Email Newsletters

Best Practices for Composition

These training materials have been prepared by Aspiration.
Who is Aspiration?

- Aspiration helps nonprofits and foundations use software tools more effectively and sustainably.

- We serve as **ally**, **coach**, **strategist**, **mentor** and **facilitator** to those trying to make more impactful use of information technology in their social change efforts.

- www.aspirationtech.org/services
Learning Goals

- Learn email composition fundamentals
- See examples of doing “The Ask”
- Understand the role of email templates
- Enumerate email template elements
- Explore composition for different goals
Email Composition

- Design for Clear Messaging
  - Know what you want your user to learn and do
- Keep Tone Casual and Personal
  - Model as “friend talking with a friend”
- Design for Skimming
  - Subject line is critical
  - Information should be easily accessible
- Know The Art of “The Ask”
Email Composition

- Key premise: you have minimal time to engage reader
  - Key message should be stated up front
- Think in terms of Subject line and 3 main points
  - State the problem
  - State your solution
  - State ways to get involved
Email Composition

**Subject**

**Problem**

**Solution**

**Action**

**Background**

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**Urgent Action: Free the Panchen Lama!**

On April 25th, Gendhun Choekyi Nyima, Tibet’s Panchen Lama will turn 17 years old and spend yet another birthday as a prisoner of the Chinese government. Over a decade ago he and his family were unjustly detained by Chinese authorities and have been held under house arrest ever since. No information about his whereabouts or well-being has been released.

This week, Tibetans and their supporters will protest at Chinese embassies and consulates around the world calling for Gendhun Choekyi Nyima’s freedom. Please help secure the release of the 11th Panchen Lama by sending the message below now.

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**Send a letter to the following decision maker(s):**

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Li Zhaoxing

**Below is the sample letter:**

Subject: Free the Panchen Lama Now.

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**Take Action!**

Instructions: Click here to take action on this issue or choose the "Reply to Sender" option on your email program.

Tell-A-Friend:
Visit the web address below to tell your friends about this.

What’s At Stake:

On April 25, 2006, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, Tibet’s 11th Panchen Lama, turned 17 years old and spent another birthday as a prisoner of the Chinese government. He has not been seen or heard from in over a decade, since he and his family were abducted by the Chinese government.

In 1995, at age 6, His Holiness the Dalai Lama recognized Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the 11th reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, Tibet’s second most important spiritual leader. Shortly thereafter, the young child and his family were forced to move to Lhasa and then to Beijing, where they were kept under house arrest since 1997.
Email Composition

- The subject line is the most important part
  - Experiment with different ones
  - Try to make it stand out in recipients' inboxes

- People do not read emails; they scan them
  - Make it easy for supporters to quickly find info
  - Be aware of where “the fold” is on the email
  - Focus on making message "skimmable"
Doing “The Ask”

“The Ask” refers to what action you want your recipients to take

Make it easy to see “The Ask”

- Make The Ask specific
  - Repeat The Ask several times in different places
- Use a sidebar and graphics to highlight The Ask
  - Give multiple options and methods for people to take action and participate
Dear friend,

King Coal is planning to do big business overseas and doesn’t care who gets hurt along the way.

Coal giant Ambre Energy is making a major push to build America’s first West Coast coal port in Washington State. Ambre has chosen the breathtaking Columbia River as Ambre’s main artery for shipping millions of tons of coal each year to Asia.

Tell politicians in Washington State to protect the health of their people and waterways and block the Longview coal port.

The proposed coal port in Longview, WA is just the tip of the (rapidly melting) iceberg for the coal industry, which plans to turn the Pacific Northwest into a major corridor for dirty and outdated fuels.

Today in Salt Lake City, RAN has gathered together with climate activists, air quality advocates, and local labor organizations at Ambre’s U.S. headquarters for a peaceful protest to send the message that enough is enough.

We need your voice too.

Tell Washington State politicians to keep coal ports out, and push clean energy projects forward.

