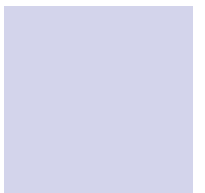
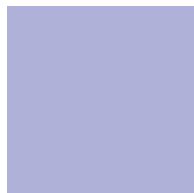
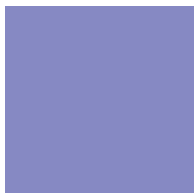


Not-for-Profit Solutions:

Strengthening Relationships
with Donors and Supporters



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 Caslon

Introduction

A primary concern of not-for-profits is strengthening the relationship with existing donors and supporters. Research shows that it usually costs less to retain and motivate an existing donor or volunteer than attract a new one. Personalized communications, driven by digital print solutions, can effectively engage these constituents with relevant information. This paper provides best practice solutions as derived from a study of PODi's Digital Print Case Study Collection.

Donor/Supporter Retention Concerns

Effectively engaging existing donors, volunteers and supporters is critical to the operation and funding of not-for-profit organizations.

According to the *2010 Fundraising Effectiveness Survey Report*, "For every \$4.50 the nonprofit organizations gained in upgraded, new, and recovered gifts, a little more than \$6 was lost in downgraded and lapsed gifts. For every 5.4 new donors recruited, slightly more than 6 donors were lost through attrition."¹ By focusing on retaining existing donors, not-for-profits can spend less money on recruiting new donors to replace losses. "For most organizations—and especially those that are sustaining losses or achieving only modest net gains in gifts and donors—taking positive steps to reduce gift and donor losses is the least expensive strategy for increasing net fundraising gains."²

Not-for-profits also need to be concerned with retaining their volunteers. The average national volunteer retention rate is 65% or, said another way, approximately one out of three volunteers who volunteer in one year do not volunteer the next year. According to one estimate this adds up to about \$38 billion in lost volunteer time in one year.³

Strengthening the relationship with donors, volunteers and other constituents should be a key component of any retention strategy.

¹ *2010 Fundraising Effectiveness Survey Report*, Association of Fundraising Professionals and The Urban Institute, 2010, p. 14.

² *Ibid.* p. 3.

³ David Eisner, Robert T. Grimm Jr., Shannon Maynard, & Susannah Washburn, "The New Volunteer Workforce," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2009, p. 34.

Challenge: Nurturing the connection with existing donors and supporters

Developing effective communications should be a key strategy for growing relationships with not-for-profit constituents. In open-ended responses to *The 2010 Nonprofit Fundraising Survey*, participants noted what most affected fundraising results was effective communication of the organization's mission, impact and needs.⁴ Relevant communications, powered by digital print solutions, can address this issue.

Ideas that Work:

Gather data on existing donors/supporters

One of the first steps to developing strong relationships with donors and supporters is to learn more about their affiliation with the organization, their motivations and their preferences for future communications.

The Seattle Humane Society (SHS) is a private, nonprofit animal welfare organization that serves the people and animals of King County, Washington with a variety of programs including adoptions, veterinary services, dog training classes, a pet food bank, and humane education for children of all ages.

For large donors, the SHS Development Office makes personal phone calls to learn more about them, such as what pets they have, if they adopted from SHS and what SHS programs they are interested in. SHS also wanted to learn more about smaller donors but making phone calls to this larger group would not have been feasible.

SHS needed a campaign that would reach donors and gather information from them in order to:

- ❖ Develop targeted leads for potential volunteers
- ❖ Build upon their existing opt-in email list
- ❖ Understand what types of services current donors prefer SHS to focus on
- ❖ Understand what type of content current donors would prefer SHS to focus on in out-reach publications
- ❖ Improve connections to donors who might be interested in making additional donations of time or money

⁴ *The 2010 Nonprofit Fundraising Survey*, Nonprofit Research Collaborative, 2011, p. 11.

- ❖ Develop targeted leads for potential adoptees and collect basic metrics regarding their current and future animal ownership, and preferences for on-going SHS contact via phone, email or print.

