



EVOLUTION

The newsletter for annual giving professionals

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10 Ways to Grow Your Audience with Direct Mail

By Bob Cargill, Yellowfin Direct Marketing

Today's seasoned direct marketer knows enough to use direct mail to cultivate new business relationships and plant the seeds for bountiful results.

After all, direct mail can help almost any organization grow a fertile audience, people who will not only respond favorably to your offer, but who will also spread your message even further through recommendations and referrals.

Other media—such as print, broadcast, and of course the Web should be factored into any bona fide marketing plan, but even the most wildly successful campaigns can spring from a simple direct mail letter.

To get the very best yield out of your direct mail program, consider the following:

Be a Purple Cow. In his best-selling book, *Purple Cow*, Seth Godin says, "You're either a Purple Cow or you're not. You're either remarkable or invisible." Now apply this axiom to your next direct mail campaign! And remember, according to Godin, a "Purple Cow describes something phenomenal, something counterintuitive and exciting and flat out unbelievable. Every day, consumers come face-to-face with a lot of boring stuff – a lot of brown cows – but you can bet they won't forget a Purple Cow."

Seek first to understand, then to be understood. Perhaps you're familiar with Stephen Covey's groundbreaking book, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People." If you are, you know that one of the seven habits he espouses is to "seek first to understand, then to be understood." It works in the real world and it works in the direct mail world. A highly effective way to win over your target audience is to understand who they are (demographics) and what makes them tick (psychographics) – before you do anything else. The more you learn about your prospects, the more success you'll have in the mail.

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Cost Savings within Your Infrastructure

By www.supportingadvancement.com

Budget time is upon us all, once again. We are faced again with the challenge of doing more with less. Whenever you review budgets and financial statements, there are always areas where purchases are aggregated into general categories and nobody seems to know what makes them up.

They are items that are sometimes not easy to audit so they may tend to be overlooked compared to some of the more obvious items such as salaries, travel, publications, events etc. There are also expenses that occur on a regular basis, where we tend to automatically pay, without doing an analysis of the benefits. You don't necessarily have to take a hard line on all budget areas, but with a comprehensive review you can often realize savings and re-direct funds to more important priorities.

Computer and Office Equipment Maintenance Contracts

Evaluate whether these contracts are needed. Most equipment is durable, and if it is going to break it will typically do so during a warranty period. In some cases, the cost of the maintenance contract over a 3-5 year period will actually come close to a substantial portion of the purchase price of the new piece of equipment.

Computers and servers have easy to replace component parts. If you have an adept technical staff, cancel your maintenance contracts. You can transfer what you're spending on the contracts into your computer replacement budget.

Photocopy vendors make most of their money on the lease and per copy charges. In some cases, depending on volume and the per copy maintenance price, you may be better off purchasing a copier rather than leasing. Do a net present value analysis over the estimated life of the copier.

Office Supplies

Office supplies are usually a large budget line item. Just about everything is included here, and at the end of the year, we all wonder what we spent and why the total is so high.

- Have a central supply cabinet that your staff is required to check prior to ordering.
- If you can, centralize all ordering with one person. Even better to standardize ordering through an on-line web form so orders can be tracked and easily forwarded to vendors.
- Standardize with one vendor and negotiate volume discounts.
- Keep an overall inventory of some of the more expensive items and review on a regular basis.
- Try to set standards for the types of supplies ordered.
- Scratch pads can be put together from re-cycled paper.
- We have the tendency to hoard. Periodically have staff go through their desks and return those boxes of pens, stacks of post-it pads and other items that create secondary inventories.
- Don't allow mass purchasing at budget year-end if you have carry forward.
- When someone leaves, return their supplies to the general cabinet.
- Recycle items such as file folders. Everyone wants new ones.
- Reduce paper and photocopying costs by archiving reports on a web site. Investigate electronic imaging.