If Ambre’s plans are successful, vital ecosystems in the Pacific Northwest and countless communities en route will be exposed to toxic coal dust. It’s time to say no to dirty coal and the
Composition Best Practices

Dear David,

Don't BLOW Ancient Forests on Kleenex

I've been writing to you for weeks about Kimberly Clark, maker of Kleenex and destroyer of ancient forests. Kimberly Clark wipes out three million tons of virgin forests EVERY YEAR, and wastes them on disposable tissues. Well, there's just one week left before we make a stand against Kimberly Clark. Will you stand with me on November 3?

**3 Ways to Help**

1. **Donate Now**
   Help Greenpeace Take a Stand. Become a Member Today.

2. **Take Action**
   Visit our Action Center and take action today.

3. **Tell a Friend**
   Forward this message to a friend. Help spread the word.

**Make a Difference**

Americans use 8.2 million tons of tissue paper products every year-- 55 pounds per person. If every household in the United States replaced just one 70-sheet paper towel roll made from

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The Ask in the text

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Multiple Ways to Take Action

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Background
NOT Best Practice

Dear Friends of Verified Voting:

As another New Year approaches, we reflect on what a busy year 2005 has been, and how much more remains to do in order to achieve transparent, reliable and publicly verifiable elections in our nation.

Through both of our organizations, VerifiedVoting.org (501-c-3) and The Verified Voting Foundation (501-c-4), we work to help those interested in election transparency – whether officials, lawmakers or concerned citizens – with research, information, commentary, materials and key connections as needed. None of this would have been possible without your ongoing support, for which we're very grateful. Below are some of the highlights we'd like to share with you.

VerifiedVoting.org

This year we've seen 19 more states pass voter-verifiable paper record requirements (the most recent Wisconsin, is awaiting the Governor's signature).

Our legislative analyst helped with wording and key concepts for some of those bills, and we generated action alerts so that concerned citizens in those states could write to their lawmakers about the bills coordinating with state and national groups to try to leverage the greatest support possible. Our thanks go out to all those citizens, groups and national organizations for pulling together, over and over.

We submitted written testimony on state efforts, such as an Alaska provision requiring audits (it passed), and California's audit legislation (passed), and have helped activist groups write county-level resolutions calling for manual audits.

This year we published “Draft Model Legislation” for voter-verifiable paper records and manual audit provisions, assisting anyone working on developing such a bill for their state. We also published “States with Audit Provisions” – a resource used by citizens, lawmakers and even other research agencies.

We supported federal voter-verifiable paper record legislation in both the House and Senate. As part of a coalition of organizations, we helped plan, train for and participate in citizen meetings with lawmakers both in Washington DC (June) and in your own districts (August) with the HR 550 Lobby Days, and our Democracy Days (June). We also sent out action alerts resulting in thousands of letters to members of Congress on voter-verifiable paper record legislation, and hired a political adviser in Washington DC to help keep this issue alive with lawmakers and their key staff, and to help build much-needed affiliations with conservatives on this issue.

The Verified Voting Foundation

Some of our Foundation work is highly visible (public testimony), but much occurs behind-the-scenes, including providing links and connections to valued resources for those that need them, and more.

Verified Voting's founder Dr. David Dill testified about the urgent need for voter-verified paper records in several venues:

- the Carter-Baker Election Reform Commission (April),
- the Senate Rules Committee, at its first hearing on this matter (June), and
- the Election Assistance Commission in (July).

The Carter-Baker Commission heard the message: “Paperless electronic voting is hostile to election transparency.” In September they recommended voter-verifiable paper records for all voting systems.

We published charts showing the "Accessibility and Auditable" features offered by different voting systems (carefully researched by staff and interns), and the advantages of optical scan voting systems with ballot-marking devices, and greatly expanded the “Accessibility” section of our website.

This year we updated one of last year’s important projects: the Election Incident Report System (EIRS). This infrastructure we helped develop and implement (with Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility, the National Coalition for Voting Integrity and other project partners), enabled the capture of 44,000 individual reports of problems encountered in the November 2006 election.

Some of that data is currently being used in legal actions to help prevent similar occurrences in future elections. The foundation and several talented and dedicated volunteers updated the system and deployed it in 2006 elections in several states.

