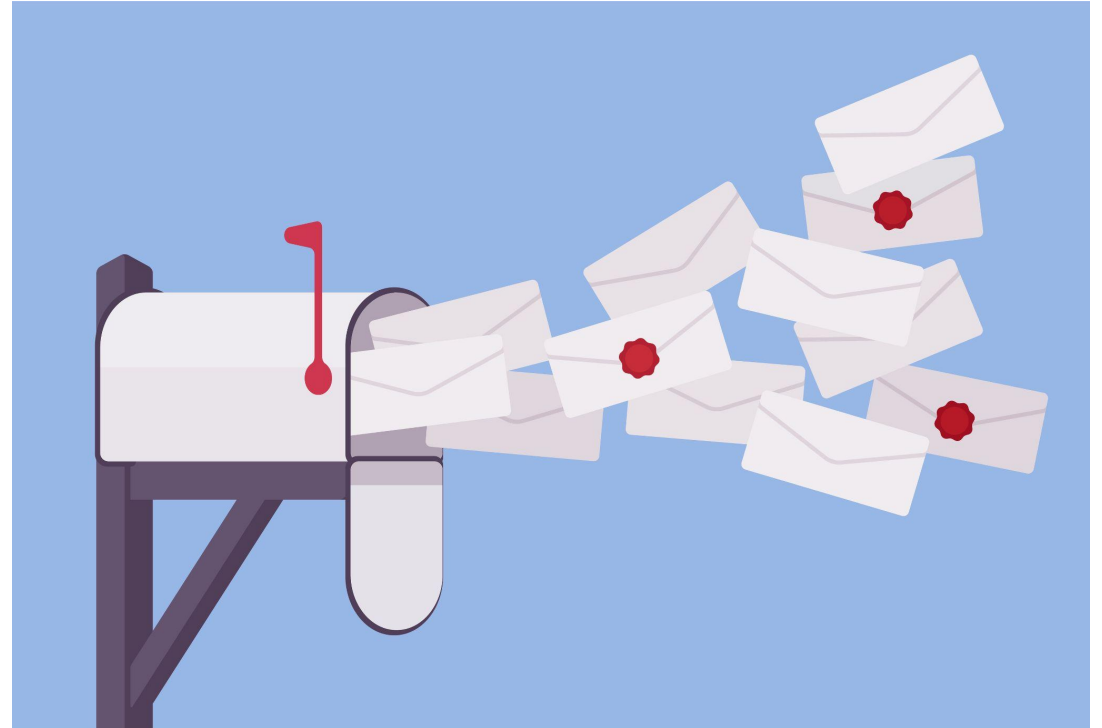
Use inserts/buckslips strategically



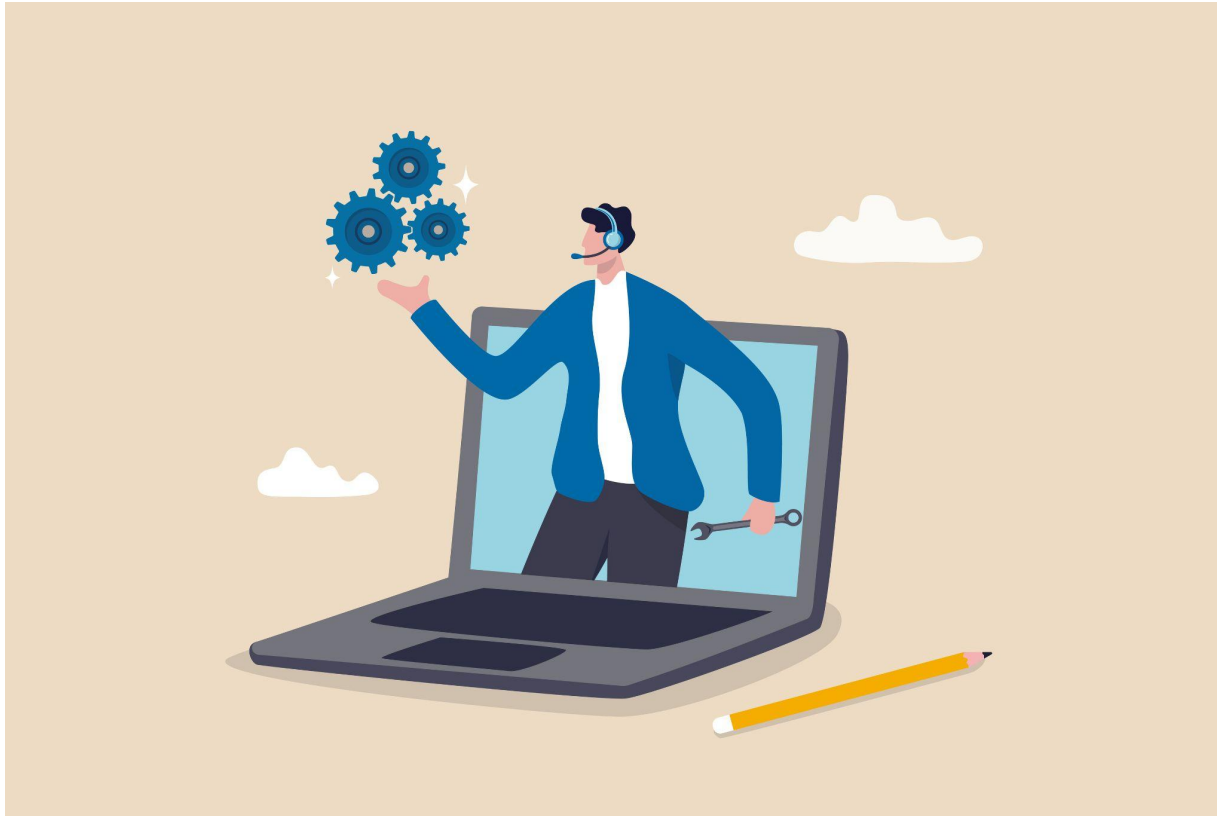
- Announce a related/unrelated event
- Reinforce a key point from your appeal
- Encourage reader to interact
- Test a key variable

