Move analysis and the philanthropic letter

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Abstract

Over the last decade the number of non-profit organizations (NPOs) have increased but, according to Statistics Canada, the number of philanthropic financial supporters remains steady at about eighty-percent (Statistics Canada, 2017). Because of this expanding field and the static number of donors, fundraisers must be able to communicate with their potential donors in a cost-efficient manner. The prudent choice of many NPOs is the direct mail appeal letter. To maximize their fundraising campaign investment, writers need to understand the compositional elements that create a persuasive appeal letter. This study reviews critical elements that are required in the production of an effective appeal letter. Furthermore, by using 'move analysis', even the fledgling writer can develop an effective letter template for their organization. This applied research is intended to introduce the genre of philanthropic appeal letters as well as demonstrate how using move analysis may be beneficial to organizational writers and will also fill a gap in scholarly research.

Move analysis and the philanthropic appeal letter

Background

Supporting those in need is a cultural activity in Canada and, as such, is strongly influenced by sociocultural beliefs. Reasoned action theory provides "empirical evidence that attitudes and beliefs, influenced by the social environment, predict intention to act" (Corcoran 2011). Understanding this belief-action process has important implications for philanthropic letter letters who depend on donations to continue to provide for those in need. Aristotle, (384-322 BCE) an ancient Greek philosopher and an early theorist in the art of persuasion, hypothesized that the ability to communicate salient facts to others was an important skill. However, whilst agreeing with Aristotle, Hauser (2004) believed that the ability to persuade an audience was an even more important skill.

Rhetorical theory—also referred to as the art of persuasion—is one of the earliest communication theories (Foss, & Griffin, 1995, p.2). The definition of persuasion is the ability to persuade a person using one or all three appeal categories, founded on Aristotle's influence – logic, emotion, and/or ethics (aka logos, pathos, ethos) thus creating a compelling argument that changes the attitudes or behaviours of potential donors.

So, even 2000 years after Aristotle's assertion, these same basic principles apply to philanthropic appeal letters: that as well as providing information to a potential donor, the real skill is in persuading the reader to donate to a specific charitable organization.

One of the fundamentals in writing letters of persuasion is "know your audience" which puts those organizations with an intimate knowledge of their donor base at an distinct advantage. Each year the number of requests from non-profit organizations (NPOs) for support increases as those who frequently dispatch such requests straight into the recycling process can attest. Annually, the Canadian charitable category grows by 6.4%. This continuous growth requires NPOs to utilize their persuasive writing skills to maximize the return on the investment of their organization's campaign.

According to Statistics Canada, (2015), there were over 5 million people in Canada who donated to various charities, with women accounting for 52% and men coming in a close second at 48% .The source of these statistics was primarily of citizens over 55 years and with an annual income of over \$80,000—a rich source just waiting to be explored, if done correctly. However, the reality in Canada is that there are hundreds of equally deserving NPOs—all competing for finite resources. It falls to the NPO staff writer, paid or volunteer, to compose an appeal letter that convinces the homeowner/decision-maker that their NPO is worthiest of a contribution.

To communicate with their supporters, NPOs use many fundraising techniques, including telethons and one-on-one meetings. Even though they have many tools at their disposal, it is believed that the most successful choice is the philanthropic appeal letter (Abelen, Redeker & Thompson, 1993). These letters of appeal not only provide an avenue of communication between non-profit organizations (NPOs) and their supporters, but also provides one of the most cost-effective methods for garnering support for their specific charity.

It is in the best interest of these NPOs to stay abreast of emerging best practices of appeal letter composition (and competition) as well as an awareness regarding form, content, and characteristics that are indicative of philanthropic letter writing genre.

Literature review

According to Brink & Wood (2001), the rationale behind incorporating a literature review is to find articles that will either prove or disprove the information that is discussed in any research article. Van de Ven's (2007) guide to organizational and social research provided a helpful guide of fundamental research activities. He noted that these activities "can be evaluated in terms of five criteria: relevance, validity, truth, impact, and coherence" (p. 12). Van de Ven's research is grounded in a reality that is relevant to the intended research audience of both the scholarly and professional community.

It is hoped that a demonstration/example (See Appendix A) of the rhetorical devices that decision-makers self-report are most persuasive, will fill a gap in the academic literature and provide a communicative resource to NPOs and other organizations who rely on effective appeal letter writing to reach their goals.

The central theme of this literature review was the exploration of previous studies mostly journal articles and scholarly papers, but a few textbooks were also consulted. Boolean search strategy was employed, using relevant one and two-word subject groupings of key terms, including direct mail, appeal letters, philanthropy, non-profit, charity, rhetoric, persuasion, philanthropic, genre, discourse analysis, support, solicitation, fundraising, and donations; and phrases such as, philanthropic appeal letters, use of persuasion in fundraising letters, and rhetorical analysis of non-profit appeal letters (Oliver, 2012).

To get a broad idea of what research information was available, and for quality assurance purposes, the following key words were applied to determine inclusion or exclusion:

1.author's reputation 2.peer-reviewed 3.the number of citations

After clearing the above criterion, the articles were then scanned for an additional three-tiered criteria:

- 1. Does this author highlight common appeal letter characteristics and/or communication theories?
- 2. Is discourse or move analysis used?
- 3. Are some of the characteristics of successful philanthropic appeal letters identified?

Only studies that fulfilled all three criteria were included in this review.

Although all the articles that were reviewed used the English language, their origins included not only Canadian writers but also articles from the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Spain, Holland and Australia. The disciplines involved included economics, marketing, sociology, psychology, and anthropology. The literature also demonstrated evidence for the existence of a genre of philanthropic letters and revealed that this genre can rely on portraying its credibility by being formal in appearance and tone and share a common philanthropic letter framework (Upton, 2002).

One specific review identified the genre markers which effectively highlight the essential elements and distinct hallmarks that are fundamental in philanthropic appeal letter composition, such as communication tone and form and communication function and characteristics.

Finally, the literature identified the perceived commonalities in standard philanthropic appeal letters in four distinct clusters: 1. Philanthropy 2. Motivation 3. Credibility; and 4. Composition.