We tend to order stationery to take advantage of quantity breaks and can end up with a

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10 Ways to Grow Your Audience with Direct Mail

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Don't sell a product, service or organization but promote a state of mind. Emotion goes a long way toward triggering a favorable response. Here's a good example. A few years ago, I received a direct mail package from the Boston Athletic Association that invited me to "celebrate the 100th running of the Boston Marathon." As a veteran marathoner, this certainly piqued my curiosity. To add drama and intrigue, a photo collage of legendary marathon runners such as Uta Pippig and Johnny Kelly adorned the outer envelope. But not a hint of how I was going to "celebrate" was to be found -- until I had ripped open the envelope in a near frenzied state. A potentially humdrum book offer had been cloaked in sentiment. And the B.A.A. had captured my undivided attention.

Be yourself. The real strength of a direct mail letter lies in the fact that, ideally, whoever receives it is led to believe that it's been written to him or her -- a "dear friend" -- exclusively. And, of course, the best-case scenario is that a lasting, mutually beneficial relationship ensues. So show some enthusiasm. Allow your copywriters to express themselves freely. Don't be afraid to open up to your audience and connect with them personally. While other mailers default to corporate-speak, a more personal approach will be a refreshing change of pace for your audience, a pleasant surprise. And they'll be startled into submission.

Optimize your offer. You might want to think of your offer as a contract between you and your prospect. It is the proposition to which your audience will hopefully respond. If you're selling something, test different price points, discounts, delivery options, payment terms and methods. Guarantee your product or service, if possible. And use a deadline to establish urgency. Premiums are also a good way to strengthen your offer. For instance, fundraisers don't usually have anything tangible to offer donors in exchange for their financial support. So a good premium such as address labels, personalized note pads, decals or lapel pins can be used as both a token of appreciation and an up-front incentive. On the commercial side, a good example of an irresistible offer is the package one of my children received from Powerade recently. The teaser on the outside read, "Two things every hockey player needs." Inside the small, square box was a coupon for a free bottle of this popular energy drink. And (you guessed it!) a hockey puck.

A bad offer to a good list works better than a good offer to a bad list. I received a letter in the mail recently that told me that I had been chosen to receive an application for the 2004 National American Miss Massachusetts Pageant. Now if I'm

a "girl with dreams," as the copy on the outside envelope so dramatically puts it, I'm all over this offer! The list wasn't bad, per se. Someone neglected to do a gender select, that's all. The truth is that my stepdaughter is a high school cheerleader, and she subscribes to American Cheerleader magazine. But I paid for the subscription, and took it out in my name. Clearly, the National American Miss organization used the American Cheerleader list -- the whole kit and caboodle, overlooking the fact that it might contain at least a few errant records. Not necessarily a huge deal. But a perfectly good example of a good offer squandered.

Use an offbeat word or phrase. Language that stands out will pique the recipient's curiosity and make it virtually impossible for him or her not to open your direct mail package. For instance, in the early '90s, a direct mail package I wrote for Science News Magazine featured the line, "things that make you go

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When and How Should I Utilize Direct Mail?

John Templeman, Cleveland State University

Direct mail marketing has traditionally been a staple in university annual fund raising, mainly because of its ability to communicate targeted messages to diverse segments as well as its cost effectiveness. However, a good number of university development officers continually choose to blanket mail their entire alumni base with appeals early on in the fiscal year without ever considering the possible consequences of their actions. Most fundraising professionals would agree that this approach is a quick, easy and economical way to secure money fast. But in a world where forming and cultivating relationships is crucial to the development of your annual fund, is this really the most efficient use of your institution's resources?

It has been this author's experience that no piece of mail, no matter how attractive or creative, can take the place of a live person conversing with an alumnus. Student Phone Centers are an excellent and relatively inexpensive way to raise substantial amounts of

money for your institution while at the same time connecting with 70-80% of your constituency. Granted, it is becoming increasingly more difficult to get in touch with people due to factors such as caller ID and an escalating number of individuals dropping their landlines in favor of cell phones and high-speed Internet access. Still, a student phonathon will always be much more effective than a direct mail campaign because a human can do things that a letter cannot such as negotiate a new gift or an upgrade from a previous gift, obtain valuable feedback and serve as a public relations representative by communicating to an alumnus what it's like to be a current student at his alma mater. This personal contact will not only increase the likelihood of a gift, but it will also allow for better relationship building, which in turn will improve the performance of your institution's annual fund this year and in the years to come.