Reply device

- Business reply envelope (BRE)
- QR code
- Personalization (name, giving history)
- Ask array / Recognition levels
- Appeal codes



Fulfillment



- Gift processing
- Tracking
- Acknowledgments
- Receipts
- Reporting

ANALYZING RESULTS

Put things in perspective

- Correlation vs. causation
- Use appeal codes on reply devices
- Account for online giving
- Develop reports and processes



Consider an appeal's "life cycle"



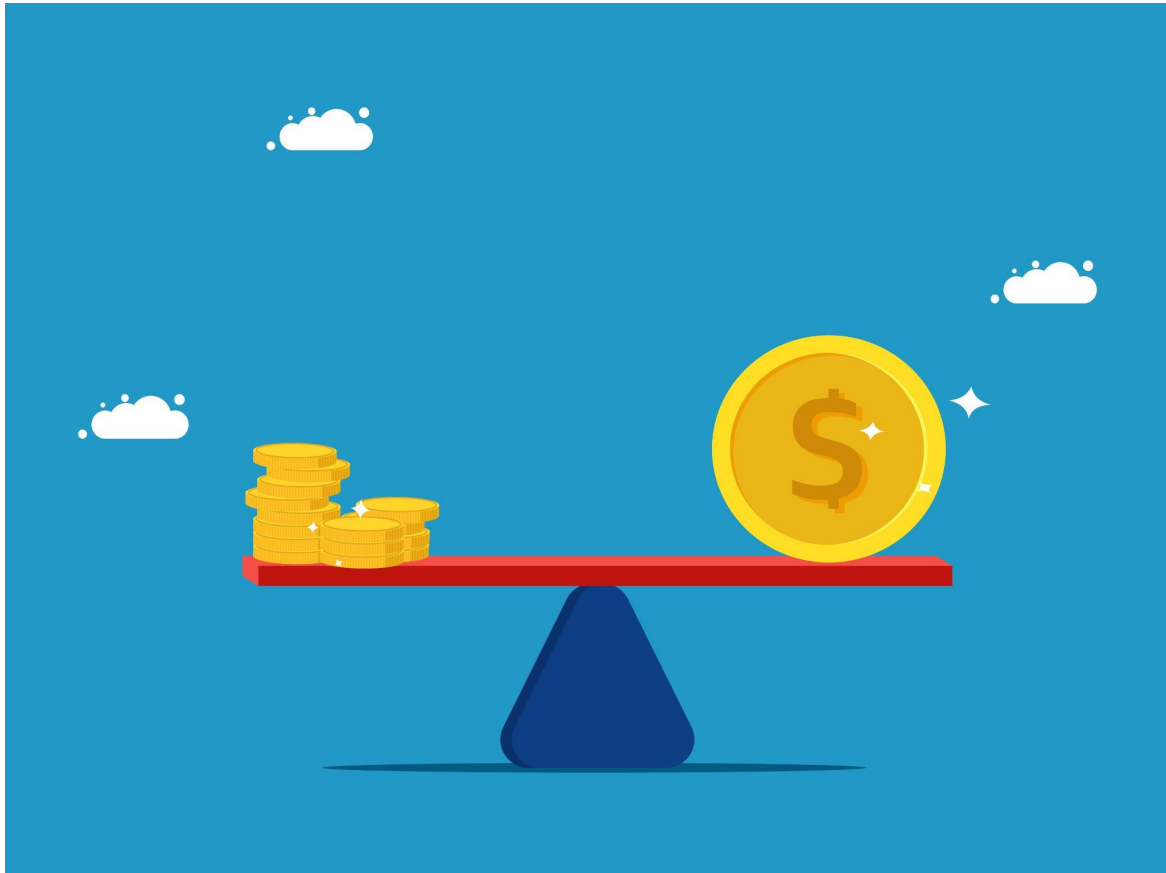
- Time when 90% of gifts are received
- Averages around 8 weeks
- Dependent on many factors outside of your control (paychecks, tuition bills, speeding tickets)
- Avoid poaching, cannibalizing or annoying

