

Successful Fundraising

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

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BEST PRACTICES

Keys to Planning Your Next Crowdfunding Campaign

By Kerry Nenn

Crowdfunding can be an effective fundraising method, but some campaigns are more successful than others. HACC, Central Pennsylvania's Community College (Harrisburg, PA), has developed several successful crowdfunding campaigns. Linnie Carter, vice president of college advancement, shares five best practices that have served them well:

- ❑ **A user-friendly portal.** "A clunky portal will doom your campaign for sure," notes Carter. Key features: The portal should immediately post donor names, contribution amounts and grand totals raised; progress and results should be accessible consistently and immediately.
- ❑ **A compelling spokesperson.** The spokesperson should have a compelling reason to raise funds and a significant social media following. Carter adds, "Our spokespersons have celebrated milestone birthdays. One did a crowdfunding campaign around a mountain climb, and another did a campaign around a multistate bike ride."
- ❑ **A marketing and a fundraising professional.** Carter explains, "For our crowdfunding campaigns, we assign both a marketing professional and a fundraising professional to lead the project. They bring different perspectives and skills to the campaigns and create amazing energy and synergy. This approach also strengthens professional relationships and boosts morale."
- ❑ **The right theme, hashtag, goal and timeline.** Crowdfunding campaigns should have catchy themes, memorable hashtags, realistic goals and manageable timelines. "For example," Carter says, "one spokesperson raised money by camping out for 24 hours on the roof of a 50-foot campus building and climbing down using a 79-foot ladder. His crowdfunding campaign hashtag was #OnFire4HACC. Our fundraising goals have ranged from \$1,000 to \$5,000, and the campaigns last no more than two weeks. Donors begin to lose interest if the campaign lasts too long."
- ❑ **Multiple thanks.** Their crowdfunding portal generates automatic thank-you emails to donors, but staff send additional thank-yous to the crowdfunding donors, then follow up again in 6 to 12 months with updates on the projects the donors supported. Carter advises, "There is no such thing as thanking donors too much." ♦

Source: Linnie S. Carter, PhD, APR, Vice President of College Advancement, HACC, Central Pennsylvania's Community College, Executive Director, HACC Foundation, Harrisburg, PA. Phone (717) 780-2321. Email: lscarter@hacc.edu. Website: <https://www.hacc.edu/HACCFoundation>

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VOLUNTEERS RAISING FUNDS

Keys to Leading Volunteer Solicitors

"Volunteers are an extension of your team, so treat them that way," advises Skylar Beaver, director of The Lawrenceville Fund for the Lawrenceville School (Lawrenceville, NJ). Beaver notes the strongest programs have a strong volunteer base. To build this foundation, Beaver recommends five key strategies:

- 1. Clear expectations.** Explain clearly and concisely what you want volunteers to do, when you want them to do it and how you're going to support them. Be very clear from the beginning. Provide a "volunteer expectation description," similar to a job description, that outlines these details. Beaver explains, "Tell them everything up front. Don't talk them into committing then ask them to do something they weren't expecting."
- 2. The Three T's.** "Every good volunteer should be willing to give time, talent and treasure," notes Beaver. However, the time factor can be short. Beaver says, "You don't have to get a 12-month commitment. Sometimes short-term volunteer opportunities are a good option, because many people don't want to commit to a vague, long-term responsibility. Let them know you need their help for a week or for a specific giving day. This is a great way to recruit and test the waters for further commitment."
- 3. Simple systems.** Many platforms exist to aid in the management of volunteers, but they aren't for everyone. "You can support your volunteer team without anything fancy," admits Beaver. "I've run large-scale events with hundreds of volunteers with just a clipboard. Yes, expensive and complex platforms can be an aid, but they aren't the main solution or essential."
- 4. Strategic, understandable training.** Provide training for volunteers just as you would staff. Conduct exclusive events, provide training manuals and invest in volunteers one-on-one to bring them up to speed. "As you provide materials and interact with them," warns Beaver, "keep in mind that you have your own internal lingo. Be sure to speak the volunteer's language as you train."
- 5. More than "thank you."** Everyone knows it's important to thank volunteers, and they truly can't be thanked enough. Thank them before they even do anything. One way to make them feel special is to provide exclusive communications for your volunteers. "We send out a monthly e-newsletter branded specifically for our volunteers," reports Beaver. "Pair these communications and regular thank-yous with the unexpected. Surprise them with ways of showing gratitude. For example, one of our staff filmed a video expressing her gratitude for volunteers and sent it to them at Thanksgiving. It's important to have these extra touchpoints along the way."

