

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

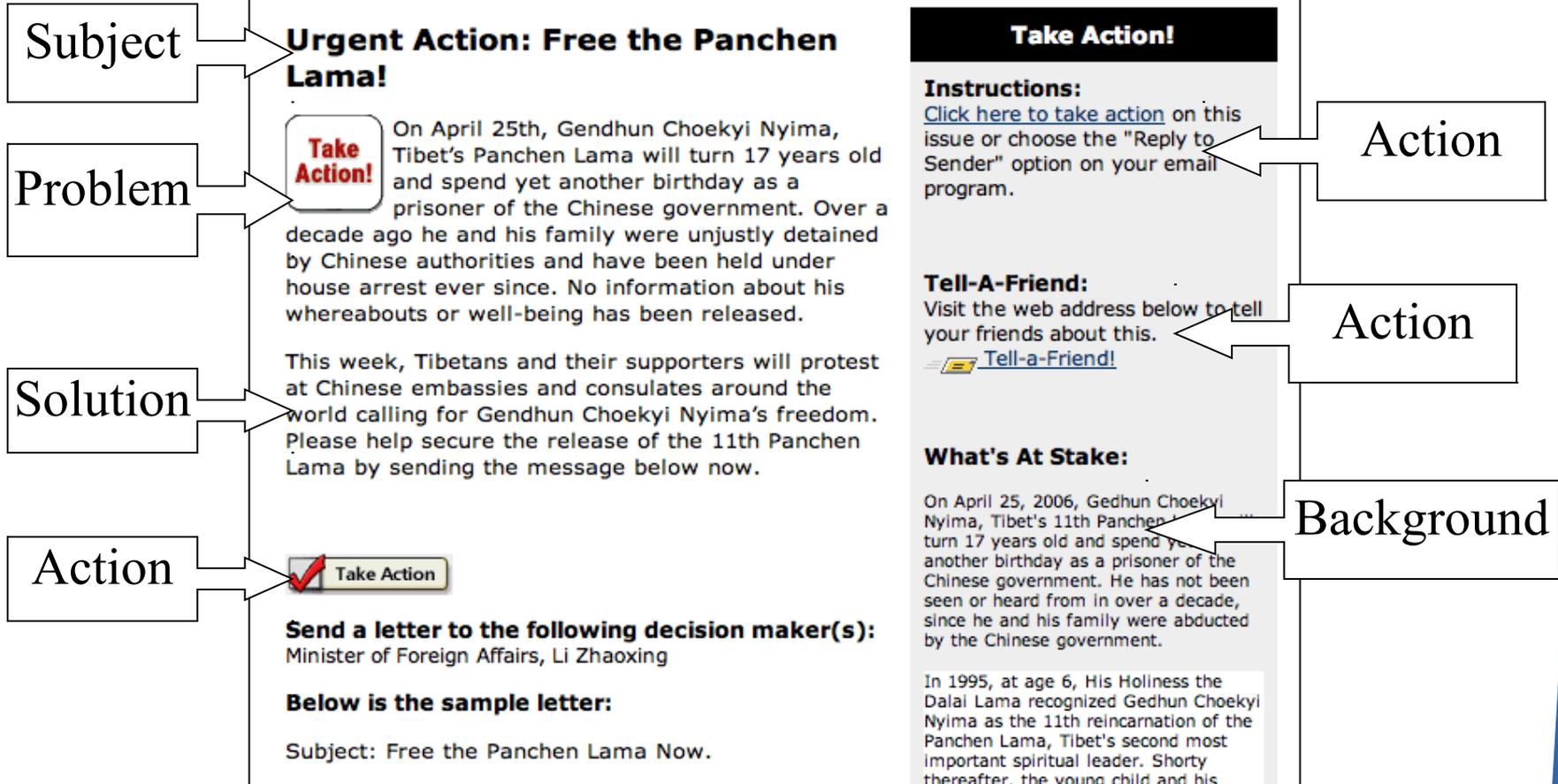
Email Composition

- ▶ 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



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

Composition Best Practices



Dear David,

25 October 2005



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?

RSVP Now! Join us, and thousands of others across North America, for a day of action against Kimberly Clark.