In contrast, direct mail marketing appeals can certainly be effective if utilized wisely and strategically. They should most definitely be employed to reach those alumni who do not want to be contacted in any other manner. Also, it might be beneficial to send a pre-call piece early in the fiscal year to your annual donors as well as your lapsed (5 years or less) donors. However, your office should strongly consider giving your phone center ample opportunity to secure a gift before sending any mailing with an ask to your best prospects. If you feel the need to get additional touches with the various segments of your alumni, this author would recommend experimenting with new techniques such as subtle e-mail appeals to those alumni for whom you have valid information. The October 30, 2003 edition of *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* cites a survey of 119 college fundraisers, which found that four in 10 institutions have started using e-mail to solicit gifts for their annual fund appeals. These results show that the use of technology in university annual fund raising is on the rise and if conducted properly, could allow your office to take money from certain line items in your budget (i.e. postage) and use it to subsidize other areas with greater need.

It is important to remember that it is our job as annual fund professionals to secure the monies that will provide scholarships, resources and the basic funds to keep the lights on. Yet, it is also our responsibility to obtain as many donors as possible with the hope that several of them will eventually move to the top of the giving pyramid. By tactically putting into effect direct mail appeals, utilizing your phone center to its full capacity, and implementing new and innovative strategies into your operations, you will add a new dimension to your solicitation efforts that will help ensure the vitality of your institution now and well into the future.

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Recruiting for Summer Call Center Staff

By Albert D. Melfo, Kent State University

The key to effective staffing for phone programs that remain open during summer months is foresight. Like so many other elements of managing a call center, program managers and shift supervisors need to be thinking well ahead of time in order to achieve the goals that they set for themselves.

That said, if your telefund will be up and running over the summer months, you probably need to start thinking about summer staff well-before finals week – generally around spring break is when we start gearing up for summer calling. We anticipate a drop in staffing levels for the first two weeks following finals, as the majority of regular calling staff returns home. But we set a goal of being back up to full staffing levels by the first week of June (for us in the Kent State University PhoneCenter, full staffing is 22 callers/shift). Here is how we accomplish this:

Start with your “captive market.”

Immediately after students return from winter break, find out which ones either plan to be on campus during the summer, or who would prefer to be on campus, if they had a guaranteed summer job lined up. (New callers, like so many others, often assume that we're closed during the summer, and we aren't.) Once you determine who this group is, get them to basically commit to keeping their positions over the summer. This gives you a core group of experienced callers upon which to build.

Advertise while you can.

At most colleges and universities, the campus newspaper serves as the primary medium for recruitment advertising. However in the summer months, it is not uncommon for publication frequency to be reduced, or to cease entirely until fall term begins. In either case, you need to attempt to reach as many students who plan or hope to be living on or near campus during the summer while you have the opportunity. Again, keep in mind that many students who leave campus over the summer would prefer to stay if they had a summer job lined up.

Get your callers to spread the word.

As with print advertising and classified ads, you want to get the word out about your telefund's summer job opportunities to as many people as you can before they start leaving campus in droves. Who are the best people to charge with this initiative? Your current callers, of course. Some of them have friends who aren't leaving campus for one reason or another, and some of those friends need jobs – design a flyer and make copies for your callers to distribute in dorms and on public bulletin board/kiosk-type spaces, as well as in the student center. Keep advertising online through your career center's website.

Train early, and train often.

We have our first training class for new summer callers the weekend after finals week. In our region, we seem to have a high demand for summer work, so we tend to have one training class a week for four consecutive weeks, with each class ranging in size from 10 to 16 callers. (We've just completed this process, and we're running at capacity again.) We then reduce our training schedule to about one class every three weeks or so during the summer, and then ramp up again in the fall. We find that our largest training

Use current callers to
recruit more callers

classes tend to be pre-summer, and at the beginning of the fall semester – not surprising, as they are both times when you'd expect students to be looking for part-time jobs.

