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Successful Fundraising

A MONTHLY REPORT OF SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING IDEAS, STRATEGIES AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Inside

ATHLETIC FUNDRAISING

Rivalry Will Enhance Your Fundraising Results

By Daniel Lindley

Inspired by a long-running rivalry between their basketball teams, two universities in Ohio launched a competition of their own in fundraising. Besides bringing in donations far above expectations, the contest paradoxically brought the fundraising staffs at the institutions closer together, says Bob Dean, director of development for athletics and major gifts, Malone University (Canton, OH).

"All of our radars for both institutions were very, very high for barriers or difficulties, and it actually turned out to be the exact opposite," Dean says of the fundraising faceoff. "It built great camaraderie and enhanced relationships." Best of all, the fundraising competition raised more than $70,000 for each campus, with more than 1,000 donors apiece.

To run the one-week fundraisers culminating in the Mayor's Cup basketball game, Malone University and Walsh University, its rival up the road in North Canton, Ohio, shared a GiveCampus platform for crowdfunding and social media. The centerpiece was a humorous video made by a professional production team. Adopting a "gang war" theme, the video featured student athletes and university administrators, including the president of each. The institutions also let students, alumni, athletes, coaches, donors and friends "jab the rival" with their submissions, subject to administrative review. These ranged from tongue-in-cheek videos to nostalgic recollections of their campus days from former athletes and coaches.

Besides sending email blasts to all their constituents to publicize the campaign in the week leading up to the game, the universities attracted press coverage from the local newspaper. On the evening of the Mayor's Cup basketball games, the fundraising contest closed just before the women's basketball tipoff. Results were announced at the men's game halftime, with Walsh edging out Malone in both the dollar and donor count. (Walsh won both basketball games too.)

In the future, the fundraising competition will probably be shortened to three days because seven days of email blasts were leading to a bit of "donor fatigue," Dean reports. Besides raising money for each university's athletics department and helping fundraisers at the campuses work better together, the joint campaign saved money because the campuses shared some costs, Dean notes. He adds the competitive approach might work not only for school athletic departments but also for other types of programs and nonprofits. ◆

Source: Bob Dean, Director of Development for Athletics and Major Gifts, Malone University, Canton, OH. Phone (330) 471-8237. Email: rdean@malone.edu. Website: https://www.malone.edu

BRIEFS

Principles Worth Repeating

As you work to identify and prioritize would-be contributors, remember that three types of prospects exist:

1. Those who believe in philanthropy and give to your cause.
2. Those who contribute to other causes but not yet to yours.
3. Those who are not philanthropic and give to no cause.

To maximize your fundraising, learn to focus efforts on the first two groups. ◆

Solicitation Tip

Present the prospect with a written proposal. This makes it clear that your request is formal and implies that a formal response is needed. ◆

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COMMUNICATING WITH PROSPECTS, DONORS

Best Use of Phone In Fund Development

Want to develop a robust and evolving strategy to reach your population in creative ways? Marissa Fitzgerald, assistant director of young alumni and student philanthropy at Fairfield University (Fairfield, CT), shares the following steps she has taken to create a successful phonathon program:

1. **Don't be afraid to try a new calling strategy.** "Finding the right calling cadence is essential," Fitzgerald explains. "We've done this by trying different pools at different times of the year to see who responds the best, whether through analytics or feedback received over the phone. For example, our more senior alumni do not like being called during our 6 to 9 p.m. shifts as they are already retiring for the evening, but they love being called during the day. We figured this out through feedback shared on the phone and changed the strategy to have greater success. Also, in FY24, we have implemented thank-you video messages from students. Our prospects love getting a thank-you call from students, so we thought sending out thank-you videos via email with a link to the event calendar could be another excellent touch point. We have heard nothing but positive comments from these videos and are planning to try these video messages with pledge reminders for our annual Giving Day."
2. **When in doubt, update contact information.** This could include mailing addresses, emails, phone numbers and employer information. With this information, you can reach prospects through channels you might not have been able to previously. Fitzgerald notes, "I always tell callers that if the call did not end in a gift but you updated their contact information and had a positive conversation, that is still a great call. This is also a way to show the value of a phonathon, because now other teams can accurately reach people to invite them to events or ask for gifts."
3. **Use analytics to improve training.** Fitzgerald looks at phonathon reporting each week and compares it to previous years and their goals. She suggests focusing on the following metrics: total prospects reached, dollars, number of pledges, number of gifts, number of unspecified pledges, complete rate, contact rate, incomplete rate and upgrade/downgrade/equal giving. "I look at the entire campaign's results as well as caller-specific reporting," she says. "I can see where the team and individual callers excel and fall short within these metrics. This allows me to adjust training strategy to better prepare callers." ◆

