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Without the support of donors, many hospitals struggle under unremitting financial pressure. The good news is you can open the door to new and greater donor relationships and connect much more effectively with your current donors! The *Jay Reardon Healthcare Direct Mail Program*, teamed with the premier services of United Printing & Mailing, Inc., provides an effective, efficient and affordable method to promote fund development using direct mail as the medium. Plus our services are turnkey and all under one roof: Strategy and planning, list development, creative, printing, mailing and post-campaign evaluation that is customized and professional.

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DONOR

Development for Hospitals

Well-stated, personal letter still the heart of direct mail

Blogs and Blackberries are fast but lose the personal touch



By Jay Reardon

Want to ask a personal favor from one or two people? Your best bet is to pick up the phone and try to arrange a one-on-one meeting if you can get through today's barricade of secretaries and voice mail. On the other hand, if you'd like to ask a favor from thousands, by far the best way to go is with a well-stated, personal letter. That's the heart of direct mail.

With direct mail correspondence you can address the recipient by name. You can send the letter to his or her specific address. And you can put your signature at the close of your letter. Your message is private. And top-quality, properly addressed, well written letters do get read!

Letter writing goes back a long ways. The Persians were delivering mail 2,500 years ago. Napoleon Bonaparte was a prolific letter writer. Historians say he wrote some 75,000. There was a long flurry of famous letters between Eisenhower and Churchill in World War II. St. Paul was a tireless letter writer which probably saved most of the New Testament. The mailboxes of history are jammed with letters that have changed the destiny of nations, inspired greatness, won high offices, abdicated thrones, sealed relationships, broke contracts and transferred fortunes. Interestingly, those who watch various social phenomena tell us that letter writing is experiencing a rebirth.

While email is lightening fast, it lacks the warmth of a personal touch. When was the last time you received an

email with the once proper salutation of "Dear..."? In its haste, today's electronics have bypassed what many consider good taste. It's one thing to have robotics announce You Got Mail. But it's far more compelling to receive a letter with your name on the envelope and a personal message inside. Letters have a longer "shelf life" than email which, for the most part, is here today and deleted tomorrow. One historian has commented, "We have paper from 2000 BC, but we cannot read the first email ever sent." Another quipped, "Digital information lasts forever, or five years, whichever comes first."

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Enlist your local paper as ally in your development efforts

Your local news media can help bring focus to your development efforts, and all it may take is a little nudge from your PR people. The Arizona Republic (Phoenix) recently carried an interesting editorial which we quote in part below. Chances are, your local newspaper and/or other local media will do the same for you with the proper inspiration from you. Here's what the Republic wrote under the headline of "Charitable Donations – Generosity Vital in Hard Times."

"When times are hard, is charitable giving a luxury or a necessity? We'd argue that, although it is easier to be generous when you have plenty, it is more important to give when you don't. That's not just because giving can provide a predictable sense of personal satisfaction at a time of economic uncertainty. It is also because a community's stability—not to mention its humanity—can depend on meeting the needs of its most vulnerable members.

"Charitable giving is more than a good deed. It is an investment in safer, healthier neighborhoods....In these wobbly economic

A case could be made by you as to why your hospital deserves to remain on the public's list of charitable giving priorities.



times, people who never thought they would need a helping hand are reaching out to...charities. People who never hesitated to give are wondering how generous they can afford to be. That is an intensely personal decision. People are dealing with fears about their jobs, their homes and their future. They are listening to economists discuss how long and how bad the current slump is going to be.

"People are cutting corners and, for some, charitable giving falls into the category of expenses that can be trimmed. It's understandable. Tough economic times lead to introspection and a hard look at what's important. However..." At this point, a case could be made by you as to why your hospital deserves to remain on the public's list of charitable giving priorities. ■

The Heart of Direct Mail – Continued from Page 1

What's the bottom line to all this? When asking people to become donors to your foundation, you are asking them somewhat of an ultimate favor—to send you money. It's a solicitation that should be given every safeguard and offered in the most highly favored manner possible—a personal letter. In a world of blogs and Blackberries, a well-written letter, arriving at a thousand different doorsteps or mailboxes, is not the result of still another electronic fad but a time-proven and trustworthy communication.

Facebook, MySpace and Twitter may be all the rage today but they'll be soon replaced with some other newfangle. And while people such as Jeff Bezos who founded Amazon, are building rockets for space tourism (they say the Amazon spaceship is due to blast off in 2010), you are faced with the more earthly challenge of

building a solid donor base. In doing so, be sure you get the best written letter possible, based if possible on the drama of a grateful patient. Mail it to a well calculated, professionally prepared mailing list. You can't get donations if you don't get donors. And the best way to reach donors is a solid, old-fashioned, personal, one-on-one letter. ■

For a great many years the Jay Reardon Healthcare Direct Mail Program has been exclusively serving the donor development and fund raising needs of not-for-profit community hospitals throughout the U.S.. Our creative directors are veteran and highly experienced writers. Our mailing lists are well tailored and expertly refined. And our program is facilitated by United Printing & Mailing, one of the nations premier direct mail firms.

When "Express" Mail was by Horse

Back in the wild and woolly days of the Old West, mail usually took about eight to twelve days, assuming you were on a leg of the Pony Express, "Direct mail" just wasn't possible. In 1790 there were only 75 post offices in the entire country, and by 1860 mail was still a slow process which prompted creation of the Pony Express. It was a short-lived but spectacular undertaking, designed to provide "fast" service between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California. A rider was ferried across the Missouri River to reach the Kansas shore, and then it was hoofbeats west on a journey that took relays of riders through Kansas, Nebraska, northeastern Colorado, Wyoming, northern Utah, Nevada and California. Along the 1,600-mile route there were 190 relay stations where remounts were kept available for the 80 riders who were constantly shuttling between stations. The venture lasted only 18 months and ended with completion of the overland telegraph. ■



What's New?

If things stay on schedule: You should be able to use your cell phone as a boarding pass next year. Under the new process your right of entry will be in the form of a 2-D encrypted bar code sent to your cell phone and visible on its screen where it can be scanned by security and gate personnel. At least that's what the International Air Transport Association tells us.

Could happen this year: Sunglasses that automatically transition to 3-D glasses when you enter a movie theater to watch a movie in 3-D.

Will happen this year: Too many people are cutting corners in the worst of all possible places—their drugs. They're falling prey to a new breed of pharmaceutical counterfeiters. In fact, the global market for knock-off drugs is expected to reach a staggering \$75 billion next year. Now an Illinois nanotech company has come up with a novel pill verification/protection idea. Three major pharmaceutical manufacturers will introduce medicine bearing nano-scale information to market this year. ■

"We make a life by what we give."

One of our hospital clients recently received the following note from a grateful donor. We thought it was so much on target and so touching that we include it here with the hope that you will enjoy and appreciate it as we did.

"My wife and I have reached the age where we find ourselves reflecting on the lives we've led—our accomplishments, our failures, our hopes and our dreams. We have asked ourselves if we have done anything to make the world a better place. Have we merely passed through or will there be some sign after we are gone that we made even a slight difference? The contributions we have given your fine hospital may be like planting trees under whose shade we may never expect to sit, but they have given a greater meaning to our lives and we are grateful for the opportunity. Sir Winston Churchill once said, 'We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.' Our annual check is enclosed." ■

