



Improve Your Fundraising
with the Labeling Principle

How did Chicago increase the likelihood that people would vote by 15%?

GET-OUT-THE-VOTE campaigns have tried many approaches. In Chicago, they increased engagement in voting just by telling half of the potential voters for a local election that they were “above-average citizens likely to vote and participate in political events.” The other half were told they were average in terms of these interests, beliefs, and behaviors. One week later, the “above-average citizens” were 15% more likely to vote.



LABELING

Tapping into People's Identity

People generally behave in ways that reinforce their personal identities. They are more likely to take a certain action if primed with a positive label describing how they see themselves. Labels can be activated based on identities such as nationality, religion, profession, race, political party, or other “tribal” associations, such as being a cancer survivor.

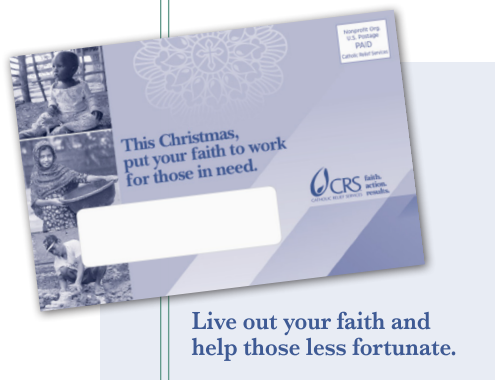
Increasing Good Behavior in Children

Giving people a positive label works for every age. In a classroom experiment with 3- to 6-year-olds, the children were divided into two groups. Those who were described with a positive noun term (“Some children choose to be helpers”) rather than a verb (“Some children choose to help”) helped the experimenter 29% more often.



Improving Fundraising Results

Catholic Relief Charities was able to tap into their donors’ religious identity as a way to motivate support for the organization. A mailing with the headline, “This Christmas, put your faith to work for those in need,” as well as other language alluding to religious identity raised 18.5% more than the control package that did not specifically reference religion.



Apply Labeling to Your Fundraising

- Use labels that positively reflect how donors see themselves: charter member, a pioneer for the cause, visionary, champion, friend, advocate, philanthropist, conservationist, leader, long-time supporter, etc.
- If you are not merging recipients’ first names into your emails, you can use a noun label, such as “Friend,” to create a connection.
- At events, identify specific types of individuals present by appropriate nouns such as “Circle Club Founder,” “Patrons,” etc. Couple this with adjectives to imbue an additional sense of importance, such as “longest-serving board member” or “most active committee member.”
- Combine these labels with specific “asks” or actions: “We’re relieved that loyal supporters like you are there for us in the times of crisis. Can we count on your support?”



Red Rooster Group uses behavioral science to help nonprofits raise more money, create effective marketing, and improve their programs. Our Behavior Change Cycle and Fundraising Action Pack card deck help nonprofits put behavioral principles into practice. Contact us to tap into our insight.



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