

FIELD NOTES

January 2011

Leadership Without a Map

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In many ways, the lack of a thoughtful and intentional stewardship plan can be the *silent killer* of an otherwise well executed development campaign.

Thanks and Thanks Again...

In fundraising, the easiest yet most impactful part of the relationship is too often minimized or neglected all together. For some, the art of saying "thank you" has been lost or dismissed as being too "soft-side."

R&R

To grow a campaign from year to year, **donor retention and renewal are critical.** If you don't know your retention/renewal rates, you are flying blind. Shepherded loyalty and commitment often yields increased giving and sets the stage for potential planned gifts.

DOLLARS & CHANGES

In a recent study of donor loyalty, respondents cited three key factors that affect their continued support of a charitable cause:

- Prompt and personalized acknowledgement
- Reassurance that their gift was used as promised
- Receiving measurable results before being asked again

A key finding from this study was that **although donors enjoy and expect appreciation for their support... it's not enough.** Discerning donors want to know how their donation made a difference. They want to know how their dollars brought about change! When

someone makes a social investment in your organization, you are required to report back to them regarding the return on that investment. Here's a great rule to remember:

"Donors enjoy recognition but require information."

NUMBERS & NAMES

When reporting program outcomes and impacts, strike a balance between statistics (% change, # served, etc...) and stories. Tell about real people who have been positively affected by your programs and services. **Although the numbers provide scope and scale, the names and faces get to the heart of your mission and purpose.**

INTENTIONS & IMPLEMENTATION

The truth is that we all intend to thank our donors multiple times each year (7 being the magic number), yet it often falls close to the bottom of the priority list. "Thank you's" often get overshadowed by ongoing efforts to raise more money. So, although it may feel counterintuitive to the touchy feely art of gratitude, *we do need to formalize and operationalize saying "thank you."* **The most successful "thankers" are those who develop and stay committed to an annual volunteer/donor stewardship plan.**

For many of our clients, this comes to life through the development of a 12-month Stewardship Matrix. Through this planning tool, donors are categorized by affiliation and commitment level. Then plans are developed to not only thank them, but also to share how their support has made a difference throughout the year. A key to the matrix approach is that donor stewardship varies in relation to gift amount.

TIME WELL SPENT

Donor survey response indicates that the number one reason donors gave a second gift was because they were thanked and shown how their contribution made a difference!

In 2011, please commit to building and executing a well-planned donor and volunteer stewardship program. It will strengthen your campaign, and... it's a lot of fun!

To learn more about the Donor By Design Stewardship Matrix and other resources to strengthen your fund development program, email dani@donorbydesign.com.

"Silent gratitude isn't much use to anyone."

-G.B. Stern