Essential elements in the philanthropic appeal letter genre

Philanthropy

Schervish (2014) defined philanthropy as "the social relation in which donors supply the means to meet the needs of others simply because they are empathetically stirred by the humanity of those in need" (p.389). Specifically, philanthropic donors may give in one of three ways: 1. though their time volunteering; 2. through in-kind donation; or 3. monetary support.

According to Connor and Gladkov, (2004), the fundraising appeal letter has a significant impact on its readers. —"Fundraising letters represent the most common form of philanthropic discourse" (p. 257). They further acknowledged that the "letter's primary purpose is to persuade people to contribute to a worthy cause or to underwrite philanthropic programs" (Connor, 2000). The critical elements of the philanthropic appeal letter include the motivation of the donor, the persuasive capabilities of the NPO to elicit empathy for the cause and, of course, the request for a donation.

In terms of developing a case for a philanthropic genre, some of the factors called upon are motivation of the donor, the persuasive abilities of the charity, and, of course, the request for monetary support.

Motivation—factors that impact donations

The factors that motivate the reader to action is key to understanding which persuasive elements (logical, emotional or ethical) should be included in a fundraising appeal. A combination of any of these factors enhances the ability to motivate potential donors to contribute 'to the cause' (Hauser, 2004).

Bazerman (1998) argued that appealing messages are actively decoded by the receiver through an emotive response: "Fundraising documents particularly appeal to the emotions of shame and pride—by representing a social rupture in the need situation (something shameful) and social healing in the act of charity (something one could be proud of)." Bazerman also suggested that, to encourage a more generous response, an appeal letter should purposely target those able to say "yes" or "no" and target their "sense of pride".

Bekkers and Wiepking (2011) reviewed 500 academic articles on 'charitable giving'. Their meta-analysis enabled them to speculate why people donate. They identified eight mechanisms that drive giving:

1. awareness of need	2. solicitation	3. costs and benefits
4. altruism	5. reputation	6. psychological benefits
7. value	8. efficacy	

They made no claim that their list was either definitive or exhaustive and that no single mechanism carried any more weight or was more important than any other. Also, their mechanisms were placed in no specific order, but in a logical manner that "corresponds to the chronological order in which they affect giving in the typical act of donation".

Each of these mechanisms possess "factors that weaken the effect (negative moderators) or strengthen the effect (positive moderators) of the amount contributed" (Bekkers et al.). 'For example, "endorsement of prosocial values" was seen as a positive factor for donation and was perceived by the donor as a benefit, such as a gain in social capital (Fisher & Ackerman, 1998). Bekkers and Wiepking (2011) further suggested that an appeal letter should contain at least one positive moderator such as low cost of inclusion for the donors. Prior research had linked

multiple pro-social motives (egoistic and altruistic, for example) at work differing over time, place, organizations and particular donors (Batson & Shaw, 1991, Corcoran, 2011).

A few other points need to be addressed. For example, some would say that Mechanism 1, "awareness of need", was the most important mechanism. However, an argument could be made that there is no point in making people aware of charitable cause if there is no one from whom to solicit donations or no one to solicit these donations. As for the cost—well, there is some irony in the fact that it costs money to make money. In effect, however, each of these mechanisms rely on the other for campaign success.

Bekkers et al. also noted that these mechanisms can interact, such as 'awareness of need' interacting with a 'altruism' (No. 1 and No. 4). They concluded that a research gap existed in identifying systematic patterns of their eight mechanisms and interactions among them. Upton, (2002) felt that there was "something missing" when it came to the process of developing a tool that would bridge the gap between what information was available and what information still needed to be discovered.

One aspect that should be addressed—often there is some confusion—is the difference between 'reputation' and 'credibility'. "Reputation refers to the social consequences of donations for the donor" (i.e. fear of being negatively judged by the members of their social circle) (Bekkers et al.). Credibility, however, refers to the perceived trustworthiness of the soliciting organization.

Conversely, Park and Lee (2015) discovered that when messages were framed in a positive manner, donors were less inclined to be motivated by a belief in a personal benefit, but rather were motivated to engage in philanthropy through a sense of altruism and empathy

to local geography and more related to the decision maker's network (Lucas, 2016).

Location (home or abroad) can have an effect on donations. One such belief, for example, is when a charity is seeking local support the focus of the composition should appeal to the values (e.g. traditional) of the local donors (Bönisch, 2012). Such as the traditional messaging NPO's implemented after the wildfire tragedy of 2016. 'Keep Alberta Strong' is one example of NPO's calling on Albertans with a traditional shared-values message of strength and resiliency that proved very successful. In comparison to a campaign from abroad, the local campaign likely had a greater impact, and produced greater empathy than the appeal to address "Famine in Africa". The perception is that there is *always* a famine in Africa (Goering, Connor, Nagelhout & Steinberg, 2011).

A strong affiliation between the charity and the donor leaves the donor feeling confident about aiding his or her community. This taps into the donor's ability to obtain some social advantage and feel connected (Schervish, Havens & Voluntas, 1997, p 257). Sociologist Lin described social capital as "an investment in social relations with expected returns" and can be a strong driving force decision making (Lin, 1999, p.30).

Furthermore, there is a widely held belief that people are more likely to donate to a cause that has some meaning for them. For example: the children of a woman who has had breast cancer are more likely to "Run for the Cure" an annual 'fun run' to support cancer research.

Philanthropic appeal letters need, among other things, to address the donor's sense of pride and that the mechanisms employed to drive support also deliver a pro-social motive for helping and convey a strong connection between donor and organization. It is only through the careful composition of an appeal letter that an organization can access the skills necessary in the art of persuasion.

Elements of persuasion

Credibility

Antonetti, Baines, & Walker (2015) found that prior donors perceived appeal letters from an organization that they had previously supported as more credible or trustworthy. They noted that appeal letter composition should not only accent the credibility and trustworthiness of the institutions making the appeal, but should also seek to emphasise the relationship which stems from a long-standing connection with the donor.