On November 3, you have the power to make change. Tell your neighbors, your friends, your family and your local grocery store shoppers,

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

Multiple Ways to Take Action

Background

The Ask in the text

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-4) and The Verified Voting Foundation (501-c-3), 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-verified 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-verified 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-verified 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-verified paper record legislation, and hired a political adviser in Washington DC to help keep this issue visible 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-verified paper records for all voting systems.

We published charts showing the "Accessibility and Auditability" 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 our clients, the Election Protection Coalition) enabled the capture of 44,000 individual reports of problems encountered in the November 2004 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 2005 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.

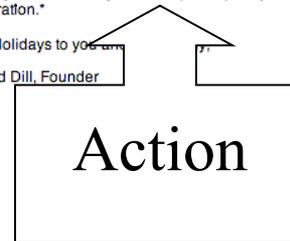
Having a team member in our nation's capital also allowed us to do more this year on developing relationships with disability advocates, and representing our organizations and issues at EAC, NIST, TGDC and other election reform forums. (She also helped launch a non-partisan election reform think tank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



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



The Ella Baker Center
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

BOOKS NOT BARS • RECLAIM THE FUTURE • BAY AREA POLICEWATCH

PLEASE FORWARD ** PLEASE FORWARD WIDELY ** PLEASE FORWARD

Dear Friend,

Link to Campaigns

Please Forward

Link to Archive

Note: the full text of this e-mail message is online at <http://www.sfpeople.org/dispatch>



SAN FRANCISCO PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATION

The SFPO Disp@tch INFO & ACTION ALERTS TWICE A MONTH

www.sfpeople.org

Web Address



united for peace & justice

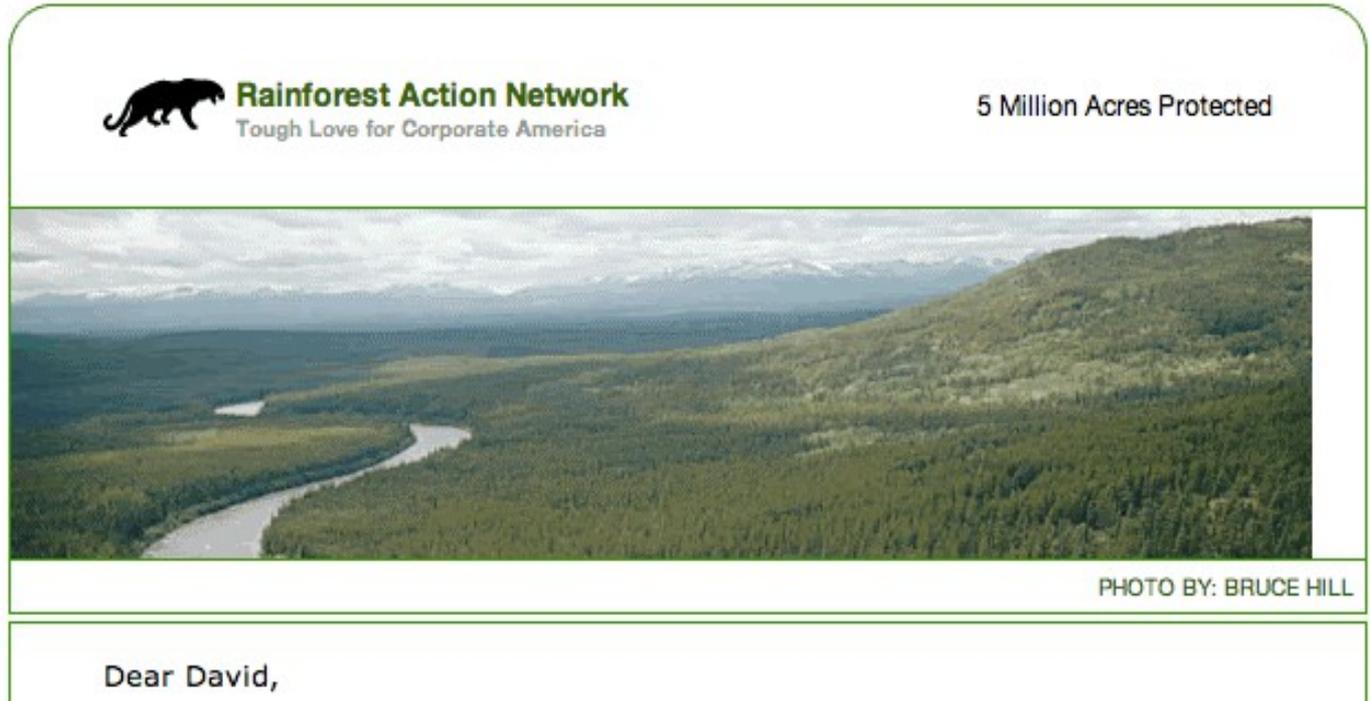
ACTION ALERT * UNITED FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE
www.unitedforpeace.org | 212-868-5545 | [Click to subscribe](#)