These are just a few of many ideas to keep your telefund operating at or near peak capacity during the summer months. Remember that, in most cases, your telefund will perform the way you design it to perform. Don't accept common misconceptions, like “we don't have enough interested students over the summer,” and you'll uncover new ways to build your success.

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New Awards to Recognize E-Philanthropy

The Sales Factory is proud to sponsor the first AFI E-Philanthropy Awards!

This new annual program is designed to recognize innovation and creativity within the annual giving field in three categories:

E-solicitations: Your e-solicitation was an event that generated buzz. Individuals are invited to nominate or submit a flash email utilized as a solicitation in FY04

Annual Giving Web Site Design: Your web team finally paid attention to annual giving and designed a great site. Individuals are invited to nominate or submit the URL of an outstanding web site dedicated to annual giving for their respective institution.

On-line Giving Form Design: One of the above worked, now for the close. Individuals are invited to nominate or submit the URL of an outstanding on-line giving form for their institution.



Institutions are invited to submit their work, or nominate a peer's, for a chance to win a contribution to their annual fund. Finalists in each category are selected during the month of June and winners are selected by peers (you!) during the month of July. For complete nomination details, and to cast your vote in July, go to www.annualfundinc.com.

To view AFI's growing library of E-solicitation samples and multi-media, go to www.annualfundinc.com/services/solicitation/solicitation.htm

Thanks and good luck!
www.annualfundinc.com
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New Matching Gift Resources by AFI!

With matching gift data powered by the resources of HEP Development, AFI is offering a suite of low cost and high quality items via our robust website, www.annualfundinc.com.

AFI offers a wide selection of matching gift brochures, post-its, and postcards for educational purposes. Our design team has pulled together some catchy themed materials for your use that are anchored by HEP matching gift data.

The most striking trend that will be noticed is the low price. AFI has worked with a number of printers to provide the lowest prices possible, far out distancing competitor pricing for similar products.

Uses of these materials was covered in the May issue of Evolution. The abbreviated version is noted below.

Brochures

Mailed to your donor audiences, these brochures list known matching gift companies. Data provided by HEP Development.

Post-its

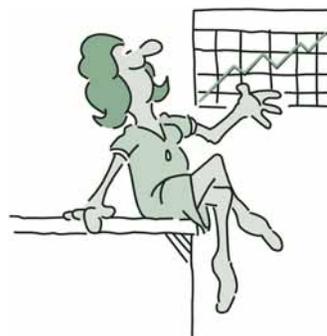
Catchy stickies that are traditionally utilized on telefund pledge acknowledgments and reminders.

Postcards

Eye-catching, educational in nature and inexpensive to produce, these postcards are utilized at the beginning of the fiscal year to educate your entire prospect base on the power of the match.

To view samples and review pricing, please go to www.annualfundinc.com.

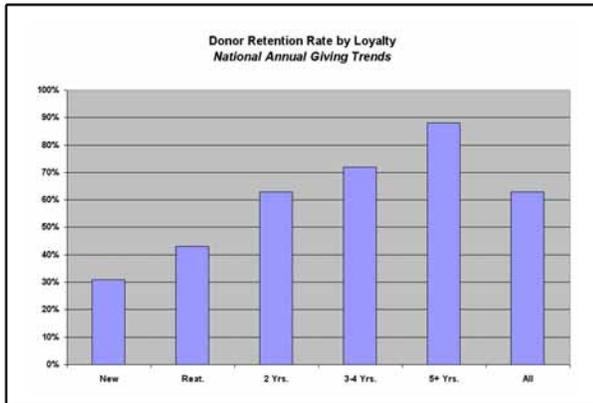
AFI



Fostering Loyalty, Fostering Results

You have worked hard to finally acquire that elusive non-donor. The question now turns to how do you retain that donor? National trends show that a retention rate in the 30% range is normal. The important figure of course is not the retention rate, but rather, the non-retention rate. In this national trend case, it is a whopping 70%. Of course, in our politically correct manner, that 70% is an opportunity to be exploited.

As the numbers below represent (compliments of Target Analysis), if you are able to increase your first-year donor retention rate a ripple effect will occur in subsequent years. Factor in the natural tendency of average gift size increases, there is much to be gained by developing a plan to retain first timers.