When Goering et al. (2009) studied the elements of persuasion in fundraising letters they found "that letters utilizing credibility appeals and those written at a high grade-level of readability produced the highest donations" (p. 229). The recipient reads its contents and, more importantly, assesses the credibility of both the organization from which the letter was written and the trustworthiness of the writer. In their study, the operational definition of 'readability' was the writer's ability to genuinely resonate with the recipient (Goering et al.)

There are three accepted hallmarks of trustworthiness. These are

- 1. reputation of the organization (i.e. history, longevity, etc.)
- 2. affiliation with other charities; and
- 3. celebrity endorsement (Handy, 2000).

Smith and Berger (1996) endorsed the use of a creative strategy to optimize donor participation and Graves (1997) suggested that one such strategy could be achieved by offering donor organisations an opportunity for inclusion in the support of a charitable cause.

The hallmarks of the philanthropic appeal letter genre include the ability to exude writer trustworthiness paralleled by a persuasive and highly readable tone (Goering et al., 2009). Credibility comes with format and content, but also functions to identify and support donor networks.

Composition

What compositional qualities make up the genre of philanthropic appeal letter? In one study, the recipients of appeal letters found that the visual design made the letters "friendlier and easier to read" while drawing attention to the persuasive aspects of the letter (Graves, 1997). One of the fundamentals is attentiveness to target preference as described by Corbett (1963) who indicated that through the "…awareness of an (our) audience we must bring back to the composing process, and ancient rhetoric has much to offer on this score".

However, in keeping with donor feedback— that although a formal tone was achieved by, for example, using a bulleted list—and was viewed as a bureaucratic component, that with a combination of an attractive visual design, these more formal elements added to the perceived readability of the letter.

Appeal letters would also need to frame information using positive terms and, rather than state a contribution amount, would use wording such as "suggested contribution level." Desmet and Feinberg (2003) referred to this as using an appeals scale. Going a step further, Fraser, Hit & Sauer (1988) coined the term 'anchorpoint' with their letter suggested contribution amount of \$20. As a result of the use of an anchorpoint increased their study's average monetary contribution three-fold. However, Goering et al. believed that this approach may backfire, leading to resentment that an organization would dare to suggest to people about how to spend their money.

In summary, the organizational reputation, suggested contribution level, establishment of credentials, introduction to the cause, and expression of gratitude all play a part in forming the foundation of the philanthropic appeal letter.

Collectively, these findings reveal elements that provide ample evidence for the genre of philanthropic appeal letters as well as the necessary structural elements needed to develop a framework for the composition of an appeal letter. The "bottom line" is that appeal letters should reliably contain persuasive prose intending to motivate the reader to provide monetary support.

Problem identification

Challenges

In today's world of new and expanding NPOs, fundraisers are faced with the challenge of standing out against competing and equally deserving like institutions for financial support. The dilemma for the fund raiser then becomes one of how to persuade a targeted audience to either become first-time contributors or a way of encouraging previous donors to continue making contributions—and perhaps even boost their previous support level.

Studies suggest that women donate more often and in higher amounts than their male counterpoints greater amounts than men (Mesch, Rooney, Steinberg, & Denton, (2006).; Piper & Schnepf, 2008; Rooney, Mesch, Chin & Steinberg 2005, Stats Canada, 2015). Other researchers explain gender differences based on resources and relative costs of giving (Vesterlund, 2001; Rooney, Brown & Mesch, 2007; Yoruk, 2010).

Contradictorily, other studies have revealed no such gender gap in financial support (Bekkers, 2007; Bolton & Katok, 1995). Yet another, more recent study, found that men tend to give a little more money than women, but disperse their support to more charities (DeWit & Bekker, 2016). Why so many disparities? It is clear that these studies, in general, had a similar line of inquiry but further investigation revealed that different methods of accumulating data, different dependant and independent variables, as well as different demographics, only added to the variances. To provide a methodology that would provide a more definitive result, further studies needed to be conducted.

So, although these qualitative studies added to the existing body of knowledge of fundraising opportunities, it was Upton's (2002) opinion that the existing, traditional approaches, did not quite meet the criteria needed for the development of the realistic baseline that would be required to successfully develop a framework to encapsulate the results.

It was only through further research, which shifted from the apparent controversial significance of the gender of the reader, and instead placed the focus on the persuasiveness of the appeal itself, that the philanthropic genre of 'Move Analysis' (Swales, 1981; Bhatia, 1998; Upton, 2002) was developed using both qualitative and quantitative studies.

Genre analysis

Genre—a 'style' or a 'type'

Professional writers and communicators know the importance of ensuring that the words they have written are understood by their readers—their intended audience. Many times, their livelihood, and often their reputation and existence, depends on this supposition. Since so many writers follow the adage "write about what you know", —they tend stick to what has worked for them in the past—be it poetry, science fiction, mysteries, or the more pragmatic historical biography etc.

Their chosen subject matter will dictate how they choose words, form sentences, and, in essence, provide a framework of discourse i.e. the recognized building blocks of sentence

formation and meaningful content, a process known as "genre", a particular structure of language that is used for a specific purpose, and aimed at a particular audience (reader) so that these readers "come back for more".

Three factors that are important when developing a genre: 1. discourse analysis—the study of language use, the linguistic structure 'beyond the sentence' and the social practices and ideological assumptions that are associated with language and/or communication (Schiffrin, Tannen & Hamilton-Ehernberger, 2003). 2. genre analysis—a process of looking at several examples of specific texts to determine what they have in common and how they differ.

It is these factors—similarities and differences—that dictate, in terms of purpose, the overall structure of the genre and the choice of language used. The selected subject matter will then dictate what words are chosen and how sentences are formed and; 3. genre integrity—a statement that uses the words and sentence structure in such a way that readers will fully understand both the intrinsic and extrinsic intention of the genre.

Swales (1990), felt that the traditional genre analysis which used a series of "move or functional components" as the basic elements of a category or a genre, could easily be morphed into move analysis.

