

Tips for writing Thank You messages

I want to explain how the 'Thank you' messages to donors work in the Advocates Control Panel to best equip you when you write these messages.

1. First of all, if you are not sure what I am referring to - after you have posted a request and the money has come in, your request is not automatically archived. It moves to the 'Pending payment' section, where you need to edit the request and give the details of the date payment was made to the applicant. This then moves the request to the 'Awaiting Feedback' section which is where you have the opportunity to write both a success story to go on the website and a thank you message which will go directly to the donors which gave to your request.

2. This section asks first of all for a title. Having experimented a little with these thank yous, we think the best thing to put in this title is simply the item which was bought for the individual. Eg. 'food for a month', 'my new washing machine'. When the donor receives the email, the title of the email is: Thank you for [your title]. So 'Thank you for my new washing machine' would read well and help the donor immediately identify the request they gave to. Bear in mind a lot of our donors give a bit to various requests, also that many are repeat givers, so it helps them identify what they are being thanked for (the system is set to a default of what you requested, but this can be edited).

3. At the start of their email, they receive the following standard text:

Acts 435 Advocates, based at the local participating church, are able to directly write a thank you message on behalf of the individual or family helped which will specifically go to those donors who gave to that request.

The following message is therefore intended for you:

What then follows is what you have written. There is therefore no reference to the details of the original request so it is best to include some of this in your thank you, again to help the donor identify the request he/she gave to. For example: 'Thank you for my new washing machine. It has made a great difference' would fall short of the information required. Much better to say: 'Thank you so much for my new washing machine. As a single mother of 5 children it has been really difficult to keep up with the washing since my previous machine broke, especially as the launderette is too far to go too, and difficult with a toddler. Having a new washer has made a huge difference. Thank you so much.'

Write naturally, either from your own perspective or directly from the applicant. Imagine meeting the donor and what you would say to him or her on hearing that they had given to the request.

4. These emails, like the success stories for the website, come to me first to be edited if necessary, authorised and sent, but of course the less editing I need to do, the quicker they will go out.

Please bear in mind that whilst donors do not know the church or charity their money is going through, they do know the location of the request they are giving to. If a donor gives to 4 or 5 different requests, all in different locations, and only gets a thank you, say from Hull, they are more likely to give to Hull requests in the future. Therefore, it is IN YOUR OWN BENEFIT to make the time to write these thank you messages. As a charity we will commit to getting them authorised and sent out as soon as possible, ideally within 48 hours of them being posted. It is also in your own benefit to get them done quickly because for the donor, giving to the request is still fresh in their mind. Sometimes donors really connect to an applicant and ask if they can do more to help!

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