



**Solutions in
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Your Checklist for Thanking Donors

Although it's rare for a donor to donate in the hope of receiving some form of recognition, giving thanks is a gesture that makes a huge difference. Here's a short list that we put together to remind you of important things to include and exclude from your thank you letters to donors.

DEFINITELY INCLUDE!

Your thank you message, whether sent by mail or email, must be **PERSONALIZED**.

To start, here are some important elements:

- ☐ The date
- ☐ The donor's complete name and address
- ☐ A personalized salutation (avoid using Dear Sir/Madame/Friend/Donor or other derivatives). If the donation is from a business, take the necessary steps to identify a contact person to whom you can send the thank you letter.
- ☐ Your organization contact information, including the name of a resource person who can be contacted for more information.
- ☐ A handwritten signature of a representative from your organization, such as the Executive Director or the President (avoid electronic signatures).

Some tips for writing the thank you letter or email:

- ☐ Get the reader's attention from the start! Try to be creative and try not to start with "On behalf of", or "it is with much gratitude that...". Why not start your letter with "We have a story to share with you"? If the message is written by one of your service users, try: "Let me tell you about my experience with (name of organization)".
- ☐ Describe how the donation will be used by the organization, using concrete examples, stories from service users, testimonials from volunteers, etc.
- ☐ The message could be written by a service user or a volunteer. If they don't feel comfortable writing the letter, you could ask them to simply write a small handwritten message at the bottom of the letter after it is printed.
- ☐ Provoke emotions in the donor.
- ☐ Write in a clear, concise, easy to understand and authentic vocabulary.



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- ☐ Include one or more photos (a touching photo!). For example, a picture of your employees or volunteers with a sign saying “Thank you!”, a photo of a good deed or success story, or why not a concrete photo of the services you offer.
- ☐ If the thank you message is sent by email, why not send a short video showing employees, volunteers or beneficiaries saying thank you?
- ☐ You could invite the donor to come visit your organization (by contacting you first, of course).
- ☐ Include links to your web site and social media, and how to receive your newsletter so they can be updated on the latest news or upcoming events with your cause.
- ☐ Next to the handwritten signature, add a small personalized handwritten note with a mention of the donor’s continued support, if applicable.

It is very important to give the same attention to the content of a letter sent by mail, as to an email sent following an online donation. In both cases, the message must be changed at least once a year to demonstrate to your recurring donors that you are making the effort to thank them appropriately.

Ideally, the thank you must be sent within 48 hours after receiving the donation.

For larger donations, a phone call to the donor is advisable to thank him personally as soon as possible. This call can also be made by a volunteer or a member of your board of directors.

The tax receipt :

- ☐ Include the tax receipt when sending the thank you letter or mention in your letter when it will be sent.
- ☐ If you mail all your tax receipts at the same time once per year, make sure you send a thank you letter when you receive the donation.

DEFINITELY EXCLUDE!

- ☐ NEVER make another ask in the thank you letter! It’s best to not even mention a phrase such as “We hope to count on your support again next year” or “at the next edition of our fundraising activity”.
- ☐ Don’t ask the donor to fill out a survey or to give an opinion about services offered by your organization.