"The main concepts to keep in mind," concludes Beaver, "are that volunteers want to be told what to do, given the tools to do it and be celebrated after they do it." ♦

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IDEAS YOU CAN ADAPT

Challenge Gift Helps College Help Local Businesses

By Daniel Lindley

After COVID lockdown orders in Virginia forced Bluefield College (Bluefield, VA) to send its students home last spring, advancement officials debated whether to cancel the college's annual giving day in April.

"We weren't even sure if it was appropriate for us to have a giving day in the middle of a pandemic," says Joshua Grubb, associate vice president of institutional advancement. Finally, the event was rescheduled for June with a twist that helped make it a record-breaker.

Bolstering other challenges and incentives, an anonymous donor provided \$3,500 to purchase gift cards from local businesses, many of which were struggling financially. For each donation of \$50 or more, the "BC Loves Local" challenge would purchase a \$25 gift card from a local business.

The college invited all the businesses in the small town of Bluefield to participate. Those that signed up received directions on how to help spread the word via their social media channels. That reinforced the college's efforts to promote the campaign via mail, email, phone, a press release, its website and social media.

By the end of the day, 272 donors had given \$178,000. That shattered giving day records and far exceeded the college's

goal of \$100,000 from 100 donors.

"It was an incredible day," Grubb says. "It blew our socks off."

The following week, college officials bought gift cards from the local businesses donors had selected and gave the businesses window decals to publicize the effort. Then the cards were distributed free to students in random drawings.

Besides raising more revenue from more donors, the effort improved relationships with the local business community, Grubb says. Businesses have responded to the college's goodwill by donating food for college events and sending speakers to its reopened classrooms.

Grubb says using GiveCampus software helped boost results by making it easier to promote and track the event. A two-year subscription cost about \$5,000, covered by a donor.

Especially during challenging times, when it comes to giving day strategies, consider a creative approach, Grubb adds. "Don't be afraid to try something new and think outside the box," he says. ♦

Source: Joshua Grubb, Associate Vice President of Institutional Advancement, Bluefield College, Bluefield, VA. Phone (276) 326-4211. Email: jgrubb@bluefield.edu. Website: www.bluefield.edu

DIRECT MAIL STRATEGIES

Focus on Enhancing Direct Mail Efforts

It might seem tempting to move away from direct mail. After all, email is so much cheaper, right? Erica Waasdorp, president of A Direct Solution (Marstons Mills, MA), warns nonprofit professionals this would be a mistake.

Waasdorp explains, "Online is great, but in combination with well-executed and timed direct mail fundraising, your results will be even better. Case studies have proven it. Donors love feeling and touching things. They hold onto direct mail much longer than any other channel. They often view it several times. It's so personal, and it creates that crucial connection you'd like to have with your donors."

So how can you make the best use of this channel? Waasdorp recommends three strategies:

- 1. Create special codes for different groups.** Use bite-sized segments, focusing on recent donors and lapsed donors. "For donors who have recently given at a higher level, give them a more personal treatment with a note from you, a board member or a volunteer," advises Waasdorp. "And for lapsed donors, you can bring them back. Remember, it's still cheaper to reactivate a lapsed donor than to bring in a brand-new one. So don't cut them

off the mailing list too soon."