List Type Contact #

Subscribe Link

Example: The "Fold"

Too Big
Pushes
Content
Below
Fold



 **Rainforest Action Network**
Tough Love for Corporate America

5 Million Acres Protected



PHOTO BY: BRUCE HILL

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 from going to step up and hold ExxonMobil accountable for the damage to the environment and your wallet. Towards this end, the 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](#)



Image

Different
Color
Background

citizens
going to

Summary
And Ask

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... opposed the war in Iraq and has championed... benefits. In the words of Marta from San Antonio and would stand up to the Bush administration in Washington."

Summary

veteran
democrat

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... with our support. Can you contribute whatever you can afford?

Ask

<https://political.moveon.org/give/springraces.htm?ffF981vCSWogP4PdIbeEsw&t=4>

A Sprint to March 7th

In less than three weeks a progressive Democrat, **Ciro Rodriguez**, will try to unseat a right-wing Democrat in the pocket of the Bush administration. **With a sprint to the finish, help is urgently needed. Can you contribute whatever you can afford?**

Click Here

[Help A Progressive Win](#)

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.

Electing 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/springraces.htm?ffF981vCSWogP4PdIbeEsw&t=5>

Narrative
Image and
Story

Thanks for all you do.

—Tom, Jennifer, Matt, Justin and the MoveOn.org Political Action Team
Thursday, February 16th, 2006

Beat Bush's Democrat



Ciro Rodriguez' opponent, Rep. Henry Cuellar, is a symbol of the sort of Democrat we need to replace. He supports the war and the Bush Medicare drug debacle. He votes one out of three times with the Republicans. It isn't a surprise that Bush and Cuellar

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 you 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 of our donors. Please take a moment to support us today: [click here](#) to donate.

Donate Link



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>

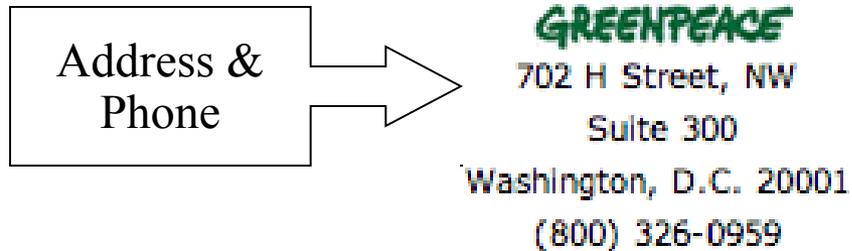
Update your preferences or contact information here: <http://www.booksnotbars.org/profile>

(Note: The first time you go to update your preferences, you must first create a login and password.)

Subscription



Example: Footers



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"

Personal
Appeal

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

Clear
Ask

I work with national and affiliated attorneys to defend civil liberties in the courts. 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

Help us raise \$500,000 to keep our unwavering pursuit of freedom on track.



\$125,000 | \$250,000 | \$375,000 | \$500,000

Donate Now >>

Ask
Repeated

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

Our Recent Victories



Goldman Sachs Victory!



JPMorgan Chase Victory!

Our Campaigns

Old Growth

Global Finance

Zero Emissions

Button for Ask

Sets A Goal and Timeline

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



Sets Delivery Expectations

Social Media Links

Additional Content

Index of Content

Full Content

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.

FOLLOW US



RAN RECOMMENDS



[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 white mobs, members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) coordinated the Freedom Rides. Ella Jo Baker helped to coordinate the Freedom Rides. 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 Rides 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
- Etta Simpson Ray, Freedom
- James Rucker, Color of C
- Michael Orange, Top Ten

Time & Location

Bolded Purpose

RSVP

Remembering the Freedom Riders

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

RSVP Now

[RSVP Now](#)

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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www.aspirationtech.org/attribute

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

Questions? Email us info@aspirationtech.org



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