EIRS and the Verified Voting Foundation also provided information to, and were cited as a resource in, the recently issued Government Accountability Office (GAO) critical report on Electronic Voting.

The Verified Voting Foundation sent written comments on the Draft Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG) issued by the Technical Guidelines Development Committee (TGDC) of the EAC this year, and provided a mechanism that assisted thousands of you to do the same.

Having a team member in our nation's capital also allowed us to do more this year on developing relationships with disability advocates, and representing our organizations and issues at EAC, NIST, TGDC and other election reform forums. (She also helped launch a non-partisan election reform think tank for area university students.)

For both organizations, there's more: interviews, public speaking, participation in election reform conferences and panels, serving as expert witnesses, updating the website, answering inquiries, letting folks know about hearings, etc... if you would like to know more about any of these activities, please contact us at any time.

Your support is invaluable in making all of this reform possible. Please keep us in mind as you think about your year-end charitable donations. Such contributions give us much-needed flexibility to devote the necessary time and resources to the most important election reform issues. (Unrestricted funds are especially crucial as they let us respond quickly to issues as they arise.) Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Happy Holidays to you,

Dr. David Dill, Founder

Action
Email Templates

- All sent messages should be based on reusable email templates

Templates

- Streamline and standardize communications
- Convey organizational identity
- Manifest best practices for email communication
- Provide hooks for recipients to manage profile
- Increase deliverability
Email Template Elements

Message Header

- Include organizational logo and tag line in the header
  - Have it link to your website.
- Don’t make the header too tall or it will push down “the fold”
  - Don't make it harder to view important content
Example: The “Fold”

Too Big Pushes Content Below Fold

Dear David,
Email Template Elements

- **Columns and Sidebars**
  - Best used to pull out “the ask” and main message to a flashy and easy to read area
  - Include an image and a button for folks to click on that are related to the ask
  - Sum up the goal of the ask or message of the email in one sentence below the image
ExxonMobil Announces Record Profit

The environment and consumers are paying for it

Dear TrueMajority member,

In his State of the Union speech Tuesday night, President Bush said that we are a "nation addicted to oil." He's right. Unfortunately, it appears the President is fueling that addiction, by threatening to veto a bill that would tax the record profits being reaped by oil companies - profits that come at the expense of consumers and the environment.

The day before the President’s speech, the world’s largest oil company, ExxonMobil, announced that it made $36.13 billion in 2005. That is the largest profit ever recorded in the history of American capitalism.

Since President Bush is working to keep those profits flowing in, we citizens are going to step up and hold ExxonMobil accountable for the environment and your wallet. Towards this end, a TrueMajority campaign has created a short, funny video in

Click the link below to check it out, and then ask ExxonMobil to clean up their act:

http://www.truemajority.org/ExxonToastsThePlanet.html

We’re sure the movie will make you chuckle. Please share the laughs by forwarding it on to all your friends and family.

The movie is humorous, but ExxonMobil’s policies are not. Sadly, ExxonMobil’s profits have come at a huge cost -- both to consumers like you and me and to our environment. ExxonMobil uses its billions to sabotage efforts to slow global warming and to lobby Congress in support of drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and off of America’s majestic coasts. Instead, ExxonMobil should invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy, such as wind and solar power.

The good news is that we have a chance to change for the better the way ExxonMobil does business in 2006. ExxonMobil CEO Lee Raymond retired in December after a long and extremely costly run. This month, Rex Tillerson took over as ExxonMobil’s new CEO.

You can help ExxonMobil change direction by asking Rex Tillerson to make the company a responsible corporate citizen that respects consumers and the environment.

Watch the movie
Dear MoveOn member,

Earlier this week 84% of us agreed we should challenge some right-wing incumbent Democrats in primary elections. Now, we're announcing our first MoveOn-member endorsement in a primary.

Ciro Rodriguez is running for Congress in the 28th district of Texas, which he opposed the war in Iraq and has championed veterans' benefits. In the words of Marta from San Antonio, he is a "true democrat and would stand up to the Bush administration in Washington."