Source: Target Analysis Benchmarking Study

This month we will focus on getting to the second consecutive gift, in September, we will turn our attention to year three and beyond.

The most important time that occurs is between the first gift and the subsequent ask. What is done, or in most cases not done, will make or break the relationship.

- There are a number of important question to pose:
- How are your new donors identified?
- How is their first commitment celebrated?
- How are they solicited for the second gift?

The first question of “How are your new donors identified?” sounds relatively easy, as we all segment our non-donors into their own unique pools for direct mail and the telefund. Anyone that makes a gift from that group is then easy to identify. But, surprisingly many organizations do not identify this group treating them only as a “number of new donors” that are reported in the results for the fiscal year. The first step is to identify these new donors as individuals soon after the gift is

received rather than at the end of the campaign as a number. It is important to generate new donor reports on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. This will form the data foundation for your next steps.

It is now time to celebrate this first financial investment.

The word “celebrate” is used because that is exactly what should occur. This is a great moment in the relationship. Your new donor has made a decision to support your institution. Something other than the normal receipting should happen. The question of course is what? Popular trends are widget-heavy in the form of new-donor packets. While the information within many of these packets is positive, the extent of the packaging can raise questions regarding costs and money management. When donors commit to supporting the institution they are not doing so for the calendar or magnet that may come as a result. Donors give to make an impact. They give because they believe in the institution and want to make a difference.

Donors want information that will substantiate their investment.

They desire prompt acknowledgment of their gift. Are your acknowledgment systems sound and timely? They want to know that their gift is designated as they requested. Are your accounting standards up to par? And they desire tangible results between the acknowledgement and the next ask. Are contributions truly making an impact? If you are able to provide each new donor (and all donors for that matter) this information, your retention results will increase. Many times we within annual giving outfox ourselves by focusing our resources on the widget of the week, when all our donors really want is something that is free: information.

Something as simple as a thank you letter can make all the difference. Pull out a sample gift acknowledgment letter. Does it convey excitement, warmth, and accountability? Chances are that the latter of accountability is the overarching message. There are a number of commonalities within all good thank you letters.

- It is prompt
- It is personalized
- It references the intended use of the contribution
- It does not, under any circumstances, make an additional ask
- It includes a personal note, or is handwritten throughout

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Monitoring Your Student Callers



Customer service is vital within the calling center environment. The ability to monitor callers will improve the quality of the feedback provided to your callers, no matter the number of calling stations.

The student monitoring position can be used to proactively address deficiencies in the areas of step terminology, negotiation, objection handling, use of scripting, and length of decisions. All these need to be consistently improved upon, and the only way to do this is through use of constant evaluation and feedback.

Through the use of hourly real-time reports, the professional telefund staff member can analyze reports, identify struggling callers, and then forward the information to the monitor and team supervisors for further evaluation. The monitor can listen in on caller conversations providing feedback to the caller (and their supervisor) to correct or compliment the behavior. A sample monitor evaluation sheet is noted on the next page. This is a constant process, and will go a long way towards improving pledge percentage and average gift size.

The student monitor's computer should be provided with access to each caller's screen via PCAnywhere™ or a similar program. This is important for two reasons: training and legal.

1) On the training side, if the monitor can see the screen that the caller sees, the monitor can use the software to take over the screen and pull down objection responses as needed and verify that the survey function is being utilized.

2) From a legal standpoint (we are not lawyers and you should consult with your legal counsel), there are two types of consent states in terms of monitoring phone conversations: two-party consent states and one-party consent states. In two-party consent states, permission/notification needs to occur for both caller and the prospect before the phone conversation can be monitored. In one-party consent states, only one party needs to be notified... basically, your caller. By using PCAnywhere™ or a similar product, the monitor can see what state the call is going into and determine the status of that state. If a two-party consent state, the monitor does not listen and moves to another caller within the room to monitor.

