

As an example of this process is an old TV ad for Tide soap. The ad comes on the screen, and the first step they take to get your **attention** is to tear a shirt in half. Then the spokesman for Tide soap pours oil and grease on each half of the shirt, thus presenting the **problem**. Next, he throws half of the shirt into a washing machine containing Brand X and the other half of the shirt into the washing machine containing Tide. The next thing you know, he pulls out both halves of the shirt and surprise, surprise, Tide has cleaned its half of the shirt, but Brand X has failed to properly clean. So Tide is now the **solution** to your washday woes.



Finally, the spokesman closes the sale (makes the **ask**) by urging you to go out and buy Tide soap. It is harder to close the sale on TV than it is via mail or in person, but, as you can clearly see, whether the medium is direct mail, newspaper advertising, the Internet or television, you follow the same four steps every time. And, if you do not follow those four steps, if you omit any step, your appeal will fail.

The door-to-door salesman and the special event fund raiser must also follow these four steps. Many years ago, when I was the state chairman of Missouri Young Americans for Freedom, a very distinguished and wealthy individual set up a lunch meeting attended by some of Kansas City's wealthiest individuals. Everyone was a multi-millionaire and the meeting was held at a very exclusive club. Because they were there, we had their **attention**. At that time there was a pressing **problem** that concerned these individuals -- rioting was occurring on college campuses across the country, including colleges in Kansas City and across the state of Missouri. The **solution** was to support Young Americans for Freedom in order to bring campus turmoil to an end. Finally, our host was supposed to get up and say, "I think so highly of Young Americans for Freedom and the cause is so urgent that I am writing out my check right now for \$5,000, and I hope you all will do the same thing." In other words, he was supposed to close the sale (make the **ask**).

Instead, he got up, thanked them all for coming and they went on their merry way. He didn't close the sale, and as a result, we didn't raise one dime from that gathering. It was a golden opportunity missed. So, in your direct mail copy, you must make certain that you close the sale. I would say that getting the attention of the reader, and closing the sale, are the two hardest things to accomplish in a letter.

## Continuity

Continuity in the copywriting process is also vital. The donor must see consistency not only from one mailing to the next, but also between the theme of the fund appeals and the progress that you achieve. This