- 2. Track mail-related online giving.** "Especially now, more and more people will go online when they receive a mail piece," notes Waasdorp. So how can you know if your effort was effective? Create a special URL for your direct mail piece that will help you track the response.
- 3. Use a professional printer. (Yes, it's worth it.)** Waasdorp reports, "Small nonprofits especially may want to do everything in-house. But this isn't always a wise use of time and resources. Particularly now, when so many nonprofits aren't in the office, the DIY direct mail is much harder. For just a few dimes more per piece, you can use a professional printer and, better yet, a professional mail house. They can get your mailings out faster and get postal discounts that offset much of the cost of the service. Meanwhile, your staff has more time to work on other tasks to further enhance your fundraising efforts." ♦

Source: Erica Waasdorp, President, A Direct Solution, Marstons Mills, MA. Phone (508) 428-4753. Email: info@adirectsolution.com. Website: <https://adirectsolution.com>

SOLICITATION TECHNIQUES

What's Your Asking Style?

Is there a way to fine-tune how you solicit donors that could lead to greater success? Brian Saber, president of Asking Matters, a consultancy in Maplewood, NJ, believes a better understanding of your asking style can help you build more powerful relationships with donors and prospective donors.

"The unique skills you bring to the gift cultivation and solicitation process, and a clear understanding of your strengths and areas where your personal style can be influential and persuasive, will not only increase your effectiveness as a fundraiser but also boost your self-confidence and relationships with co-workers and others," says Saber.

Saber's asking styles system involves four primary styles based on two distinct axes that define whether you are introverted or extroverted and analytical or intuitive:

- ❑ **Rainmaker.** The analytic extrovert is capable of fearlessly asking nearly anyone for a donation, is deeply passionate about building and maintaining strong and meaningful relationships and is goal-oriented and thrives on making and enacting well-formed decisions.
- ❑ **Go-Getter.** The intuitive extrovert style defines a person who acts on instinct when forming relationships with prospective donors and uses that instinct to decide when and how to move forward. The go-getter is also naturally friendly and charismatic and draws in others with passion.
- ❑ **Mission Controller.** The analytic introvert prefers to possess a wealth of information on donors before initiating contact and insists on being well-prepared and fully informed of all variables. The mission controller is uncomfortable when all details have not been clearly defined and all tasks assigned.
- ❑ **Kindred Spirit.** The intuitive introvert relies heavily on intuition while also possessing a deep passion for the cause and mission of the organization. The kindred spirit thrives in one-on-one meetings and conversations and operates with a personal drive to make a true difference in the lives of others.

Saber suggests many of us share the characteristics of more than one style, and a solid grasp of the concept can be helpful in a team environment. "It is extremely beneficial to work in tandem with someone who has an opposite style and coordinate an approach that encompasses both styles; for instance, one member of the team may choose to conduct prospect research as the other formulates the plan for cultivating and soliciting the donor," Saber says. ♦

Source: Brian Saber, President, Asking Matters, Maplewood, NJ. Email: brian@askingmatters.com. Website: <https://askingmatters.com>

DONOR CALL STRATEGIES

Focus on Engagement During Phone Calls

Donor prospect phone calls are tough. At worst, you don't get a chance to establish a connection before you hear the "click," and at best you might receive an invitation to call again.

"The telephone is a necessary tool in any charitable giving program, but the primary issue that we face is in building trust and establishing real value during the short time we are offered with donors," says Dennece Knight, executive director of the El Paso Children's Hospital Foundation (El Paso, TX). "Engagement is the key, and that means utilizing engagement strategies to overcome distrust, provide value and service to donors and offer solutions that match their interests."

Knight says, "Your donors really have no reason to trust you on the phone, and your task is to find ways to cross the chasm of distrust and genuinely establish a connection that will enhance the relationship and lead to further engagement," Knight says.