Move analysis

The move analysis of Swales continues to provide the foundation for research on the rhetorical structure of both academic and professional texts. By using the basic top-down approach (where the focus is on meaning and ideas) researchers were able to develop a framework which helped them to determine which components of the text could be grouped together. These specific groups were categorized as a series of movements, where each movement performed a particular communication function (Upton & Cohen, 2009).

Upton (2002) believed that by using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies he could produce valid and reliable results and provide the necessary elements and remedy his perceived gap in genre analysis studies. He decided that move analysis encompassed the structure of a genre that would fulfill a need (as in the case of my research topic), for the development of an effective philanthropic appeal letter—and thus a new genre was born.

It was fortuitous for Upton that his research coincided with a quantitative study being conducted by the Indiana Center for Intercultural Communication (ICIC) because it gave him the opportunity to combine both qualitative and quantitative studies. As such, he was able to develop a generic analysis framework that would provide a totally new perspective on the language of fundraising—one that could be used in most, if not all, philanthropic appeal letters and the characteristics (or markers) of such letters.

Model of generic move analysis

The first step in genre analysis is the development of a logical framework—a template, as it were—to help identify the different categories of move types that are present in the text. Incorporated, these categories, by classifying the function and the purpose of the text, constitute a genre and, thereby enable the organization of the text as a distinct move type, therefore providing an obvious grouping foundation. As each word/phrase/function is discovered it (they) can be allocated a space in the correct section/move.

In move analysis, this first step is a two-part process. The first part identifies the function and the purpose of each specific category and enables organization of each of these categories into individual move types. The crucial factor at this stage is to identify "look-a-likes"—words or phrases that are so similar in purpose and/or function that they are, in fact, two parts of the same move—not two distinct moves. The second part of this process enables further analysis of the 'preferred' move structure of the corpus as a whole. In other words, this process reveals typical and distinctive patterns of discourse that occur when analyzing the texts in the corpus as a group (Flowerdew, 2005). Instead of using the phrase "specific category", Upton & Cohen (2009) use the word "segment". One or more trial runs may be needed when first identifying these various categories to ensure the integrity of the relationship between one segment and another.

The world of the fundraiser

Unlike other appeals, a fundraising appeal is specifically designed to persuade a specific group of people to look beyond their insular world and reach out to help those in need. Many times, those who are looking for support only get one opportunity to ensure that their cause is seen as more important, or more relevant, than any other one of the myriad of charitable organizations all competing for a piece of the same donation pool.

There is no shortage of available factors that influence the success of a specific appeal. Through trial and error some agencies have managed to hone their appeal letters to a fine art and know exactly what tone and words to use to maximize contributions. For others who are still struggling to get it right, to make an impact, they can be strongly guided by using a template, a fill-in-the blanks—so to speak.

Research can help the novice fundraiser maximize their appeal. For example, there is the question of whether to include a gift with the appeal letter. Members of the public frequently complain that they would prefer it if a NPO did not "waste" money on, for example, the gift of a pack of Christmas cards but instead, apply the money saved by not doing so, to their cause. Interestingly enough, the technique of using a gift raises more money than if a gift was not included. This fundraising technique takes advantage of the social principle of reciprocity

(mutual exchange). Falk (2007) study of 10,000 solicitation letters found that the frequency of donations increased by 17 percent if a small gift was included and by 75 percent for a large gift.

Appeal letter writers are guided by what has been successful for other organizations who used the move analysis genre—and more importantly, what has not worked—and can have, at least, as good a chance as any other organization to make their fundraising campaign successful.

Move analysis in action

Although move analysis may be used for any number purposes, a grant proposal or business promotional letter as examples, even a résumé, this study focuses on the philanthropic appeal letter. Upton (2002) notes that what makes philanthropic discourse so persuasive and unique is that it is a genre unto itself.

Bhatia (1998) stated that "Fundraising discourse represents one of the most dynamic forms of language use . . . in that it may promote a cause (as in the case of direct mail fundraising) . . . a social event . . . or an idea or objective" (Bhatia, 1998). The recipient of the appeal letter is left to decide whether the letter has been successful in its attempt to persuade, that is "to act out of selfless motivation, social responsibility, and an urge to take moral action that will ensure the eventual success of the enterprise".

To accomplish this task, Bhatia theorizes that fundraising letters, like their cousins, business promotional letters, can have a traditional six-move structure or the more practical fourmove structure:

Move	Function/purpose
Establishing credentials	using celebrity endorsement, referring to community needs,
	referring to mission statements, using an image of trustees,

Table 1. Fundraising move and their function/purpose from Bhatia (1998)

	invoking frameworks of consciousness, community	
	involvement and/or support)	
Introducing the cause	an introduction and/or description of the cause	
	indicating the value of the cause	
	indicating the potential value of solicited support etc.	
Soliciting support (direct	"Won't you join in", extended appeals – "Our ability to	
appeals	help others is directly related to your ability to help us", and	
	appeals with incentive "I hope you will renew your gift of \$50,	
	and if possible add a little more to it"	
Expressing gratitude	giving thanks for past support, by corroborating mission	
	statements, and for anticipatory response to the appeal.	

In order to develop a methodology that makes philanthropic discourse persuasive, Upton (2002) applied the move-based tools from Bhatia's (1998) analytic approach. He modified Bhatia's original four-move structure to a seven-move structure to reveal which move element specifically motivated readers to respond positively.

The first modification, labelled Move 1—to "get attention", has the functional purpose of getting and keeping the focus of the reader's attention at the start of the letter (p. 5). Some attention-getting strategies include using a quotation, an opening shocking/unexpected statement or something as simple as a general pleasantry. The move, "conclude with pleasantries," is placed at the end of the letter with a communicative function to create a cordial ending.

Upton's further modifications of Bhatia's work included the amalgamation of two move —"establishing credentials" and "introducing the cause"—because his research team found it almost impossible to make a clear distinction between them. The amended move is called "introduce the cause and/or establish credentials of the organization" (p. 5). Table 2 below displays a more comprehensive presentation reading of the revisions.