If a one-party consent state, the monitor listens and evaluates the caller. The twelve (12) two-party consent states, at the time of writing, are: California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Washington

Unfortunately, if your program resides in one of the states above, you are a two-party consent state and must advise the prospect if the call is to be monitored. It is recommended that you stay away from monitoring both ends of the conversation if the only way to do

so is via a prepared statement at the beginning of the call. It is our belief that this will do more harm than good. As soon as such a statement is uttered, it changes the tenor of the phone call to a telemarketing themed call in the eyes of the prospect rather than the friend-raising/fundraising theme that is more conducive to non-profit work.

If you are able to move forward on monitoring callers, it is important that the calling program prepare a document for all current callers and new callers to sign verifying that they are aware that their phone calls may be monitored for quality control purposes. Good luck and happy listening.

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Extend your telefundraising reach with SmartCall from SunGard BSR



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SUNGARD®	www.sungard.com

Cost Savings within Your Infrastructure

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lot of obsolete letterhead as a result. Evaluate carefully whether the quantity breaks are worth it, particularly if stationery changes regularly.

We always tend to stay with the same coffee and similar vendors. You may be able to save by purchasing these types of supplies directly through one of the discount wholesalers.

Printers, Toner and Ink Jet Cartridges

Color printers are useful, but staff should be made aware of the high costs and that they shouldn't be using them for printing web site pages or that 100 page report.

Laser printers have a per copy cost less than ink jet printers, so when purchasing printers try and estimate the volume and per-copy cost when making decisions regarding printers.

Train staff on how to use draft modes when printing.

Professional Development

Is professional development managed as a perk, or is there an overall plan in place for each staff member, and are these plans monitored?

Conferences and trips are expensive. An alternative is to bring in an expert in for a day and remember that many colleagues will also be willing to share their expertise at no charge.

Technology Spending

This is a substantial category in all budgets.

- Is there a systematic and organized computer replacement plan or is it ad-hoc based on left over funds at the end of the budget cycle?
- Does the computer replacement plan consider the type of user and the nature of their work?
- Are institutional volume discounts being taken advantage of in software and hardware purchases?
- Are the correct number of software licenses being purchased?
- When a new computer is ordered, are licenses for software transferred from an older machine or are new ones purchased because that's what comes from the vendor?
- Are central services being taken advantage of, or are these services duplicated within the department?
- How is the training budget allocated, and is advantage being taken of central training opportunities?

Telephone and Communication Charges

It's difficult to remove the ability for staff to make long distance calls, but this is one area that can be subject to abuse, if not monitored at least on an occasional basis.

Phone logs are voluminous but should be subject to at least periodic audit and spot-checking. There should be a policy on long distance

usage that states clearly when staff is required to reimburse for personal calls.

Tied in with telephone charges are overall communications charges for cell phones, hand held devices and Internet access by staff on the road. Calling plans should be reviewed on an annual basis and alternatives evaluated. Staff should be told to use cell phones for making long distance calls in hotel rooms, as it is usually substantially cheaper.

Purchasing an office membership with an ISP that everyone can use can reduce the cost for Internet access by staff on the road and they can access the Internet using local numbers. This is considerably less expensive than having staff dial up to the office server.

Other Categories

Some other categories are travel and entertainment, publications and events. The policies on these items should be reviewed on an annual basis, and measures of effectiveness put in place. For example, how many trips were taken, what was the average cost of a trip, and how many calls took place on a trip?

In all cases, implementation of standards and good advance planning processes helps to define the appropriate levels of expenses more clearly so that maximum advantage can be taken of limited budgets.

AFI

**Let's face it.
What you really
need are more
of these.**



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Fiscal Year vs. Calendar Year Debate

One of my favorite questions that I continually see on listservs this time of year is, "Does anyone have a sample fiscal year end letter appeal?" The samples that are then submitted all make reference to the "fiscal year coming to a close." Putting your donor-centric hat on, do we really care when the accounting books close? Does the fact that the fiscal year is closing compel us to make a gift? Actually, I have never commented to my wife, "honey, we need to get this gift in the mail today, IU's books are closing on the 30th."