But Rodriguez is up against an incumbent—Henry Cuellar—who consistently voted against Democrats on important issues and literally campaigned for Bush in 2000. With a sprint to the March 7th finish we can put Rodriguez over the top with our support. Can you contribute whatever you can afford?

https://political.moveon.org/give/spring2006

The really good news about this primary is that there is no Republican in the race. If Rodriguez wins in three weeks it will be a big progressive win.

E lecting Rodriguez is one part of our two-part candidate strategy—taking back the House and supporting the more progressive Democrat in primaries.

We also have another candidate you can support today—Francine Busby (D) who is the MoveOn-member endorsed candidate in California's 50th district. She is running in a special election to replace Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham (R) who left Congress after pleading guilty to accepting bribes.

And like Rodriguez, the special election is coming right up—on April 11th. Every minute is urgent for these candidates. Together we can put them over the top. Can you contribute whatever you can afford?

https://political.moveon.org/give/spring2006

Thanks for all you do.

—Tom, Jennifer, Matt, Justin and the MoveOn.org Political Action Team

Thursday, February 16th, 2006
Message Elements

► Include “Spread the Word” functionality
  ► “Tell a friend” link
  ► Share on Social Media links
  ► “Forward this email” link
  ► Information on how to subscribe, if you were not the recipient

► The easiest way to grow your list and spread your message is to have your supporters forward your emails to their friends.
Email Template Elements

Message Footer

- Place all information about how to subscribe, unsubscribe, or manage your profile in the footer
- Other information related to the sending and receiving of the email are best placed here
- Place organizational contact information or links that do not show up in the header or sidebar
- Include the email address of the recipient
- Make sure you're in compliance with CAN-SPAM
Example: Footers

Books Not Bars and the Ella Baker Center can’t survive without the support. Please take a moment to support us today: click here to donate.

Not on our list-serve yet? (Maybe this message was forwarded to you.) Sign up to get e-mail updates directly by going to http://www.booksnotbars.org/subscribe.
To UNSUBSCRIBE from this list, go to http://www.booksnotbars.org/unsubscribe
Update your preferences or contact information here: http://www.booksnotbars.org/profile
(Note: The first time you go to update your preferences, you must first create a login and password.)

Donate Link

Subscription
Example: Footers

Address & Phone

GREENPEACE
702 H Street, NW
Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20001
(800) 326-0959

You received this mailing because you are subscribed to our mailing list. If you need to update your information or prefer not to receive these mailings in the future click here to update your account.

We value your privacy. If you have any questions about how we use your information please read our privacy policy.

Thank You for your Support!
Message Composition

- Use different templates and message styles for different purposes:
  - Fundraising
  - Newsletter
  - Live Event
  - Action Alert
Message Composition

▶ Fundraising
  ▶ Make your ask often and early
  ▶ Develop goals and give updates as you work to achieve those goals
  ▶ Communicate how $$ will translate into results
  ▶ Create and emphasize a sense of community
    • “If everyone gives $5 we can…”
  ▶ Personalize tone: must be from “someone”
Dear Misty,

My job here at our national office is to respond to the calls that come in from our 53 state offices when they encounter a serious attack on civil liberties. And that means that the phones are ringing off the hooks.

I work with national and affiliate lawyers to defend civil liberties in the courts and in the halls of power. And that involves making decisions about allocating our resources so we can be there to respond to each new attack.

In three days, the ACLU will begin its new fiscal year. In the next 12 months, we'll be facing unprecedented attacks from forces that are working in state after state and at the national level to break down the wall between church and state, perpetuate LGBT discrimination, defend racial profiling, and undermine reproductive rights all across the country.

We will meet this assault on freedom head-on. But, we need your support to ensure that our attorneys and advocates can stay in the fight — case by case, issue by issue, and community by community — until we win.

Please make a donation to help us reach our goal of raising $500,000 before the end of our fiscal year on Thursday, March 31.