Calculate key performance metrics

- \$ Revenue
- # Gifts
- % Response rate
- \$ Average gift



Evaluate cost



- Fixed vs. variable
- Content vs. distribution
- Top line vs. bottom line results
- Point of diminishing returns
 - \$ ROI (revenue)
 - \$ CGD (gifts)

Track results by segment

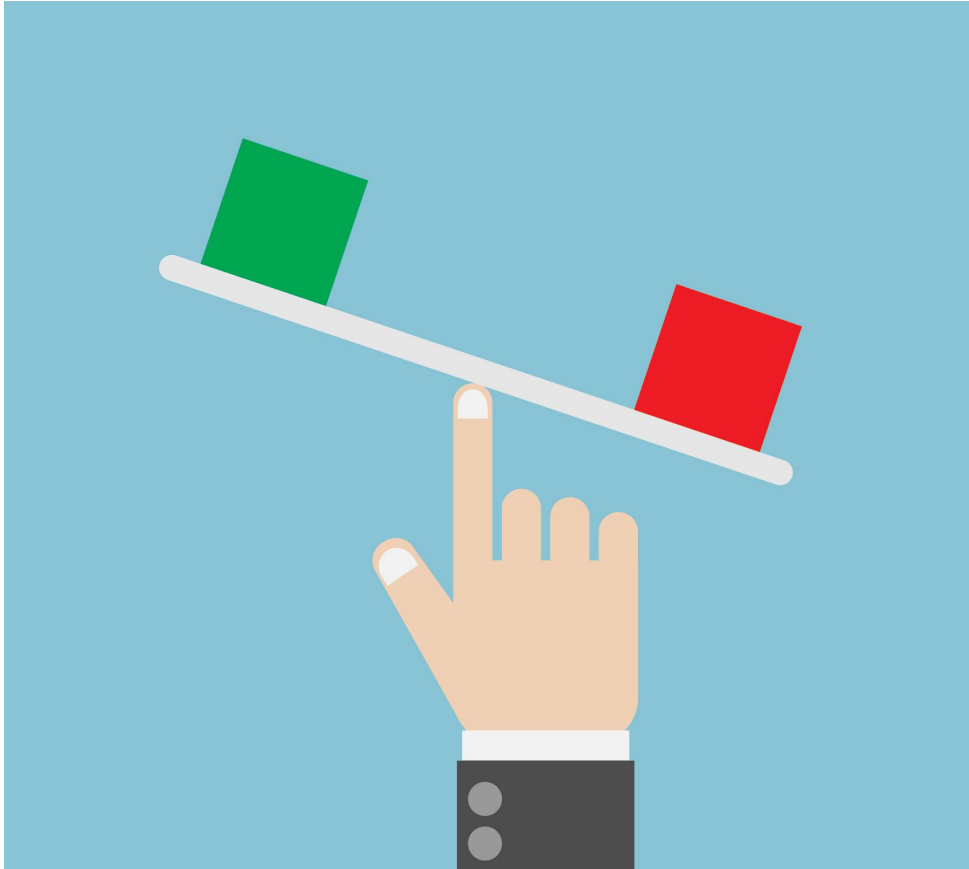
	\$ Revenue	# Gifts	% Response	\$ Avg Gift	\$ Cost	\$ ROI*	\$ CGD
Segment A	\$360,000	2,987	8%	\$121	\$135,000	\$1.67	\$45.20
Segment B	\$100,000	1,020	2%	\$98	\$75,000	\$0.33	\$73.52
Segment C	\$55,000	364	14%	\$151	\$25,000	\$1.20	\$68.68
Segment D	\$500,000	416	26%	\$1,200	\$60,000	\$7.33	\$144.23
Overall	\$1,015,000	4,787	12%	\$212	\$295,000	\$2.44	\$61.62

Give context through comparison

- The campaign overall
- Other segments (sort)
- Past campaigns
- Sort most to least
- Beware of outliers



Test forward *and backward*



divide list in half and change only one thing

- Design
- Length
- Font
- Ask amount
- Purpose/designation
- Inserts
- Signatory

Key takeaways

- Direct mail works - and remains very important
- It requires a lot of different expertise and collaboration
- Segmentation and personalization lead to better response
- Focus on the needs of the prospect
- Measure and test regularly
- Make constant improvements

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ANNUAL GIVING NETWORK