

A REAL EYE-OPENER

To generate donations, this not-for-profit used a simple letter to dramatize the effect of life on the streets.

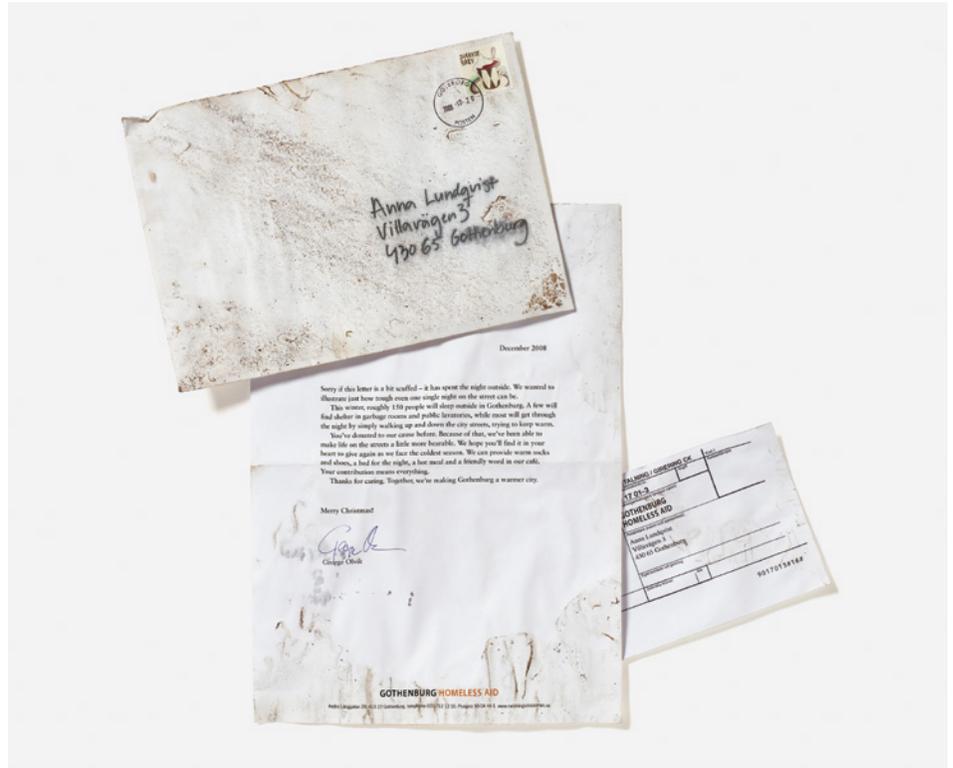
Winter is the most important time of year for the Gothenburg Homeless Aid organization. It's when people tend to give more to those less fortunate than themselves, especially during the holiday season. It's also when the organization hopes to raise most of its funds for the year ahead.

The competition for attention is particularly fierce at Christmas, especially for donations. To make their letter stand out amongst the avalanche of cards and commercial mailings, the agency took a counter-intuitive approach. They knew that direct mail would be a perfect medium to talk to people about homelessness because it's delivered right to your home, setting up an immediate tension.

To really bring homelessness to life viscerally, they took a humble letter, beautifully written, and let it spend the night on the streets. They exposed it to the same cold and wet conditions as the homeless of Gothenburg. Then it was mailed. Once opened, the cleverly understated letter allowed readers to imagine what it must be like to spend a night out in the elements.

In total, 22 per cent of all recipients donated an average of just over 29 euros (15 per cent increase in recipient donations over the previous year).

This eye-opener was a humble yet powerful use of the simplest type of direct marketing – the letter – designed to generate a feeling and generate donations.



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