The following donor call engagement strategies will help put your donors at ease and establish trust and value during the call:

1. Project sincerity, confidence and enthusiasm while introducing your organization and its cause. Begin the conversation by immediately addressing the major focus of your mission (e.g., treating children with cancer, assisting single mothers, combatting prejudice).
2. Speak clearly, succinctly and in simple language.
3. State up front that the purpose of the call is not to ask for money but rather to seek input. Without delay, add purpose and value to the call, "I am a member of our donor appreciation team, and I'm calling to thank you for your past support and interest in our organization."
4. Transition the donor or prospective donor to talking about his or her interests, connection to your cause and reason for a first gift or reason for attending an event or visiting your website. Finish the call by asking, "What can we do to improve, better fulfill our mission, more directly respond to your interests and needs?" As a final step, set up a time to call back and respond to the donor's concerns, further strengthening the connection. ♦

Source: Dennece Knight, Executive Director, El Paso Children's Hospital Foundation, El Paso, TX. Phone (915) 521-7229. Email: dknight@umcelpaso.org. Website: <https://elpasochildrensfoundation.org>

Ignite Your Annual Giving Efforts

By Thomas Schroeder

Americans are generous, even through the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, its financial impact and political upheaval. Individual donors continue to be the largest philanthropic group, far exceeding corporations and foundations.

“Acquiring and retaining individual donors is the driving force of any charitable organization’s annual giving campaign,” says Kathy Hansen, vice president of institutional advancement for the College of Saint Benedict (St. Joseph, MN). “There are many different ways to approach an annual fund campaign, but at its core, each campaign requires careful planning, appeals that are personal and vibrant, events to engage donors and a great deal of attention to stewardship.”

Here Hansen focuses on each component:

- 1. Planning.** Your annual giving campaign takes preparation and attention to detail. Start by bringing your leadership group together to establish a realistic and achievable goal. This can be accomplished by analyzing the results of the previous five campaigns; studying any variances; considering current economic conditions, both globally and locally; and assessing the strength of your relationships with current donors. The final planning step involves developing your campaign approach; making certain it is properly staffed and resourced; and creating the campaign calendar of appeals, events, messaging and follow-up.
- 2. Appeals.** Your direct communication with donors and prospective donors serves to educate them about your organization’s history, mission and programs; generate awareness and engagement; and appeal to donors’ values and emotions. The three most common times of the year to distribute appeals are during the mid-year, on Giving Tuesday and during the holiday season. Your appeals must be delivered through channels that connect with donors, have a compassionate voice that emphasizes your mission and needs, be personalized and include imagery that invokes empathy and other emotions, such as joy and even anger.
- 3. Events.** Hosting events during the pandemic is challenging but not impossible. Virtual events provide opportunities to be creative and unique, customized to divergent donor segments, and fun and entertaining. Your goal is to further develop connections with existing and prospective donors to your mission, the impact of your services and the need for their support.
- 4. Stewardship.** The key to retaining donors is stewardship, and your interaction and communication with them post-gift, needs to be broad and diverse. Acknowledge each gift within three days, make it personal and warm in writing and follow up with a phone call whenever possible. For each donor, plan at least four touchpoints per year, such as birthday cards or notes, recognition of career milestones and simple gestures to thank them for caring. ♦

Source: Kathy Hansen, Vice President of Institutional Advancement, College of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph, MN. Phone (320) 363-5220. Email: kghansen@csbsju.edu. Website: <https://www.csbsju.edu>

Direct Mail Appeal Tip

Next time you plan a direct mail appeal, divide your list in two. Send a different message to each group, asking each to support different projects, then measure your response. Everything else in your package should be the same.

Sounds simple, but how often do you test funding projects to determine what produces the better results? ♦

Boost Your Annual Fund

Try this annual fund strategy to increase giving among greater numbers of donors:

In your fiscal year’s third quarter, send an appreciation letter to current donors updating them on your annual fund totals and thanking them for their valuable support. Then invite them to share an enclosed over-the-top list of budget needs (and a return envelope) with a friend or associate, explaining that, if your nonprofit is fortunate enough to meet its annual fund goal, additional gifts received by year-end will address those special funding needs you have identified. ♦

Meet One-on-One With Board Members

From a development standpoint, regularly meeting one-on-one with your board members makes sense.

