

The use and misuse of emotion. Section 4: emotions and donors.

4.9.

Keep it simple

by Brock Warner, CFRE, development manager at War Child Canada.

Every fundraiser earning their pay knows that emotion drives the majority of giving, especially in annual and monthly programmes. At a recent IFC

conference Dan Hill, author of *Emotionomics: Leveraging Emotions for Business Success* said:

'If you want to be successful at fundraising, the more you make people think, the less they feel; and the less they feel, the less they are motivated to give.'

This has been true in my experience, until gift sizes begin to outstrip a donor's own budget for an impulse buy. When the gift crosses that line - which is different for everyone - emotion alone isn't enough to put them at ease. Trust, logic, and accountability then become drivers alongside emotion.

What's not a primary driver for giving?

Complexity.

Issues are complex and your projects are complex.

How we communicate to donors should not be.



Advertisers have long described success as a strong idea simply presented. A radical fundraiser does the same, but understands that success for us isn't measured in units sold or increased market share. Success for us means lives saved, policy changed, or opinions altered.

There's connective tissue between the head and the heart. You don't have to choose between one or the other. In fact, neglecting one or the other could disappoint or confuse your donor.

Never underestimate anyone's ability or willingness to learn about the most complicated social issues regardless of age, background or giving history. After all, the deeper you're able to bring your supporters into the day-to-day

of your organisation, the more engaged and generous they are likely to be in the future.

If you've struggled to translate your complex programming detail into compelling copy, here are five tips:

1. Familiarise yourself with the readability scoring in Microsoft Word.
2. Fresh eyes from outside your organisation will be able to point out jargon or unclear logic.
3. Write a draft, then let it sit. Come back in a more relaxed state and I promise, you'll find areas to improve.
4. Practice, practice, practice. Talk to service clubs, schools, and associations about your work.
5. Photography is your friend. Ideally, a single subject in action to propel your story forward.

This article first appeared on <http://iamafundraiser.com/donor-is-crying/>

© Brock Warner 2016



Brock Warner, CFRE is professor of ePhilanthropy at Humber College in Toronto, and manager of development at War Child Canada. Currently in Toronto. As a fundraiser, he is as dedicated to the 'how' as much as the 'how much'. Connect with him on Twitter, [@BrockWarner](https://twitter.com/BrockWarner) or on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/in/brockwarner/).