Source: Marissa Fitzgerald, Assistant Director, Young Alumni and Student Philanthropy, Fairfield University, Fairfield, CT. Phone (203) 254-4000. Email: marissa.fitzgerald@fairfield.edu. Website: https://www.fairfield.edu

BRIEF

Host Productive Staff Meetings

Meet weekly with staff to set fundraising related goals together and monitor the degree to which each is being met. Keep meetings positive, informative and motivating. Use the time to lift each other up toward your common goal. ◆

SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING

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Editor: Scott C. Stevenson.

Production Editor: Mary Jean Jones.

Editorial Correspondence: Scott C. Stevenson, scott.c.stevenson@gmail.com.

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BROADENING YOUR DONOR BASE

Expand Your Reach Through Nontraditional Methods

"A statistical report may not grab attention," notes Samantha Krzywonos, faculty of fine arts development officer at the University of Victoria (Victoria, British Columbia, Canada). Krzywonos suggests five methods to get people's attention and effectively reach new donors:

- ❏ **Add urgency and vibrancy with storytelling.** A beautifully made documentary can garner more support than raw data. "A great example of this is Dr. Elizabeth Vibert in UVic's history department," says Krzywonos. "She partners with a fine arts graduate student to make documentary films about food security and migration. Sharing video clips with donors to reinforce need and inspire them is always an effective tool."
- ❏ **Get local and personal.** Communicate your value proposition clearly and in a compelling way by showing how your project or organization makes a difference in the community. Krzywonos reports, "We pivoted our Giving Tuesday campaign at the last minute and prioritized an appeal within the faculty to support an Indigenous student award when news broke in our province about the discovery of 215 unmarked graves at a Kamloops Residential School Site. A faculty member quickly stepped up as the lead donor and created the Fine Arts Indigenous Student Award. Within a couple months, the award was endowed with $30,000 raised just through online and Giving Tuesday donations. This demonstrates the need to think bigger and broader in your vision but local and personal in your ask."
- ❏ **Be ready to pivot.** Don't miss opportunities like the one described here. Pivot to prioritize appeal efforts that address things happening in your local community. "By changing focus, you'll be able to have an immediate impact and build a groundswell of support," says Krzywonos.
- ❏ **Use creative outreach skills to attract nontraditional partners.** Partnerships grow your audience, broaden the reach of your story and amplify your impact, all leading to more donors. Krzywonos notes, "Now in its fifth year, the Artist in Residence program partnership between UVic's Faculty of Fine Arts and Ocean Networks Canada strengthens connections between art and science and broadens perspectives and critical discourse on environment, technology, oceans, culture and biodiversity."
- ❏ **Let donors lead.** Krzywonos concludes, "Ask patrons and donors how they want to learn about impact — then track and demonstrate that." ◆

Source: Samantha Krzywonos, CFRE, Faculty of Fine Arts Development Officer, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Phone (250) 721-6305. Email: finedev@uvic.ca. Website: https://www.uvic.ca

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CAPITAL CAMPAIGN PLANNING

Create a Donor 'Depth Chart'

By Kim Pawlak

A "depth chart" involves taking the gift chart and plugging in the names of people in your community who might be able to make gifts at those different levels, which gives you a good sense of where you might have gaps, says Frances Roen, founder of Fundraising Sol (Minneapolis, MN).

"For example, if you need two $1 million gifts or two $5 million gifts, who in your community might be giving those?" says Roen. "This is where your knowledge of your donors and your philanthropic community is important. When you start filling in names of individuals and institutions who give to these types of projects, you get a good sense of the giving levels where you may have gaps. If you are able to fill in most of the depth chart with the people you already know who might be interested, that's a great sign. That can build some confidence about going forward to a feasibility study. If it feels very empty, that's a sign that you might want to pause for a second and think about whether a capital campaign is the best thing to meet your strategic goals."