In the face-to-face sessions, you can:

- Review fiscal year giving to date.
- Talk key issues/challenges at hand.
- Brainstorm about whom to approach for a challenge gift.
- Identify their associates/friends who might merit a personal visit.
- Address funding interests of individual board members.
- Come up with new ways to address your nonprofit’s strategic plans from a fundraising standpoint.
- Toss around ways in which the board can positively participate in and impact development events/programs, especially major and planned gifts. ♦

Go Above and Beyond During Uncertain Times

By Thomas Schroeder

Q *The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how we connect with and steward our donors, so what are the innovative strategies you have employed to go above and beyond in building productive relationships with your donors during these times of uncertainty?*

“Even if you have expanded your giving options for donors, the pandemic provides even more incentive to explore how you can better personalize your outreach and allow donors to make decisions as to which giving options work best. With social distancing, rules against large gatherings and work-from-home options for many, more and more of our time is spent online and on our mobile devices. You may be surprised that many older donors are now skilled at navigating the online giving process, and even able and willing to give directly from their smartphones. Text-to-give is an increasing popular and effective variant of mobile giving in which your supporters can simply text an assigned code to your organization’s phone number designated for that purpose. It is also an excellent idea to simplify the process by internally storing your donor’s personal and payment information after their first gift, thereby creating a streamlined profile that bypasses the need for them to remember and login a username and password. One more suggestion: Make recurring contributions a priority, monthly, quarterly or annually. Recurring contributors are crucial in that they have demonstrated their loyalty to your mission and tend to remain involved and increase their gift levels over time.” ♦

— Mark Rand, CEO, Stateline Boys and Girls Club, Beloit, WI. Phone (608) 365-8874. Email: <https://statelinebgc.org/contact-us>. Website: <https://statelinebgc.org>

“Everyone loves merchandise. You may be thinking, as I was at one time, that rewarding your donors’ financial support with coffee mugs, t-shirts, baseball caps and engraved pen and pencil sets is a bit on the cheesy side, but let me illustrate how my opinion changed. A couple of years ago, at the groundbreaking ceremony for a new children’s wing at our community hospital, the mayor addressed the crowd and media while wearing a branded polo shirt he was given at our organization’s annual golf outing — perfect use of our merchandise. My advice is to establish a program for distributing your merchandise to major donors (framed photos that display your organization’s work in action), to annual donors (large coffee mugs or calendars with impact photos) and especially to your important stakeholders such as board members and committee chairpersons (nice apparel).” ♦

— Melissa DeSalvo, Associate Development Director, Madison Area YMCA, Madison, NJ. Phone (973) 822-9622. Email: mdesalvo@madisonymca.org. Website: <https://www.madisonareaymca.org>

ADVANCEMENT STAFF MEETINGS

Team-Building Exercise

Spend the first five minutes of staff meetings sharing one success and one disappointment among those present. Doing so relieves tension, strengthens bonds and teaches lessons. ♦

Identify Strategies For Retaining First-Time Donors

Once you’ve had the good fortune of generating high numbers of first-time donors, it’s important to teach them the habit of repeat giving. Getting a second gift — even if it’s a year later — is key to building a repeat donor.

