

FIELD NOTES

November 2010

Leadership Without a Map

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Gear up, energize your donors, staff and volunteers and finish the year strong!

Year-end Fundraising - An Action Plan

That special time of year when holiday spirits converge with tax anxieties is quickly approaching. So, we have assembled an action-oriented plan for successful year-end fundraising!

COLLECT PLEDGED GIFTS

Review your list of outstanding pledges. Send reminder letters to those who pledged under \$100. Call those donors who pledged \$100 or more. Personally visit donors who pledged \$1,000 or more. Be sure to start by thanking them for their pledge, and **follow up** with specific examples of how important their contribution is this year.

ASK PAST DONORS

Make end-of-the-year appeals to all your LYBNTs (Last Year But Not This) and SYBNTs (Some Year But Not This). Divide the list of LYBNTs and SYBNTs by those to visit, those to call, and those to send an appeal letter. Customize your ask based on each donor's past giving. For example, if they have supported aquatics programs in the past, ask them to support a free community swim lesson program in 2011.

CONNECT THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Refresh communications to reflect an end-of-the-year appeal. Update your website and social media channels with a compelling message and a specific action request. On your donation thank you page, include buttons, content and links that allow donors to easily repost your message on Twitter, Facebook, etc... to show friends that they just donated to your organization and invite others to do the same. **Make it easy to spread the word!**

INSPIRE STAFF MEMBERS

Recruit fellow staff members and volunteers to help with end-of-the-year fundraising efforts. Host phone-a-thons, thank-you-thons and other events that bring people together for added enjoyment. You might uncover some future campaign leaders by getting individuals involved in a less threatening group activity at year end.

ENGAGE YOUR MEMBERS

Create philanthropic opportunities for members and volunteers this holiday season. For example, provide a way for families within your membership to give the gift of a Y membership to a low-income family. Encourage parents to use this opportunity to teach their kids about the spirit of giving and social responsibility. Provide members with opportunities to sponsor a membership, campership or class in honor of someone they love.

PERSONALIZE YOUR CASE

Add a personal "voice" to your end-of-the-year fundraising appeal. Your case needs to stand out in the midst of all other not-for-profits in your community. Don't just list programs. Tell a compelling story about someone who will not be able to participate in a program without the donor's support. Tell a story about a real individual, using their words. Grab a prospective donor's attention through empathy.

THANK YOUR DONORS

A great way to **thank donors** at year's end is to invite them to participate in your holiday programs. Extend a personal invitation to

donors to attend a pre-school holiday play. Older adult groups might pitch in on lunch. Engage program participants to create a meaningful thank you message or gift that can be presented to donors during the program.

EVALUATE YOUR EFFORTS

Put aside time early in January to evaluate your 2010 end-of-the-year fundraising efforts. Taking stock of your efforts while they are still fresh in your mind will help you plan for an even more successful finish to 2011.

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Consider a **Financial Development Audit**. Learn how your volunteers and staff *really* feel about fundraising. This past month we conducted assessments for the Dane County YMCA (Madison, WI), Lake County YMCA (Painesville, OH), YMCA of Southwestern Indiana (Evansville, IN) and the Lima Family YMCA (Lima, OH). Contact [Dani Mann](#) for more information.

"Many times you hire a consultant and wonder afterward if the money was well spent. In the case of Donor by Design, I believe it was and their advice will benefit us many times over as we move forward." - David Abbott, YMCA of Southwestern Indiana Board Member

And, in the spirit of Thanksgiving, thanks to each of you for the critical work you do in your community!

