

Maximize Opportunities to Thank Your Donors

by Belle Bergner

We have an abundance of communication tools these days, which provide a variety of ways to thank supporters of our causes. Snail mail, email, texts, newsletters, social media, phone calls and events are efficient ways to communicate, but also contribute to information overload. With so many voices, our donors can be distracted and miss an important message—especially a thank you for a donation. Here are 10 ways to be sure your appreciation cuts through the noise.

1. Offer a Next Step. The hours, days and weeks after a donation are the time when your donor will be most excited about your cause, and most likely to remember you. The next step can be as simple as “*You can join our email list for [X cool benefit, updates, etc.]!*” or “*We’re throwing this free event for new donors in your area*” or “*check out our website to see what you’re making possible.*”

2. Thank You... for Being YOU. What’s infinitely more valuable than a donation? The person who gave it. So thank your donors for being themselves. Who are they? The kind of people who give to important causes AND who take action on their vision for a better world.

3. Send a Handwritten Note. Thank-you note writing is a great activity for board members. They, as well as the donor, will become more engaged in your organization.

4. Treat Each Donation as the Beginning of a Beautiful Friendship. If the donor is new, there is an opportunity for a lifetime of support. What might be a one-time donation could become a lifelong friendship.

5. Don’t Ask for More Money Yet. Thank-you notes should bubble with pure, unadulterated gratitude, and make donors feel sheer delight and appreciation. If you thank them with enthusiasm now, you should definitely ask again in three to six months—and if you do your job, they’ll be HAPPY to give.

6. Keep it Simple. Keep your message simple and emotional. Being complicated doesn’t make something better. In fact, complexity makes it less likely you’ll be remembered when you ask for money next time.

7. Invite Donors to a Thank You Reception. You’ll not only show your appreciation, but you’ll get face time with your donors and have the opportunity to learn more about why they support your organization.

8. Use Social Media. Shout out on Facebook and Twitter to thank and recognize donors. Social media has the potential to reach new networks and rapidly grow new supporters.

9. Boast About Your Success. Send donors a top ten list of accomplishments for the year to demonstrate how donations make an impact (and make it clear that without their support, you wouldn’t have a top ten list).

10. Personally Call Donors to Say Thanks. Social researchers say the voice is still the strongest communication tool; especially in these days of impersonal electronic messaging. Involving board members and staff will deepen the relationships among your whole team.

Mayes Wilson Associates can help you evaluate and improve your donor appreciation program. Call us today!



Nonprofit resource courtesy of

MAYES | WILSON & ASSOCIATES, LLC

Strategic Organizational Consulting • www.MayesWilsonAssociates.com • 414-807-4319

© 2015 MAYES | WILSON & ASSOCIATES, LLC