Check out Roen's Depth Chart template. ◆

Source: Frances Roen, Founder, Fundraising Sol, Minneapolis, MN. Phone (612) 516-0797. Email: frances@solfullfundraising.com. Website: https://www.solfullfundraising.com

TYPES OF GIVING

The Evolution Of Third-Party Gifts

By Kerry Nenn

“Ten years ago, a third-party gift meant a donor-advised fund or an IRA,” notes Karen A. Sims-Harrell, director of gifts and records management for North Carolina State University (Raleigh, NC). “Today, third-party gifts encompass much more. Donors have more flavors to choose from.” As the landscape continues to change, here’s what you need to know:

If funds are being initiated from an entity other than the actual donor, the donation is considered a third-party gift. This can include donor-advised funds (DAF), distributions from IRAs, planned gifts, annuities, family foundations and matching gifts.

Sims-Harrell notes, “With so many vehicles available, we have to make sure we remain up-to-date with current fundraising trends. Maintain strong relationships with your colleagues in finance and gift planning to ensure all t’s are crossed and i’s are dotted. Use webinars on IRS processing to educate yourself on proper protocols. And equip staff with operational processes specific to your organization. Review guidelines annually or quarterly to ensure income and transactions are being reported correctly.”

Sims-Harrell points out three best practices specific to DAF. “Anything received through a DAF has to be 100 percent charitable,” she says. “Donors cannot receive any benefits associated with the contribution. This includes gala tickets or sponsorships. So, make it clear to donors what their DAF contributions can and can’t pay for.”

Second, always identify who the legal donor is. For many third-party gifts, this is a question that must be answered when the gift is received. DAF contributions are distributed by an administrator such as Vanguard. However, these administrators often dabble in retirement accounts as well, so you may get a check from an account administrator that is not a DAF but is an IRA charitable contribution. You must identify who the actual donor is for the funds you’ve received.

Sims-Harrell also suggests consistency in stewardship, even when funds are coming indirectly from a donor. “DAF advisors don’t need a tax receipt, because the administrator already provided one to the donor directly,” notes Sims-Harrell. “However, we still want to express appreciation, so we send an acknowledgment letter instead. This doesn’t require the same language as a tax receipt.”

Lastly, use disclaimers. Sims-Harrell explains, “Third-party gifts often require knowledge of information that falls into the tax realm, but you’re not their CPA. So always tell donors that you’re not giving tax advice. You can talk in a general cadence about the fundraising landscape, but remind them to talk it through with their personal tax advisor. Explain that this professional can provide the next layer of insight to help the donor reach their intended philanthropic goals.” ◆

Source: Karen A. Sims-Harrell, Director Gifts and Records Management, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC. Phone (919) 515-7827. Email: kasims@ncsu.edu. Website: https://www.ncsu.edu

Have a topic for a story? We would like to hear from you.
Email scott.c.stevenson@gmail.com.

BRIEFS

Personalized Thank-You Videos Are a Big Hit

Miami University (Oxford, OH) staff leveraged ThankView to send more than 3,000 personalized thank-you videos to their giving-day donors — all within a 24-hour period. “The videos featured students, faculty, staff and even our mascot,” reports Emily Berry, vice president for development. “They followed a simple script thanking donors: ‘Hi, Mark, my name is Julie, and I’m a junior at Miami. I wanted to thank you so much for your gift today to the Outdoor Pursuit Center. It’s going to help us so much. …’ The open rate for the videos exceeded 80 percent, and we received tremendous donor feedback. Some recipients even shared their video on social media, which in turn prompted participation from others. ◆

Generate Donor Leads Using Video

Unpolished, selfie-style videos perform well across all digital channels. Lori Bower, president of BowerComm Strategic Marketing (Hutchinson, KS), advises, “Don’t be concerned with length. Be more concerned about intriguing people in the first three seconds. If someone is interested, they will watch for three, five or even 10 minutes.” In fact, longer videos and post copy can help social channels better identify people who are interested based on how long they watch. It becomes very clear who is interested by how much time they spend with the content. ◆

Increase Retention With a Little Data Share

Are you letting donors know how long they’ve been giving? “We can usually track this more easily than the donor can,” notes Colin Hennessy, vice president for alumni and donor engagement at University of Iowa Center for Advancement (Iowa City, IA). “They might not realize until they see it on your ask or reminder card that they’ve been giving every year for 14 years. And seeing that track record encourages them to keep going.” ◆

STRENGTHENING INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Practical Ways to Unite (and Benefit From) Fundraising and Marketing

"The common adage puts fundraising and marketing on two sides of the same coin," notes Marcus Turner, associate executive director for external relations at Lone Tree Arts Center (Lone Tree, CO). "But how can you bring those two sides together?"