That’s why it’s important to identify strategies to bring about a second gift within a year’s time. Follow these methods to generate second gifts from first-time donors:

- 1. Introduce your organization properly.** Remember, you may have received a gift for reasons other than their belief in your mission. They may have simply attended a special event or sent a memorial gift. It’s up to you to introduce your organization to them and justify a repeat gift down the road.
- 2. Steward the donors appropriately.** Incorporate steps throughout the year to show your appreciation and demonstrate how their gifts are making a difference. Consider special recognition — such as a paid ad in the local newspaper or a special listing of new contributors in your newsletter or magazine — that impresses your gratitude upon them.
- 3. Create multiple links between the donor and your institution.** Explore and offer various ways for these first-time donors to become involved. Ask board members or others to express appreciation for these gifts, through personal notes, phone calls or one-on-one gestures.
- 4. Tie future gifts to projects that interest them.** Because these first-time donors may have had no previous affiliation with your cause, work to match their interests with projects that will more readily merit another gift.
- 5. Make them feel like “part of the family.”** As each week and month goes by, take cultivation steps to make them feel a part of your cause and constituency. ♦

MATCHING GIFTS STRATEGIES

Maximize Your Fundraising Dollars

The charitable giving landscape is changing, and charitable organizations are looking for ways to make the most of every fundraising dollar. So what is your matching gifts strategy?

“By identifying and promoting matching gift opportunities among your organization’s donors, volunteers and board members, for example, you could potentially double the amount of money you raise each year, and who wouldn’t want to do that?” says Joe Piffaretti, senior director of corporate and foundation relations for the C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital (Ann Arbor, MI).

It is imperative to develop a strategic approach to tapping into the giving programs of your supporters’ employers at all levels, Piffaretti suggests.

“Most large corporations, and even many small companies, have established charitable giving programs that include direct grants to causes they support and gifts through a corporate foundation and often overlooked programs that match their employee contributions to charity, whether dollar for dollar or perhaps at a higher matching ratio,” Piffaretti explains. “And failing to identify and target these programs means you are leaving dollars on the table.”

Incorporate these matching gift strategies:

- ❑ Incorporate matching gifts into your prospect research. By developing a matching gifts database, and integrating

the data into your CRM, you can identify donors with employer matching gifts programs. For example, when donors give using their work email address, the program can automatically screen the employer for an active program and provide the donor information on its access.

- ❑ Promote your efforts to identify and tap into matching gift programs among your supporter sectors. It is likely that many of your loyal annual donors are unaware of their employers’ programs, or are unsure of how to access them, and developing a process to help your supporters apply for a matching gift as simply as possible will immediately boost the response.
- ❑ Track and formalize from year to year the matching gift status of your supporters, the giving thresholds including the minimum and maximum donation size and types of organizations accepted and the timelines for application or submission. Provide detailed information to employers regarding your organization to ensure inclusion in the program, including nonprofit status, audits and financial information, mission and history. ♦

Source: Joe M. Piffaretti, Senior Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations, C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital, Ann Arbor, MI. Phone (734) 763-1318. Email: piffaret@umich.edu. Website: <https://www.mottchildren.org>

GOING MOBILE

Respond Innovatively to Crises

Surviving tough times requires innovation, especially for nonprofits. So when the COVID crisis shut down its performance venue in March, Opera Memphis (Memphis, TN) kept itself in the public eye and raised some much-needed funds by taking its music on the road.

The Sing2Me program features individual performers singing a cappella on a flatbed trailer named Piccolo La Scala, hauled around the city behind a van. For \$450, patrons get a one-hour outdoor performance. Donating an extra \$150 provides another one for a group that can’t afford it.

“We called it VROOM, for vehicular roving opera outreach module,” Ned Canty, general director, says with a laugh. The idea grew from a month of free mobile performances the opera company started in 2012.

Sing2Me singers have performed on a borrowed trailer in front of a retired music teacher’s home, outside an apartment building and for residents of an addiction recovery facility. When the trailer was stolen, the company raised enough money selling named squares to buy new ones for itself and the lender.

So far, Opera Memphis has given about 70 Sing2Me

performances, Canty says. Although the program has been “very slightly revenue positive,” he says it has brought other benefits too.

New donors have come in, and some existing ones have increased contributions. It’s provided touchpoints for donors, attracted media coverage and created new patrons.