Move number	Action	Details
1	Get attention	May include pleasantries: Dear Mr. Fry
2	Introduce the cause and/or	May indicate the reason for the appeal,
	establish credentials	both general and specific; successes of
		the organization in previous campaigns
3	Solicit response	Reader is asked to respond with either a
		financial donation or a donation-in-kind
		May refer to previous contacts or may
		encourage contact now to, e.g. address
		uncertainties or to volunteer with the
		organization
4	Offer incentives	Small gifts that represent the NPO or, as
		is the case in Canada, a reminder of the
		tax incentives related to donations
5	Reference insert/enclosures	Can be a brochure, a pledge form or a
		return envelope
6	Express gratitude	Any comments that refer to past support
		or in anticipation of future donations
7	Conclude with pleasantries	May be a polite comment such as have a
		nice day and/or every best
		wish/sincerely

Table 2. Upton's revised move features of direct mail fundraising letters

Appeal letter composition

The appeal letter, designed as a framework, or a foundation, builds on the growth of Bhatia and Upton's work. Formal letters, like the genre of philanthropic letters, contain certain structural elements that are recognized as standard, or conventional, components, such as the salutation: "Dear Ms. Brown". Upton argues that while an appeal letter's structural elements are not persuasive in themselves, they are, nevertheless important and familiar to the reader—the local conventions. Although their presence may be taken for granted, people will notice and may also comment on their absence.

The first structural element—the dateline—not only dates the letter but also serves as a historical marker. Providing formality to the letter, the second structural element—title and address of potential respondents—and the third structural element—opening greeting or salutation—provide an element of courtesy. The fourth element—complimentary close—is the word or phrase that draws the letter to a close, such as "Sincerely" This is followed by the fifth and sixth elements—signature and signature footer—which provide a personal close with the printed name and title of the letter signatory. The final structural element—footnote information—will indicate the presence of material etc. in the envelope.

Table 5. Optom's Formal Letter – structural elements		
Element	Structural Elements	Details
Designation		
А	Dateline	The date when the letter was written or sent
В	Address information	This is the address of the addressee is given providing formality to a letter
С	Salutation	This is the opening greeting of the letter and is followed by either nothing, a comma, or a colon
D	Complimentary close	This is the word or phrase that draws the letter to a close and may or may not be followed by a comma. Example: Sincerely,
Е	Signature	This is the author's written signature
F	Signature footer	This provides the printed name and/or the title of the letter signer Example: John Brown

 Table 3. Upton's Formal Letter – structural elements

		President & CEO
G	Footnote information	This is the information located at the bottom of the page, after everything else has been completed and indicates that there is other information in the envelope Examples can include "enclosure" or "cc"

Research opportunity

The opportunity to conduct this research project stemmed from Healthy Workplaces for Helping Professions at the University of Alberta. Dr. Tom Barker and a team of field researchers are conducting a two-year study to develop frameworks that will enable those employers of health care professions to attract, and retain, resilient staff.

Resilience is defined as "an individual's positive adaptation to adversity, trauma and tragedy... is not a trait, but a set of skills, behaviors, thoughts, and actions that can be learned and developed". Resiliency is an adaptive mechanism people employ when faced with stress, challenges, crises, adversity, trauma and threats to development. Resiliency is that ability to "bounce back" with increased understanding, insight, self-efficacy and strength (Assumption College, Maine, 2016). However, many of those who work in the helping professions lack resiliency and are prone to burnout.

One of the programs Healthy Workplaces for Helping Professions has developed is the "Be a Wellness Leader Program" which provides pathways to leadership involvement and policies. The program gives agency leaders a framework for organizational wellness policies and a process to develop, implement, and evaluate their wellness initiatives. Information/feedback from workshops, on how to keep employees healthy and strong, was collected from over thirty agencies using traditional surveys to measure health, job satisfaction and levels of stress from hundreds of professionals from across the province. The returning surveys from the participating agencies—provincial and federal government ministries, educators and numerous non-profit organizations—provided further information on frameworks that can be used to develop and maintain wellness (Barker, 2017).

There are five levels of agency wellness and input from these agencies and members of the research team have identified a "Wellness Cycle" and have created a "Helping Professional Value Cycle (See Appendix A).

All of this work is slated to be presented at a province-wide conference to be held in October 2017. The presentation of the results of the project but will also provide tools to be used to develop and implement a sustainable workplace wellness program for staff of non-profit human service agencies. In addition, Healthy Workplaces for Helping Professions will be hosting a networking event during the conference. The proceeds of which will fund a bursary for future Be a Wellness Leader training sessions for those unable to afford the tuition fee. Conference participants and more specifically, 63 agency leaders, will be offered the chance to make a small donation—\$100—in return for a networking table (Barker, 2017).

This appeared to be too good an opportunity to miss—a chance to research the effects of an appeal letter using move analysis. Some, if not all the elements that have been discussed in the first section of this paper were used to develop an experimental persuasive appeal letter.

A number of affiliates had already committed to attend the conference. Specifically, 63 of the delegates were recognized decision makers for their agencies, and were in a position to commit to sponsoring a networking table.

The overarching aim of my study is to demonstrate the effectiveness of Upton's move analysis and how it can produce an effective appeal letter. I modified Upton's seven move analysis by shortening it to five moves by excluding move 5 on 'enclosures' and move 7, by not 'concluding the letter with pleasantries'. However, there will be enough data to enable me to deduce, quantitatively, which portions of the fundraising appeal letter motivated these potential donors to support my fund drive. The research strived to create a comprehensive report, however, the validity of the project was dependent on the participation of the chosen delegates.

As well as making an appeal for support, I also wanted to elicit further information from the 63 delegates. Essentially, I wanted to assess the impact my appeal letter had on their motivation to donate. In an email letter to these 63 people, besides responding to my appeal letter, were asked to provide additional information—a short, three-question, quality assurance survey. They were able to access this survey by clicking on the link provided shown in the appeal letter. The link took them to a page entitled "Quality Assurance Survey". The three questions were as follows:

1. For quality assurance purposes, we would ask you to indicate which factor(s) in this appeal letter you found most compelling.