Turner suggests three steps to maximize the combined power of fundraising and marketing.

"The critical starting point is the lexicon," notes Turner. "Run a series of checks to see if your voice is consistent with messaging from fundraising and marketing. You don't want two voices. Bring both groups together and decide who you are as an organization and what you're trying to communicate. This could be a weekly check-in to go over what you're pushing out that week. Read that week's materials aloud to each other and get feedback to ensure consistency."

The next step is content development. Turner notes this is an overlooked place to start for managing and developing relationships. "Relationship development is to fundraising as content development is to marketing," he explains. "Use content as a touchpoint for your donor relationships. Decide together as fundraising and marketing teams when and how you're going to communicate and what messaging both builds your brand and cultivates donors. And communicate clearly any important nuances to content deployment — such as information donors should receive before the general public."

This last point leads to the third step: communication. "I tell my team there's no such thing as overcommunicating when it comes to internal communications," says Turner. "Also, you can have regular marketing and fundraising meetings, but if you don't know how to communicate with each other, it won't be fruitful." Learn each person's preferred styles, so you know if someone needs a direct approach or time to process. When you learn and apply differentiated approaches to communicating, you can effectively bring these two pieces together. ◆

Source: Marcus E. Turner, Associate Executive Director for External Relations, Lone Tree Arts Center, Lone Tree, CO. Phone (720) 509-1000. Email: marcus.turner@cityoflonetree.com. Website: https://www.lonetreeartscenter.org

FUNDRAISING EMAILS

What's Your Secret to a Persuasive Subject Line?

Q ***In your opinion, what subject lines are most effective in driving donors to give to your organization?***

"Include the words 'please,' 'support' and 'today.' I don't believe in click bait — the person receiving the email should know you are asking for a donation today.

"Once you have included the above, make the subject line as short as possible, four words if you can — 'Please Support Nonprofit Today.'" ◆

— Clark Perks, Development Director, Catholic Partnership Schools, Camden, NJ. Email: info@cspschools.org. Website: https://www.catholicpartnershipschools.org

"To be successful, you must answer the basic question: What's in it for me (WIIFM)? Remember to center your audience (donor, client, recipient, etc.) in communications. I received a very well written appeal last week and the subject was, 'Are you in?' I think 'YOU' might be the most important word (and its variations) that you could include in a subject line for this." ◆

— Ari Polsky, Communications and Fundraising Consultant and Former Camp Communications Director, Los Angeles, CA. Email: info@aripolsky.com. Website: www.aripolsky.com

"I think a 'We're in this together' vibe is solid. I want to feel like I'm part of something and still be addressed and appreciated. The gang's all here, and we're doing this, as a group and a movement. I mean, donations alone won't get the work done, and we can't do the work without funds. It's a team effort. And obviously, you have to know your audience — that's most important." ◆

— Katherine Marie Heilman, Director of Communications, Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen and Social Center, Cincinnati, OH. Phone (513) 621-6364. Website: www.ourdailybread.us

Nine Ways to Make the Case For Employee Support

Look for ways to encourage and solidify employee giving to build a sound support base for your organization, not just financially, but on a much deeper level.

To do so, seek first to understand the motivations behind employee involvement. After all, many employees in your organization are likely to be there because they feel an identity with your mission and services. Others may think of their position as just a job. Both types of individuals are likely, though, to make charitable contributions when they believe their time or money is going to a worthy cause.

Soliciting staff is best done in an upbeat yet low-key way to avoid making those who have limited finances feel besieged or intimidated to give money. Look for levels of giving that are in keeping with the means of all salary ranges.

Here are some guidelines and ideas to either launch an employee giving program or improve an existing one:

