

Top ten tips for asking for money by email

It's a great idea to email people about your fundraising and can really give your sponsorship money a boost. Here are our top tips on how to send an email that will help the pennies roll in.

1. Don't be shy

Family, friends and workmates are the obvious people to tell about your fundraising, but think more broadly too. Remember you're doing it for a very good cause: the National Literacy Trust. Think about people at clubs you belong to, schools, church, neighbours, even local businesses and the press. The more people you tell, the more likely you are to raise money.

2. Grab their attention

Think about the subject line for your email. If you make it exciting and interesting more people will open it and read on. "Do you want to see Dave without any hair?", "I'm going to run through the middle of London in my pyjamas" and "Do you want to chase Paula Radcliffe for 26 miles?" could all raise interest!

3. No spam jam

Think about spam filters when you write your subject line. Anything with the word 'free' or 'exciting' or containing 'naughty' words is likely to get blocked, never making it to the intended recipient.

4. Keep it simple

Think about what you want to say in your email. Jot down a few notes before you write it, spending a few minutes ordering what you want to say and making it as straightforward as possible. Ask someone else to read it and see what they think

5. Tell your story

You probably have quite strong reasons for why you've chosen the activity you're doing and why you've chosen to support the National Literacy Trust. Share some of your passion and motivation. Tell people why you have chosen to raise money for us and why you think the work we do is important. Let them know what training or preparation you're doing too. Your chosen event is a challenge in itself, but so is all the hard work that goes into preparing for it.

6. Show you're real

People are more wary of emails nowadays, especially emails asking for money, so it's important people know your message is 100% genuine:

- Link to your fundraising page on **Virgin Money Giving** or **JustGiving** and keep it updated with your progress (tell them you'll do this in your email to keep them coming back).
- Give users a legitimate and secure way to sponsor you. Point them to your fundraising page. Don't ask for money to be sent to you in the post or deposited in a personal bank account.

7. Ask generous people first

You know you can probably rely on one or two people to donate a decent amount. Ask for their support first. That way, when people go to your fundraising page, they'll see what the people before them donated and want to donate similar amounts. So £10, £5 or even £3 could help set the bar. But bear in mind that £100 could be intimidating!

8. Ask again

You know how it is with emails. Sometimes you have good intentions, but are too busy to read them. It slips your mind and then you think maybe it's too late. So give people who missed it earlier another opportunity to sponsor you. Don't be embarrassed to email again.

9. And again

You can update people on how your training is going, let them know how much you've raised, then put a reminder at the bottom of the email about what you're doing, when and why. It can be short and sweet and doesn't have to seem like a nag – "3 weeks in and the fundraising is going well, I've raised £xx so far only another £xx to go..."

10. Get help

Ask people to forward the email on. They may have contacts that you don't and may know people who would like to sponsor you.

GOOD LUCK