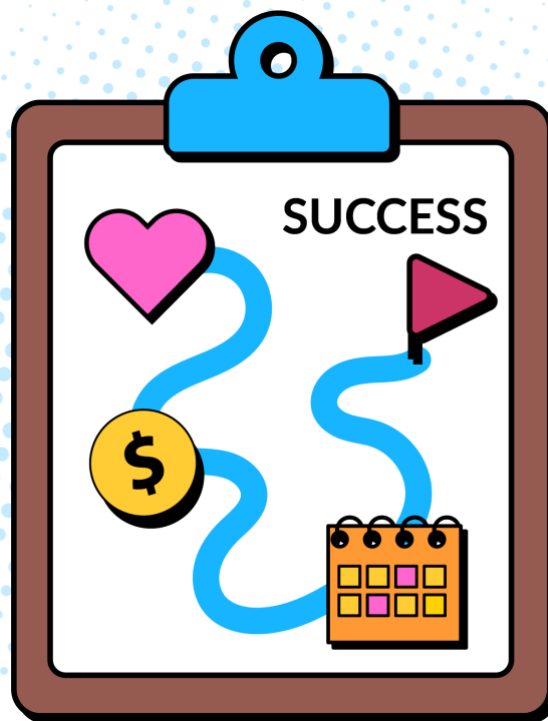




AUGUST 2025

Monthly action plan



August 2025

Irresistible Communications

A Step-by-Step Guide to Building
Fundraising Messages That Move Donors

Introduction

Great fundraising writing isn't about being clever or poetic. It's about being clear, emotional, and focused on the donor. This month's Monthly Action Plan (MAP) will guide you through four simple but powerful lessons to help you write messages that get opened, read, and inspire action.

Built around the *Irresistible Communications for Great Nonprofits* course, this MAP gives you a clear, practical path through the noise. Each week focuses on one key building block of donor communication — from how to make your message feel emotionally real, to shaping a powerful offer, telling the right story, and making sure your message gets read (not recycled).

You don't need to be a "good writer" to be a great fundraiser. You just need the right tools, a bit of practice, and a plan that keeps the donor at the heart of it all. Let's get to work.

Who This Action Plan Is For

This MAP is for you if:

- Your appeals get praised internally, but don't raise what you hoped for
 - You're unsure how to speak both clearly and emotionally
 - You want a repeatable process to follow each time you write
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Key Outcomes You'll Achieve

- A clear understanding of what makes donor communications effective
 - A stronger, more emotional fundraising offer that inspires giving
 - Storytelling skills that connect your donor to the heart of your message
 - Practical techniques to design appeals that get opened, read, and acted on
 - A donor-first mindset you can apply to every piece of writing
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1. The Foundations of Irresistible Communication.

What Really Works (and What Doesn't)

Fundraising isn't about explaining. It's about connecting. This week, you'll rethink what makes a message effective — not based on internal approval, but on real donor response.

Learn:

- Why professional, polished writing often falls flat with donors
- How emotion, clarity, and simplicity drive giving
- Why long appeals often do better than short ones

Module:

- [Irresistible Communications – Module 1.1: What to Say and How to Say It SO you Really Connect](#)
- [Irresistible Communications – Module 2.2: Things No Donor Said, Ever](#)

Tools:

- [Irresistible Communications Workbook – Module 1.1](#) This guided worksheet helps you unlearn the habits of 'professional' writing and practice writing that connects emotionally. Use it to simplify your message and speak more directly to your donor.

Extra Reading:

- [It's Not Just You: 3 Barriers to Success in Fundraising](#)
- [How to Tell the Donor's Story in Your Fundraising](#)

Try This:

- Choose one recent appeal or message.
- Ask: *Did this sound "nice" or did it connect emotionally?*
- Try rewriting the first paragraph using simpler words and a donor-centered tone.

2. Shape the Offer: The Core of Every Irresistible Message

Even great writing won't raise money without a strong offer. This week, you'll learn how to build an offer that is clear, urgent, and specific.

Learn:

- The components of a strong fundraising offer (the Offer Diamond)
- How to speak to your donor's values and goals
- What makes an offer emotionally powerful

Module:

- [Irresistible Communications – Module 2: What Fundraising Is Always About: Action](#)

Tools:

- [Your Fundraising Offer Report Card](#) One of our favorite downloads in ALL our content! Use it to check if your offer is specific, urgent, emotional, and donor-focused — and spot quick wins for stronger appeals.

Try This:

- Take a past appeal and isolate the “offer” — what are you asking the donor to do?
- Use the Offer Report Card to test and revise it.
- Make it shorter, more emotional, and donor-focused.

3. Storytelling That Sparks Action

A good offer becomes irresistible when it's backed by the right story. This week shows you how to find and shape stories that show need, connect emotionally, and invite donors to help.

Learn:

- What makes a story effective in fundraising — and why many don't work
- How to avoid “success stories” that fall flat
- How to build emotional tension that invites action
- Why your story must connect directly to your offer
- Tips to focus your storytelling so it's clear, powerful, and moves your donor to give

Your Module This Week:

- [Irresistible Communications – Module 3.1: The Right Story](#)
- [Irresistible Communications – Module 3.2 Making the Story ABOUT the Donor](#)

Tools

- [Your Fundraising Story Outline Checklist](#) This checklist helps you shape stories that show need, evoke emotion, and invite action. It's your go-to for checking if your story has all the elements to support your fundraising offer.

Extra Reading:

- [Action: Your Magic Ingredient for Successful Fundraising](#)
- [How to Structure Your Storytelling for Maximum Impact](#)
- [Fundraising Story Goes from Good to GREAT \[Case Study\]](#)

Try This:

- Choose a story you've used before — or one you're considering
- Use the checklist to test it
- Refocus it so it shows a problem the donor can help solve

4. Make Your Message Unmissable

Design, Mystery & Emotional Readability

Even the best message fails if it's never opened. This week's lessons help you deliver your message with maximum impact — from envelope design to layout and visual tone.

Learn:

- What makes mail and email more likely to be opened
- Why accessibility boosts response rates
- How to structure your message visually for older readers
- Practical, proven design techniques that are helping real fundraisers raise more money right now
- What goes into a successful direct response campaign — from layout to emotional flow
- How to design appeals that not only *look* good, but *feel* right to your donor

Modules:

- Graphic Design for Fundraising with John Lepp
- [Irresistible Communications – Module 1.2: The Design of Your Message](#)

Extra Reading:

- [How to Make Your Fundraising Strong with Visual Design](#)

Try This:

- Review your last appeal or email.
- Can a donor with poor vision read it easily?
- Apply at least three visual tips to make your message more inviting.

Quick Reference: Your Complete Table of Time Saving Tools

Modules	Irresistible Communications – Module 1.1: What to Say and How to Say It SO you Really Connect
	Irresistible Communications – Module 2.2: Things No Donor Said, Ever
	Irresistible Communications – Module 2: What Fundraising Is Always About: Action
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