

Planned Giving MENTOR™

◆ The Newsletter for Newcomers to Gift Planning ◆

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Stretching Your Marketing Dollars

Colleges, major medical centers, national causes, religious federations — all of these organizations spend enormous amounts of marketing dollars to educate their prospects about planned giving. *Their prospects may also be your prospects.*

With the “Intergenerational Transfer of Wealth” still on track (www.bc.edu/research/swri/), sophisticated charitable organizations are intensifying their direct marketing efforts toward older individuals. Your planned giving prospects are receiving regular and effective educational literature about methods of deferred gifts complete with moving testimonials, such as:

“Setting up a charitable remainder annuity trust guarantees us a set annual income while allowing us to provide future gifts to our church, our colleges, and the local opera company — all organizations that have played important roles in our lives.”

One Gift at a Time

In the early stages of planned giving programs, gifts happen one at a time. Universities with decades-old planned giving programs may be able to send out a mailing to thousands of potential donors and get scores of requests for gift annuities or life estates back in response, but new programs cannot.

For organizations starting new planned giving programs, you must identify your precise prospect audience and create strategies to market directly to them. Though these people will likely receive material from other organizations, they will probably not have a good understanding of the way it all works. You will provide a service if you work with them in such a way that they can feel smart — not dumb — about something they know is important, but cannot seem to grasp the particulars.

Small-group activities make the most sense. Use of “living-room ses-

sions” (or the equivalent in your facility) promotes a feeling of connection with your mission and your staff, and a comfortable atmosphere for your prospects to get questions answered without pressure to make the gift.

The first and best use of marketing is to help the right potential donors feel smart about planned giving.

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Your Prospect’s Advisors

The second best use of your marketing dollars is to identify, cultivate, educate and stay connected to your prospect’s advisors (legal, financial, etc.).

These donor advisors will be your best line of offense for your planned giving program. If you spend time building a relationship with them, giving them helpful information, and assuring your trustworthy and non-pressured relationship with their clients, you will see definite results in their willingness to promote your organization as a worthy place for deferred gifts.

The Home Team

The third best use of your marketing dollars is to educate your own executive and lay leaders that planned gifts take time to close. Through materials, over meals, and in facilitated conversations with PG consultants and colleagues, help them to understand that the entire program is designed to support the long-term health of your organization. As such, a long-term approach to gift closing is crucial.

Spending your marketing dollars wisely is an essential element to launching a successful planned giving effort . . . and, for that matter, improving the effectiveness of an existing program.

— Susan Axelrod

Stuffin’ It

Let’s face it: Planned giving marketing can be an expensive proposition. Creating brochures, sending targeted mailings, conducting seminars and so on can not only be expensive, but it can also be logistically impossible for many nonprofits.

However, there is a not-often-used, but powerful and extraordinarily inexpensive marketing option to consider: Receipt stuffers!

Most every organization I can think of is pretty good at sending accurate and timely receipts for income-tax purposes. As a development officer, consider this a “turnkey” monthly communication opportunity with one of your best possible constituent groups: current donors.

Receipt stuffers can be as simple as black type on colored paper, or four-color glossies. The quality of the piece should be consistent with the “look and feel” of other material your organization sends out. Most gift receipts are

PGMentor Topics: A Two-Year Glance

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