“This type of granular experience has kept us in the minds of our audience and introduced us to new folks,” Canty says. “People who would not necessarily have gone to an opera house even if it was free wander down their block to hear our singers.”

Sing2Me has been so successful, Canty says, it will continue even after COVID lockdowns end. Canty has given advice to opera companies from Seattle to New Orleans interested in launching their own mobile performances.

During challenging times, nonprofits should think about their “minimum viable product that is the most effective unit of service and mission fulfillment,” Canty suggests. “Simplicity of message and clarity are very important right now.” ♦

Source: Ned Canty, General Director, Opera Memphis, Memphis, TN. Phone (917) 257-5897. Email: ned@operamemphis.org. Website: www.operamemphis.org

Impact Donor Attrition During COVID-19

A simple and achievable 10 percent improvement in annual donor attrition can result in an impressive 200 percent increase in long-term projected value.

“Even as charitable institutions struggle to deal with the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, strategies to retain donors absolutely must be prioritized, and, in fact, the pandemic’s effect on communities and daily life may play a role,” says Shannon Shamosh, assistant director of donor relations and stewardship for Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, MD). “The pandemic and its impact provide opportunities to stress to donors the value of your mission and services, the safety and mitigation steps taken by your institution and the increased need for donor involvement and investment.”

By retaining more donors, specifically first-time donors, and lowering attrition significantly, Shamosh suggests the long-term benefits include donors upgrading their giving, giving in multiple ways, recommending others to become involved and, ultimately, pledging planned gifts to your institution.

The keys to increasing your donor retention rate during the pandemic, according to Shamosh, include:

- ❑ Identification involves not only developing a perceived connection to your organization and its cause but also helping your donors to define their roles or place in the community or greater world in terms of the organization. In other words, donors can build such fierce loyalty to your institution and its mission that they cannot conceive

of their lives without that involvement. An effective strategy involves reaching out to donors to inquire about how COVID-19 is impacting their work and personal lives and sharing any positive coping suggestions with others.

- ❑ Trust is built and sustained when donors view your organization as exercising good judgment, demonstrating competence and adhering to a set of principles and values in which they believe. This means your organizational response to the pandemic must be clearly communicated, and your sustained efforts to continue to serve your constituencies and fulfill your mission must be shared. Consider sponsoring virtual sessions to solicit donor input and present specific pandemic-related needs donors can help fund, such as technology upgrades and protection equipment.
- ❑ Relationship commitment that results in a strong and emotional attachment involves genuine passion on the part of donors for the future of your organization. This level of commitment occurs when supporters believe they have deepened their understanding and knowledge of the institution’s guiding principles and also believe that harm to the organization will result if their financial and emotional involvement is withdrawn. ♦

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HONE YOUR SKILLS

To ‘Sell’ More Effectively, Know Your Product

A sound understanding of your nonprofit’s product(s) — services and programs — is indispensable as you “sell” to would-be donors. Sales skills have little meaning without the ability to understand and explain your products to others.

Additionally, the more you can distinguish your products from the competition, the more passionate you become about the value of your nonprofit. And if you’re enthused, others will more readily become enthused as well.

Make a habit to keep broadening knowledge of your nonprofit and its products.

To help do that:

1. Pretend you’re a prospect being introduced to an organization for the first time. What questions might you have? What questions would you want answered if you were asked to make a sizable contribution? Write down the first 10 or 20 questions that come to mind and see if you can

answer them. If not, learn the answers and script yourself to answer them properly and thoroughly.

2. Begin a “facts” file which you can add to from time to time. Whenever you discover a new piece of information about your place of employment, jot it down and include it in your facts file.
3. Make time to regularly visit one-on-one with your nonprofit’s employees. Ask them questions about their work. Their insight will provide you with valuable knowledge.
4. Keep comparing key facts about your nonprofit with the competition. It helps to know where you’re ahead of and behind the competition. ♦

For additional resources, visit www.wiley.com.