Forces choice responses were

- a. chance to do good for others
- b. potential to increase your reputation
- c. opportunity for marketing/networking
- d. Other

2. Please tell us about your primary service

Choices for response were

- a. child and family services
- b. child and youth counselling
- c. home visitation
- d. services for those with disabilities
- e. sexual assault services
- f. women's and emergency shelter services
- g. Other

3. Please indicate the size of your organization

- a. small—fewer than 19 employees
- b. medium—over 20, but under 99 employees
- c. large—over 100 employees

Appeal letter composition

For this section, I referred to the previous discussion on appeal letter composition. One specific formality was addressed by using the official letterhead of the University of Alberta and the signature of Dr. Barker, both of which added to the credibility of the appeal.

The research project

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to test the following hypothesis:

Writers of the philanthropic appeal letter who follow the steps— 'moves' analysis—as proposed by Bhatia (1998) and Upton (2002) will experience a more successful fundraising campaign than those who do not use moves analysis in the writing of their philanthropic appeal letter. The main benefit of describing the purpose is that the reader will have a clear idea of the problem and how the researcher intends to study this problem. It also provides the researcher with a clear statement of the steps that need to be taken in order to arrive at an answer/solution.

The study will use an evaluative research design, one that is intended to provide data to writers of philanthropic appeal letters on the success, or effectiveness, of an action program (Wood,1998), through evaluation of the program. This results from this research design is of particular interest to those who are responsible for garnering support for a charitable cause.

Evaluative designs are appropriate when "the research statement inquiries about the effectiveness of a particular program"—in this case, the writing of the philanthropic appeal letter and its effectiveness, based on the response from potential donors (Wood, 1998). Rationale for developing this research

Those who are charged with the task of eliciting funds from potential donors need to be aware of the research studies that have focussed on their specific situation. Why is that important to them? The theory is that using a specific tool, that is, the move analysis, will lead to a more positive response—an increase in the amount and type of donations.

Given the attendees at the conference and their social network within the industry, the content of the letter highlights their connectedness and the ability to gain social capital through association and participation with the potential for return on their investment. In other words, new and existing networking connections have the potential to translate into increased professional opportunities (Schervish et al., 1997; Lin, 1999).

Research design

Procedure/Method

This is a two-part study:

1. Response to researcher's request to complete a quality assurance survey via email

(The request to complete the quality of the survey was on the email and not on the appeal letter).

 Response from participants: Reaction to philanthropic appeal letter and its effectiveness (Will the participants be persuaded to make a suggested donation of \$100 to access networking opportunities?).

Ethical component

The Ethics Review Board at the University of Alberta were approached for advice on the ethical component of the study. Their advice was that since the study did not violate anyone's individual rights—participants were quite free to ignore the survey questions—an ethics review was unnecessary.

Design

The study used an evaluative research design, one that was intended to provide data to writers of philanthropic appeal letters about the success, or effectiveness, (or lack thereof) of their appeal by analyzing the data. The results gathered from this research is of particular interest to those who are charged with the task of eliciting funds from potential donors and therefore need to be aware of the research studies that have focussed on their specific situation. By using an evaluative study, the primary design question is: What portion of the appeal letter did recipients find most compelling?

According to Wood, there are four basic assumptions when using an evaluative design:

- 1. There are measurable objectives for the program that can be used as a basis for evaluation—in this case, the success (or otherwise) of the moves analysis genre.
- 2. There are methods, or tools available with which to measure the variables—in this situation, the response of the appeal, i.e. donated resources.

- 3. The objectives can be assigned priorities and weighted in a practical sense according to their value to the project—in this case, the bias towards a specific "move".
- 4. Adequate control participants can be provided so that a model for statistical testing can be used to establish whether or not the program made a difference—in this case, results from previous fundraising campaigns that did not use moves analysis. (Wood, 1998, Ch. 5, p.126)

It should be noted that in this study, the fourth assumption, that is, the recruitment of adequate control participants, was not included in this basic design. Instead, the results of data collection were evaluated quantifiably and success was based on the response.

Participants/data collection and analysis

Target population: 63 NPO leaders (n=63)

Due to the specific nature of the study it was impossible to randomize the target group. Instead, sample selection was based on the knowledge of the researcher.

Probability sampling: Researcher had access to demographic information the target population

- a. Access to information on the entire proposes target population
- b. Target population were known as people who could make the decision to make a

donation based on the appeal made in this letter.

The philanthropic appeal letter was created by the researcher using move analysis. See below to read how the generic example Table 4 was translated into the letter.

Table 4. Upton'	's revised move	features of direct r	mail fundraising letters

Move number	Details
1	Dear Healthy Workplaces for Helping Professions delegate

	We want to give you more information on the Healthy Workplaces for
2	Helping Professions Conference, scheduled for October 13, 2017 in the
	Lister Centre on the University of Alberta Campus.
3	We also want to offer you an opportunity to participate at the Conference
	at a different level. In an effort of promote wellness resources and foster
	networking among the delegates, we are offering Resource Tables for a
	suggested contribution of \$100.
4	These tables offer a number of benefits to your organization:
	Opportunity to meet and share information with other conference
	delegates
	Cost efficient advertising
	• Access to other agencies and stakeholders in policy development
	in the Province
	• Participation in a worthwhile event that promises to impact human
	resource agencies and associations
	Additional information:
	• Table setup time: between 8:30 am and 9:00 am
	• Networking time: between 10:00 am and 10:45am and
	between 12:00 pm and 1:25 pm. Total 2 hours
	• Your organization logo in the official program
	• Location: Wild Rose Room, Lister Centre
	• Address: 11613-87 th Ave
	• Free parking

5	Not applicable
6	We look forward to hearing from you
0	we look forward to hearing from you
7	Not applicable

In keeping with the suggestion of Bekkers and Wiepking's (2011) – components needed to develop an effective appeal letter – positive moderators such as low cost of inclusion- I included in the composition.