Right now, we're facing some of the most draconian legislation we've seen in years. Here are just a few
Dear David,

Over the last twenty years RAN has achieved remarkable success in convincing corporations that environmentally and socially destructive practices are not welcome in the global marketplace.

During a time when many environmental groups have been put on the defensive, RAN is charging ahead. Year after year, RAN brings the fight for the environment to the doorstep of the world’s most powerful corporations.

Through targeted, cutting edge market activism, we help keep our last remaining old growth forests and endangered ecosystems out of the hands of careless and corrupt corporations.

But we can’t do this work without your help.

Please make a tax deductible donation today.

To make your contribution go even further, a generous donor is matching dollar-for-dollar all gifts up to $50,000 that you make online before December 31, 2005.

As we look back over the last twenty years, we have much to be proud of. This is definitely a time for us to celebrate our victories. But more importantly, it’s a time for us all to recommit to building a larger, stronger grassroots movement determined to create a sustainable and just society.

Many of the world’s most endangered ecosystems still remain at the mercy of mining, oil, gas and logging activities—and the financial giants who fund them.

That’s why we’re ramping up our campaigns to bring these injustices to light and demand a better future for all.
Message Composition

Newsletter

- Keep it well-formatted and well-sectioned
  - Always include a table of contents
- Employ short introductions
  - With links to full articles
- Maintain regular delivery schedule
  - Create expectations on the part of recipients
In the past month we’ve seen a major wave of power shifts across the globe. From Sidi Bouzid to Cairo to Wisconsin, *The People* are taking power out of the hands of those who’ve proven unworthy to wield it. This is a rare and precious moment in time when people like you and me have both the inspiration and the momentum to command our future. What’s it gonna be?

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Powershift 2011

From April 15th-18th, over 10,000 young leaders will converge on Washington, DC to stand up for our future, to reclaim our democracy from big corporations and push our nation to move beyond dirty energy sources that are harming the health of people and the planet. Rainforest Action Network will be there in force. Join us.

The Young Activist’s Guide to Building a Green Movement and Changing the World
by Sharon J. Smith
Message Composition

Live Event

Make sure that you include all the required info:

- Date, time, location, directions, map link
- Purpose and cost
- Phone number to call for more info
- RSVP info, link to registration page
- Appropriate fundraising “hook”

There is no point in announcing an event if people do not have the necessary info to attend.
“Even though we came from many different places and we had many different cultures and many different home environments, in some ways we were very much unified because we had a common cause... we knew that we had taken a stand and that there was something better out there for us.” - Glenda Gaither Davis, Freedom Rider

In 1961, a courageous band of Black and White Americans risked their lives to travel together on buses through the Deep South. They called themselves the Freedom Riders, and they managed to bring the President and the American public face-to-face with the civil rights inequities that plagued the nation.

After the rides were confronted with violence from white mobs, members of the Student Coordinating Committee (SNCC) could not wait. While the Mississippi Freedom Riders were under attack, Ella Jo Baker helped to coordinate the leaders of SNCC members to grow and strengthen as leaders during the Freedom Rides.

Ella Baker Center is proud to invite you to an exclusive preview of the upcoming PBS documentary on the Freedom Riders at the Oakland Museum of California in partnership with KQED. Following the film, a dynamic panel will discuss the history of civil rights in the Bay Area, where we are now, and how you can get involved with the ongoing movement for freedom and justice. Panelists include:

- Jakada Imani, Ella Baker Center
- Etta Simpson Ray, Freedom Rider
- James Rucker, Color of Change
- Michael Orange, Top Ten

**RSVP**

**Time & Location**

**WHAT:** Freedom Riders Documentary Screening

**WHEN:** Wednesday, May 11, 2011
6:00 PM - 8:30 PM

**WHERE:** Oakland Museum of California
1000 Oak Street
Oakland
Summary

- Good email composition has essential traits
- The art of “The Ask” is central
- Email templates streamline and standardize
- Template must contain specific elements
- Consider composition for different goals
Thank You!

▸ Questions?

▸ Comments?
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We encourage re-use, modification, and re-distribution in any situation where they may be useful.

We love to hear about how you are improving and remixing what we've done.

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