While within many institutions fundraising results must be reported based upon fiscal year, this requirement should not be imparted upon your donors. Charitable giving is based upon the tax calendar, which is the calendar year. This is what donors know and how society conditions them to think in regards to philanthropy. Many institutions spend too much time attempting to educate alumni on the fiscal year structure rather than focusing squarely on needs, case, and impact. As fundraisers we should not focus on numbers and deadlines, but rather marketing the case for support. If we are effective in our marketing strategies, the dollars take care of themselves and the deadlines are meaningless.

One of the first issues that often arise once the above is shared is, "What about my giving societies and honor rolls? They are

based upon fiscal year accounting." The rebuttal is normally another question, "All your donors in the past donated via check only. Now they want to give by credit card, but you are not set up to accept credit cards. What do you do?" Both answers are the exact same, CHANGE.

Annual giving societies and honor roll stewardship should be based solely upon calendar year giving. Fiscal year totals will remain the same and be reported as such internally. The key here is to remember that we are not accountants, we are marketers. The annual giving societies and honor rolls are about recognition, creating good will, and cultivation. Worrying about the fiscal year externally, and the headache of educating on the fiscal year set-up are not worth the effort and detract from the annual giving program. Simplify.

AFI

Be donor-centric & market calendar year

Fostering Loyalty, Fostering Results

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No matter the volume, most of the above can be easily facilitated. The final addition of a personal note can be more difficult for larger shops. Consider, however, even a quick handwritten "Thank You" or "Thanks". It takes seconds, but will have a powerful impact. A strategy within the telefund is to have the student caller's first name printed on all pledge acknowledgments. During pledge processing, the student responsible for preparing the pledges for mailing can read the first name and handwrite the caller's name.

The final question of "How are they solicited for the second gift?" is equally important as the first two questions. The rule of thumb for this new donor group is that you have to hold their hand awhile before you kiss them. Too many times we are guilty of moving too aggressively for the upgrade for the first time donor. It is a stretch to place the first time donor of

\$50 in the donor pool where the first ask is \$500. Instead, simply seek gift renewal. Reference their previous gift, "Last year you generously made a gift of \$50. Can we count on you for \$50 again this year?" Participation is the goal. Review the previous chart. A first time donor renews at around 30% and a two-year donor renews at over 60%. The key and ultimate goal is to increase the pool of two-year donors, not maximize gift size. Once two year donor goals are reached, loyalty statistics begin to work in the institution's favor. The challenge/opportunity is getting over the 30% hump.

The term "invest" is used often in our discipline. With investment, as in the business world, comes the responsibility to communicate information and demonstrate results.

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10 Ways to Grow Your Audience with Direct Mail

Continued from page 3

h-m-m-m..." in big, block letters on the outer envelope. Not only was this the name of a hit song at the time, but it was also a decidedly different way of promoting the magazine. While I'll never be able to prove the viability of this offbeat catchphrase, I can say that this package had a long run as the magazine's control, winning a couple of major industry awards for its creativity and effectiveness along the way.

Some clichés are worth more than a dime a dozen. Some copywriters might say to avoid clichés. I say just the opposite. Clichés are well-known expressions to which everyone can relate. Used judiciously, and cleverly, they can help you establish immediate rapport with your audience and cast a wider net. For instance, one well-known lawn care company says, "Now the grass can be greener on your side." One dog obedience school claims they can teach "old dogs new tricks." And "the cure for the common cold" has been paraphrased by everyone from Nissan ("the cure for the common car") to

the USA Network ("the cure for the common show") to Boston's Samuel Adams Brewhouse ("the cure for the common cold one").

Show appreciation. Some people are afraid of needles, but not me. So when the American Red Cross comes calling for blood, I'm an easy mark. Yet after 25 years as a donor, I still wouldn't have expected an acknowledgement the likes of which I received from the organization recently. Calling me a "hero to more people than you ever imagined," this big, glossy direct mail package was chock-full of praise, flattery and kudos, including several heartfelt testimonials from grateful blood recipients and a personalized certificate of appreciation that was, as they say, suitable for framing. Going well beyond expectations, the American Red Cross used this masterful effort to intensify loyalty and goodwill among donors like me.

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