1. **Appoint a popular team captain in each department.** When you plan your campaign, ask department heads to select a well-liked, non-managerial employee who will organize donation efforts in that area.
2. **Provide tables of suggested donations appropriate for each salary level.** Some employees may be confused about how much money to give or think that what they can afford to contribute will make no difference. Ask your accounting and personnel departments to prepare a list of salary ranges and a reasonable corresponding donation suggestion for each. Be sure some amounts are especially affordable through incremental payroll deduction or offer the option of a one-time contribution.
3. **Recognize employees who have been generous.** Without revealing how much each has contributed, honor those who have followed suggested contribution guidelines in all pay levels. When higher-paid employees see that those they know earn less are contributing, they may join in or increase their original pledges. Note names in your newsletters, in campaign updates, on bulletin boards or at staff meetings.
4. **Hold regular coffees employees can attend.** Encourage each department involved in charitable works to have an open house for all staff with coffee and cookies. Give them an opportunity to see firsthand how that department makes a difference. Remember that those who work for your institution may be too busy with their own jobs to be fully aware of other activities that help communities.
5. **Develop in-kind giving options.** When employees are truly unable to give money, they may be eager to do hands-on work through their skills, either work-related or those learned in past positions. Recognize them for their efforts as well.
6. **Create a Spirit Award to honor a department or individual.** When the campaign is concluding, honor the teams, departments or persons who have given to the best of their abilities for each pay level. Take photos and ask board members and officers to attend. When you hold the next campaign, employees will remember how much the effort was appreciated.
7. **Keep momentum going.** Have a creative sign or billboard in a high-traffic area keeping employees posted on the drive's financial progress. When those who have not yet contributed see the goal being reached, or wavering, they may decide it's time to do their part before the drive is over.
8. **Stress participation more than actual amounts.** While you want employees to donate as much money as they can afford to give, stress that participation itself also is crucial to the success of the campaign. Honor departments with 100 percent employee participation, even if all have given only token amounts.
9. **Be sensitive to employees who feel pressured.** If you become aware of animosity among your constituents, reiterate that no person should feel obligated, and that the hard work they do daily is in itself a major contribution. But also help them realize that anything additional they give is deeply appreciated and being used efficiently.

As you refine your employee giving efforts, be sure to say thanks in many ways, just as you would with donors who do not collect a paycheck from your cause. ◆

BRIEF

Secure More First-Time Gifts

To understand how a prospect may react to your solicitation, do a little role playing with a colleague or team member. Ask yourself, "What would I like to hear from the development officer? What might convince me to make a first-time gift?" ◆

STEWARDSHIP-RELATED EVENTS

‘Notes From the Nest’ Event Serves to Thank Donors

By Kerry Nenn

Photo credits: Sara Everson, UND Alumni Association and Foundation

Many universities invite students to write thank-you notes to donors. University of North Dakota Alumni Association (Grand Forks, ND) staff took this concept to the next level.

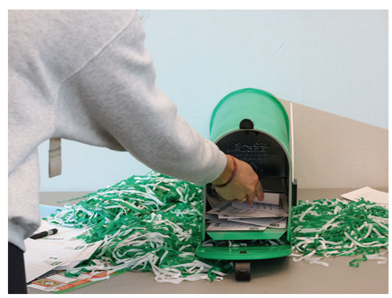
“We wanted this to be an experience — an event students would remember,” explains Jenn Lukens, director of stewardship and donor appreciation. “We also wanted to relieve the burden on each college, going through the process of tracking down students to write thank-you notes. Plus, each college did this differently. We brought the entire process under the alumni umbrella to brand it, keep it consistent and streamline it.”

The resulting “Notes From the Nest” two-day event attracted nearly 2000 students in person and another 500 distance learners who submitted notes via email. Staff matched students who received scholarships to the specific donor who funded that scholarship. Lukens reports this is not a common practice at other educational institutions her team researched before launching the event. “It added complications, but it makes the experience more meaningful,” she notes. “We realized we need a digital registration process to improve the experience. Volunteers had to shuffle through documents as students arrived to find the name of the scholarship and appropriate donor to give to students. We hope to have a digital platform next year that allows students to sign in digitally and pull up the information, then check out digitally when they’ve completed their letters.”

Staff provided resources on tables and screens to educate students on how to write a thank-you note, including what to say and what the note should look like. Students could choose from three different print designs for their notes, all of which included “Notes From the Nest” branding.

To create a fun atmosphere, a balloon entrance was created and volunteers welcomed students, plus staff put together a music playlist for the event. Additionally, a media area provided a videographer to capture student testimonies and a photographer with a Polaroid camera. Students could then mail their pictures with their letters.

To promote the event, staff pushed it out on every media possible, including a promo video that featured a student who shared why it’s important to do this. Staff also incentivized the event. Lukens notes, “Many students were more than willing to show up to express their gratitude to the donors who support their scholarships, but offering free pizza and donuts along with the chance to win an additional scholarship certainly added to the incentive.” ◆



Source: Jenn Lukens, Director of Stewardship and Donor Appreciation, University of North Dakota Alumni Association and Foundation, Grand Forks, ND. Phone (701) 777-3359. Email: jennl@undalumni.net. Website: https://undalumni.org

Regularly Test Your Stewardship Practices

How does your organization score when it comes to stewarding existing donors? To find out, ask your contributors.