Validity and reliability

Using the earlier work of Bhatia (1998), who declared that the analysis of fundraising options provided "an interesting and challenging profile...to achieve a limited set of generic objectives", as his starting point, Upton (2002) declared that most of the work in developing these "genre options" was largely based on qualitative methodology. Because of this, he believed that there was not enough current genre specificity to address the need for a comprehensive understanding of how to construct a framework and provide a more scientific way to determine the essential elements of this genre, and which would also provide a comprehensive baseline that demonstrated validity and reliability.

Given the attendees at the conference and their social network within the industry, the content of the letter highlights their connectedness and the ability to gain social capital through association and participation with the potential for return on their investment. In other words, new and existing networking connections have the potential to translate into increased professional opportunities (Schervish et al., 1997; Lin, 1999).

Computer mediated communication/email enables message delivery from specific sender to specific receiver by name in a one-to-one dialogue, as opposed to a one-to-many dialogue and allows for instantaneous communication rather than the potentially unequal distribution of letters in traditional mail (Baron, 1998).

Recipients were encouraged to respond swiftly given the limited number of conference spots available in exchange for their contribution. Additionally, email affords greater convenience, cost efficiency, and delivery reliability with use of delivery confirmation option (Baron, 1998). This line of questioning stems from investigation into an appeal letter in which decision-makers were asked to indicate which rhetorical strategy they found most compelling. The method for analyzing the data is called move analysis, the codification of which will provide the foundation to help answer the research question.

Moreover, the compelling motive of this study is to enable NPOs to engage with their supporters and potential donors with a genre-specific targeted message that will resonate, lead to action, and help them attain the monetary support needed to meet their organization's mission. Results:

The results of the survey were disappointing. Of the 63 emails that were sent, only 21 delegates responded to the first question, and 22 delegates responded to the second and third questions—about 35% in all. As for the success of the appeal letter, only three delegates committed to making a \$100 donation. It was heartening to see that 50% of respondents (n=21) were motivated to make a donation since it allowed them "a chance to do good for others".

One particular result stands out: of the 22 respondents, 14 claimed primary services were "other"—more that 50%. A review of the choices available needs to be evaluated and the size of

the organization showed that 10 respondents worked in a large organization—over 100 employees.

Findings

As previously discussed, the study's appeal letter was categorized into five specific moves (Table 5 below). Letter recipients were asked to participate in a three question survey and their responses (1 survey response = 1) are tallied in Table 6 below.

Move 1	Dear Healthy Workplaces for Helping Professions supporter,
Move 2	I am writing to announce the Healthy Workplaces Wellness Conference,
	scheduled for October 13, 2017 in the Listre Centre on the University of
	Alberta Campus.
Move 3	We want to offer you an opportunity to participate. In an effort to promote
	wellness resources and foster networking among the attendees, we are
	offering Resource Tables (for a suggested contribution of \$100) at the
	conference.
Move 4	These tables offer a number of benefits to stakeholders:
	The opportunity to meet and share information with conference attendees
	(See attached information sheet)
	Cost-effective advertising
	Access to other agencies and stakeholders in policy in the Province
	Participation in a worthwhile event that promises to impact human-resource
	agencies and associations

Table 5. Move analysis

Other information includes the following:
Set up time: after 8:30 am
Networking time: Two hours (10:00 – 10:45, 12:00 – 1:15)
Your logo in the program
Location: Wild Rose Room, Lister Conference Centre
Address: 11613 - 87th Ave
Free parking
Not applicable (N/A)
We look forward to hearing from you.

Of interest, 10 respondents (55.6%) identified altruistic means ("doing good for others") in their response to question one that asks about the most compelling factor in the appeal letter. However, 6 of the respondents (32%) report being persuaded by the opportunities to either network or market their organization.

In Table 3 below, 5 (approximately 22%) respondents identified their primary services are focused on services to children and families. Revealing the need for list alteration in future study, almost 65% of the respondents answered 'other' without a write-in comment box I missed potential informative data.

Most respondents answered the last survey question as to the size of their organization with seven (36.8%) reporting *small* (under 20 employees), two (9%) reporting *medium* (over 20 employees), ten (52.6%) with *large* (over 100 employees).
Overall, the low number of respondents, 22 (approximately 35%) of the 63 surveys sent out, was disappointing in that a rate of 50% participation (approximately 32%) was targeted for a more robust set of data for discussion.

Quality Assurance Survey	Multiple Choice Answer(s)	Number of
Question(s)		respondents
1. For quality assurance	1. A chance to do good for others	10
purposes, we would like	2. Promise to increase their reputation	1
to know what factor(s) in	3. Opportunity for marketing	3
our appeal letter you	4. Opportunity for networking	3
found most compelling?	5. Other	5
		n=21
	Child and Family Services	5
2.Please tell us about your	Home Visitation	1
primary services.	Child and Youth Counselling	0
	Sexual Assault Services	0
	Women's and Emergency Shelters	0
	Other	14
		n=22
	Small (under 20 employees)	7
3.Please tell us the size of	Medium (over 20 employees)	2
your organization	Larger (over 100 employees)	10

 Table 6. Quality Assurance Survey Question

Other	3
	n=22

Conclusion

As investigated in the literature review, consistent with the philanthropic genre, this study's our appeal letter was composed in a formal structure, employed important elements in its composition such as the eight mechanisms identified by Bekkers and Wiepking (2011), provided an option for altruism toward beneficiaries (Park et al., 2015) and the ability to gain social capital and feel connected (Schervish et al. 1997). These findings are consistent with existing scholarship and contribute to the field as additional support of the important elements of an effective appeal letter.

Furthermore, moves analysis discovered that over 55%, of this study's survey respondents were persuaded to act by emotion—specifically their feelings of altruism. Thus confirming the finding of Bekkers et al (2011) and Park & Lee (2015); appealing to the readers sense altruism and the positive moderator of the low-cost of inclusion are effective elements in appeal letter composition. Following closely, 30 % of the respondents were persuaded by the opportunity to benefit from participation – or prosocial, rational motivators as found in the research of Batson & Shaw (1991) and Corcoran (2011).

