

Frederick Memorial Hospital
Raises Nearly \$3 for Every \$1 Spent
on Community Appeal Letter

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Project Overview

Our Client

Graphcom helped Frederick Memorial Hospital (FMH) acquire new donors and cultivate existing ones by sending a fundraising appeal letter to prospects throughout Frederick County. The appeal was designed to raise money to build a new Cancer Institute.

Based on our recommendations, the letters were sent to Frederick County residents with an annual household income of \$80,000 or more, regardless of whether they had an existing relationship (donor or volunteer) with FMH.

Our Challenge

Although the hospital had raised funds through appeal letters before, the results were lackluster.

- Some mailings had cost more money than they had made.
- Letters were created in a newsletter style, in which readers were required to open several folds to get the entire message.
- They were printed with only two colors, which gave the pieces an outdated look.
- Messaging was staff-centric, without enough emphasis on what the benefit to the donor might be.
- Acquisition efforts were launched only once per year and were limited to a different quadrant of Frederick County each year.

For this new appeal, the client defined “success” as acquiring any new donors, provided that the funds raised were at least equal to the cost of launching the campaign.

Previous Appeal Letters



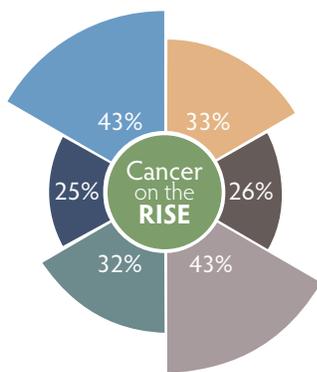
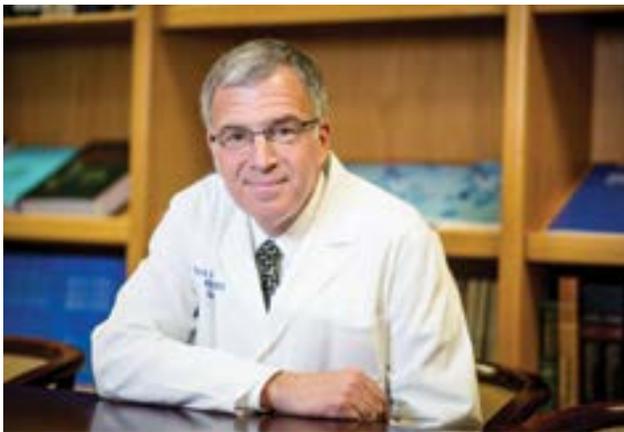
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Engaging the Head & Heart

Our goals were to increase awareness of the Cancer Center initiative throughout the community, broaden FMH’s donor base, and (of course) to raise funds.

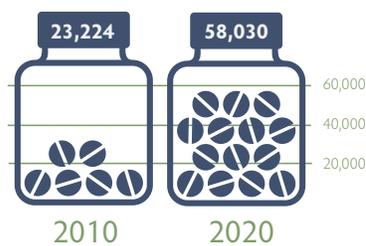
The Graphcom marketing team determined that because these letters would be sent to the entire community—not just previous patients and their families—it was important to appeal not only to people’s emotions, but also to their sense of logic. In other words, we needed to make a strong case for improving cancer care in the Frederick community, both with storytelling and with hard data.

To that end, powerful narrative was combined with strong, impactful images to evoke emotion. At the same time, we researched cancer data in the community and included infographics for quick “at a glance” facts.



INCREASE IN CANCER CASES
PROJECTED FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS

- BRAIN
- UROLOGIC
- BLOOD
- GI
- BREAST
- LUNG



THE RISKS OF AGING
FREDERICKTONIANS AGES 65+
THE GROUP THAT ACCOUNTS FOR 60% OF ALL CANCER CASES
— WILL MORE THAN DOUBLE OVER 10 YEARS.



PERCENTAGE OF DEATHS DUE TO CANCER
SOURCE: MARYLAND VITAL STATISTICS ANNUAL REPORT, 2010



Testing & Results

In addition to writing the letters, Graphcom also provided design, printing, and mailing services. We printed all versions of letters and envelopes using variable data to personalize each mailing based on whether the recipient is a volunteer or donor. This allowed us to track each version of the letter and envelope, and determine which mailing was more effective.

Although the hospital had raised funds through appeal letters before, they had never conducted any testing to discover what techniques would work best for their audience. We tested a couple of variables with this mailing, including the following:

- 2 envelopes: Blank vs. teaser
- 4 letters: To donor vs. non-donor, each group divided to receive letter from doctor vs. patient

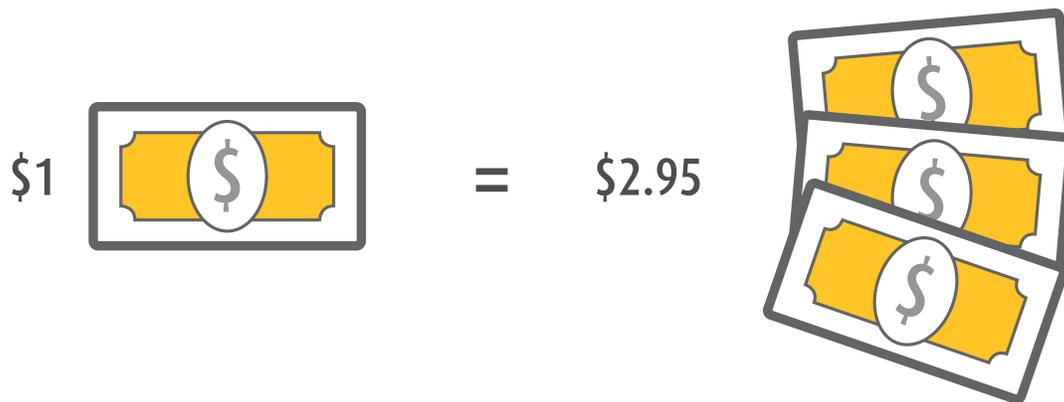
Test: Letter from Doctor



Test: Letter from Patient



Results



For every dollar FMH spent to produce these donor appeal letters, they earned \$2.95 in return.

\$63,683 Funds Raised | **123 New Donors** | **310 Total Number of Gifts**

Plain Envelopes Work Best—by 29%

We tested an envelope with a standard return address from the hospital against an envelope with a teaser. The standard envelope beat the fancy one by 29%!

The Doctor Got More Donations—by 46%

One version of the letter was written by Dr. Soberman, who heads the Cancer Institute. The other version of the letter came from a female cancer survivor and nurse with a family. Dr. Soberman's letter enticed 46% more donors to give.

“ Once we get [these new donors] in the habit of regular giving, we have a really good shot at making them lifetime donors. That's really big. Over the course of 10, 15, or 20 years or more, some of these lifetime givers could end up making a provision in their estate plan for FMH. That's the ultimate gift!

I probably won't be around then. However, someone may look back and say, 'Thank God for those development bozos and their work back in 2014/15!' ”

- Ken Coffey, Vice President and Chief Development Officer

graphcom.