Once every three years, conduct a random survey of existing donors and ask to be rated on the following points:

❏ Type of gift acknowledgment received.
❏ Timeliness of gift acknowledgments.
❏ Who does the thanking.
❏ Frequency of donor recognition.
❏ Understanding of how gifts are making a positive difference.

Donors’ responses will help to pinpoint positive practices as well as those that need more attention. Plus, the surveys will accomplish two additional objectives: 1. Cultivation toward future gifts will occur as a result of seeking these individuals’ advice, and 2. You will be demonstrating that you really do care about the ways in which you show appreciation and recognize generosity. ◆

DONOR RELATIONSHIPS

Integrate Your Brand Into Donor Relationship Strategies

By Megan Venzin

The YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago (Chicago, IL) has a motto they operate by: "Find joy over and over and over." This is the lens through which they view their stewardship efforts and the connections they make with donors.

"Our brand platform focuses on the idea that 'The Power of Play' brings along possibilities, and those possibilities lead to progress," says Brandon Davis, vice president of brand engagement for YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago. "Sometimes nonprofit professionals downplay the importance of brand promises that are core to the mission because we live it every day, but we have to remember that the donors in our community do not, and it's our job to guide them through that experience so they can feel it for themselves."

Davis believes the unique selling points of your organization should be front and center when interacting and communicating with donors. "There's so much more to your brand than just the logos, colors and fonts you use," Davis continues. "Ultimately, what it boils down to is that your brand is your reputation." So how can you make your donors see your work and feel like they are a meaningful character in your story?

Here Davis shares some ideas:

1. **Know your donors on a personal level.** "Let's get really clear on who our donors are," Davis says. "Ask yourself, 'How can they participate? What do they need? What do they want?', and also identify what you need in order for your organization to be fulfilled."
2. **Think beyond the transactional.** "There are transactional opportunities, and then there is commitment," Davis says. What offers can you extend to donors to involve them in your mission? Invite them to be on the board? Chair an event? Lend feedback to your rebranding campaign? Committed collaboration leads to lasting bonds between organizations and philanthropists.
3. **Willingly embrace change.** "Organizations will be recognized for the way they react, especially in chaotic situations," Davis explains. "Those that embrace change as the world evolves will be celebrated for doing so." Donors play a key role in sustaining organizations during difficult times, and they will stand by nonprofits that have proven they are up for the challenge.
4. **Learn from mistakes.** "At the Y we always say, 'There are no failures, only unplanned learning opportunities,'" Davis shares. If you fall short on a fundraising goal, determine whether it was because you engaged the wrong donors — is there a group you're overlooking? Take time to understand what failed to resonate with your supporters, and then grow from that.
5. **Tell better stories.** "Storytelling is another tool for solidifying your reputation, and the stories you tell should showcase your brand and circle back to the big idea behind your work," Davis says. Donors should be the faces of those stories — make them feel like heroes. ◆

Source: Brandon Davis, Vice President of Brand Engagement, YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago, Chicago, IL. Phone (312) 932-1200. Email: communications@ymcachicago.org. Website: https://www.ymcachicago.org

FIRST-TIME GIFTS

Build a Habit Of Giving

So you've managed to get that first gift from a new donor. Whether it's a major gift or a small offering to your annual campaign, your primary consideration should be retaining that donor, so he or she continues to support your cause.

To keep donors engaged and interested in giving to your cause in the long run:

- ❑ **Know your donor as a person.** You have heard that friendship should precede love. The same holds true in donor development. Get to know donors as people first. What do they like? What are their interests? What drew them to your organization? Where do they work? Asking these questions will lead to a genuine relationship that will strongly resonate with any donor.
- ❑ **Keep the relationship mutual.** Make sure the relationship works for both parties. What does your donor need? Whom do you know who can help with that need? Connecting donors through networking opportunities is a great way to say "thanks" for their support.
- ❑ **Follow their lead.** Donor policies should not be one-size-fits-all. It's imperative to know what your donors want. Knowing this will keep you from mailing to them too often, sending them things they don't want and asking for amounts they can't give.
- ❑ **Give them the credit.** In publications, mailings and on your website, keep donors front and center. Tell people your work wouldn't be possible without donors. Tell stories of individual donors who have stretched a bit to make a larger gift or who made a personal connection with one of the people you serve. Putting donors first tells them they are vital to your mission. ◆