The motivation for applying moves analysis to my appeal letter was to demonstrate the benefits such as ease of use for the philanthropic writer and illuminate which rhetorical devise decision-makers found most compelling. It is hoped this demonstration will be assist even the novice composer with essential elements for their compositions as well as providing a workable framework for their construction that will enable them to quickly and effectively convey their appeals to donors. The importance which has been discussed throughout this paper, however Chatterjee, Rose, & Sinha (2013) summarized it well in their study; "most charitable organizations cannot accomplish their stated missions [e.g. feeding the poor] without asking for monetary support".

The study also supports existing literature in the genre and fills a gap in the literature by presenting successful persuasive elements with move analysis framework to create a compelling argument for its use in the philanthropy field and further academic investigation.

There are a few of short-comings with this study future investigators may wish to alter. The first being the relatively small size of the sample (n=63). And the other caution note is in regards to the professional composition of the sample itself. Respondent's answers to the survey may not be generalizable to other target audiences as the respondent pool was comprised solely of people working in the helping profession who, it may be argued, have a predisposition towards altruistic behavior. And lastly, this study did not ask the respondent to report their gender, however, gender identity may represent an interesting subsequent course of study.

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Appendix A

Healthy Workplaces for Helping Professions



Structural	Formal Letter - Structural Elements Function
Elements	
1. Dateline	The date when the letter was written or sent.
2. Address	The address of the addressee is given providing formality to a letter.
information	
3. Salutation	This is the opening greeting of the letter and is generally followed by no
	punctuation, a comma, or a colon.
4.	This is the word or phrase that draws the letter to a close and is followed
Complimentary	by either a comma or no punctuation. Example "Sincerely,"
Close	
5.Signature	This is the author's penned signature
6. Signature	This provides the printed name of the letter signer and/or the title of the
footer	signer. Example: John Brown
	President
7.Footnote	This is the information located after everything else in the letter indicate
information	that there is other information the reader should be aware of. Examples
	can include "enclosure" or sponsor listings.

Table 1 Upton's formal letter structural elements

Move	Move Function
Move 1:	Comments intended to get the reader's attention (using a quotation, an opening
Get Attention	shocking/unexpected statement or something as simple as a general pleasantry)
Move 2:	"This move can indicate what the problem or need is, or it can indicate what the
Introduce the cause	organization does to address a problem/need. While these are different foci, in practice these ideas (problem/need and organization activities) are so intertwined that they are best
and/or	viewed as a single move. The overarching purpose of this move is to introduce to or
establish credentials	remind the reader what the cause is and/or what the organization does to address a cause. In this move the following occurs:
of organization	general problem/need indicated (i.e. homelessness)
	specific problem/need highlighted (i.e. Sara is a homeless single mother).
	successes of past organization efforts highlighted goals of future organization efforts outlined

 Table 2 Upton's revised seven-moves of persuasive direct mail appeal letters

Move 4:	Indicates benefit of the gift to the donor, an incentive for giving. The incentive can be
Offer incentives	tangible such as a coffee mug or intangible such as the 'good feeling' you get knowing you have helped.
Move 5:	As mentioned above this move is not applicable to our study and therefore will not be used.
Reference	
insert	
Move 6: Express	Any comments of thanks for either past/current or future financial or other kinds of support.
gratitude	
Move 7	"Have a nice day"
Conclude	
with	
Pleasantries	

Appendix D

Table 3 Healthy Workplaces for Helping Professions five-Moves appeal letter

Move 1	Dear Healthy Workplaces for Helping Professions supporter,
Move 2	I am writing to announce the Healthy Workplaces Wellness Conference, scheduled for October 13, 2017 in the Listre Centre on the University of Alberta Campus.
Move 3	We want to offer you an opportunity to participate. In an effort to promote wellness resources and foster networking among the attendees, we are offering Resource Tables (for a suggested contribution of \$100) at the conference.
Move 4	These tables offer a number of benefits to stakeholders: The opportunity to meet and share information with conference attendees (See attached information sheet) Cost-effective advertising
	Access to other agencies and stakeholders in policy in the Province Participation in a worthwhile event that promises to impact human-resource agencies and associations Other information includes the following:

	Set up time: after 8:30 am
	Networking time: Two hours (10:00 – 10:45, 12:00 – 1:15)
	Your logo in the program
	Location: Wild Rose Room, Lister Conference Centre
	Address: 11613 - 87th Ave
	Free parking
Move 5	Not applicable (N/A)
Move 6	We look forward to hearing from you.

Appendix E

Appeal Letter



The Healthy Workplaces for Helping Professions Project

April 8, 2017

Professor, Thomas Barker. PhD. University of Alberta Extension 2-367 Enterprise Square Edmonton, Alberta

Agency Name here Address here Edmonton, AB

Dear ____:

The Healthy Workplaces Conference (October 13, 2017) is offering the chance to host a *Resource Table*. For a small, \$100 contribution to our education bursary, your agency will have great visibility, (there are a limited number of tables available) in addition to many networking opportunities over the course of the one-day conference. I hope you will consider participating and visit <u>http://hwhp.ca/resource-tables.html</u> or call 780-651-8143 to reserve your table today! And don't forget to mark your calendars for October 13th and join provincial leaders from

government, education, and the non-profit human-service sector at this one-day educational and

networking event. For more information about the conference itself please visit:

http://hwhp.ca/conference-2017.html.

Sincerely,

Tom Barker

P.S. I'm supervising a graduate student who is conducting an informal survey on non-profit appeal letters; we would both appreciate if you can take a couple of minutes to answer the three questions at: https://docs.google.com/a/ualberta.ca/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf83Ac5vJNH1cC6Arxc3cXKzIHbISz

c4co1Es49W-y1-Z5DQQ/viewform

Appendix F

In the appeal letter above there is a link for participants to the quality assurance Quality Assurance Survey. Below and on the next two pages the results are listed as well as pie chart illustrations of the study findings.

Quality Assurance Survey Results

Results n=21



Results

N=22



Results

n=22



- 7 Small (under 20 employees)
- 2- Medium (over 20 employees)
- 10 Large (over 100 employees)