



The Power of Thank You



“Thank you.” These two little words can make or break a campaign. It can mean the difference between receiving a one-time-and-only gift or developing a deeper relationship with a donor who can leave a legacy gift of significance.

Too often, a donor who supports a campaign for the first time—no matter how big or small the gift—will not give again for two key reasons. One: They are not asked again. Or, two: They are not thanked well or at all.

Donor appreciation is an integral part of any development plan. To properly thank and appreciate your donors, keep these things in mind:

Create policies and stick with them

A proper donor recognition/appreciation policy or plan should be created and kept available for reference for anyone, volunteer or staff, doing fundraising for your organization. Make sure everyone understands how important it is to follow through on the organization’s policies and make sure follow up is taking place.

Make it personal

Not all donors like to be thanked the same way. Some may have an interest in a naming opportunity for a major gift. Others may want to remain anonymous, but still want to hear, “Thank you.” For many, a personal handwritten thank you or phone call is very special and appreciated. As you cultivate your donor prospects and get to know them as individuals, this is something you need to learn about them.

Involve your constituency

While giving the donor a plaque or certificate they can display may be appropriate for certain situations, many times these gestures mean less to a donor coming from the organization as from a constituent. Consider the individuals you serve and facilitate opportunities for them to say thanks. A note from a student affected by a scholarship, a picture created with painted handprints of the children you serve, a success story from a family that has been impacted positively by the organization. These will mean more to donors than a hundred plaques.

Saying thank you—in a way that means something personally to your donors—is not only an important part of fundraising, it may be one of the most valuable of all.

Ross Pfannenstiel, Senior Vice President, Kansas City