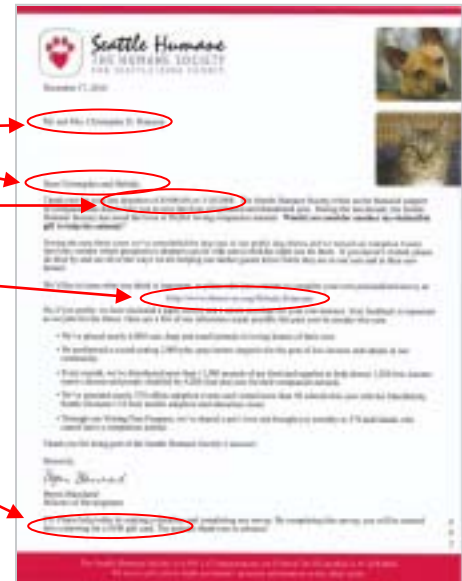
A direct marketing campaign was developed for SHS which engages new donors to learn more about them. A letter from the CEO or Director of Development is sent to new donors, inviting them to visit a Personalized URL and complete an online survey that helps SHS learn more about donors. Donors are also given the option to complete a paper survey and send it back via an enclosed return envelope. Two weeks after the letter is sent, a reminder postcard is sent to non-responders.

❖ Donor name

❖ Donation amount and date

❖ Personalized URL

❖ Offer



Letter to donor

To encourage donors to complete the survey all respondents are entered into a drawing. Offered gifts have included a \$100 gift card, a \$250 SHS Pet Adoption package, and SHS gift baskets.



Personalized landing page



Survey page

The primary objective of this campaign was to gather information on donors. Unexpectedly, a campaign that initially cost the SHS \$3,000 received over \$4,000 in contributions. Other results included:

- ❖ 17% response rate to initial campaign – recipients provided information via either a paper or online survey
- ❖ This campaign has been repeated three additional times and each time yielded a 14-20% response rate
- ❖ The response mechanism used has been close to evenly split between an online survey at a Personalized URL and a printed survey. For a mid-2010 campaign, 53% of the responses came in via reply mail and 47% via the Personalized URL
- ❖ SHS determined that donors outside of a 35-mile radius are extremely unlikely to respond, but the incremental cost of sending to these donors is very low
- ❖ Findings from the mid-2010 campaign included:
 - 68% of new donors had adopted an animal in the past and 30% had adopted from SHS
 - 6% planned to adopt a cat in 2011 and 14% a dog
 - 38% were interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities with the SHS
 - 40% opted in to receive further email communications from SHS

Any organization looking to deepen its relationship with customers, donors or other constituents should first spend the time and effort to learn more about them. This can lead to personalized communications that are meaningful to the recipient. SHS uses the data it has gathered on donors to segment its audience for campaign needs throughout the year.

Ideas that Work: Solicit feedback

Not-for-profits can improve their marketing effectiveness by gathering feedback about the services they provide. By learning what individuals value the most and where they might need more education, not-for-profits can better target their communications.

The Animal Rescue League (ARL) of Western Pennsylvania is a nonprofit organization dedicated to finding homes for animals. ARL decided to conduct a survey with the following objectives:

- ❖ Understand how customers were finding out about ARL
- ❖ Learn how customers felt about their animal adoption experience

- ❖ Garner opinions about the value of ARL services (adoption, clinic, obedience school, kennel, cemetery and wildlife rehabilitation)
- ❖ Collect email addresses
- ❖ A secondary objective was to collect donations

Working with their service provider, a personalized postcard with a Personalized URL response mechanism was mailed to individuals who had adopted animals within the last two years. One version of the postcard was for cat adopters and the other version was for dog adopters.



Personalized landing pages were set up to welcome each individual and to obtain email addresses for future use. The survey page made it very easy for adopters to answer questions and provide individualized feedback to ARL. The Profile page of the site allowed the client to verify his own contact information and a Thank-you page expressed appreciation for client input. Each page on the site also provided a direct link to the PayPal site for the ARL, allowing clients to easily make donations.

Thank-you emails were sent to each client who responded and completed the survey questions. The campaign and survey results were accessible to ARL via an online dashboard – making it easy for them to be responsive to client feedback.

The results were very pleasing to ARL. In terms of responses 11.4% of the pet adopters went to their Personalized URL and 10.7% actually completed the survey. Some of the key findings were:

- ❖ Only 2% of customers found out about ARL from radio and TV ads, leading ARL to rethink their media mix
- ❖ Customers felt ARL needed to speed up the adoption process, but they thought the volunteer staff was great
- ❖ They collected over 300 new email addresses for future communication
- ❖ Donations more than paid for the campaign

A combination of a great list, personalized direct mail and Personalized URL technology made this all possible.

Ideas that Work: Engage with relevant information

To truly engage recipients, not-for-profits need to customize their communications to meet the interests of their audience. The Girl Scouts Arizona Cactus Pine Council (GSACPC) did an excellent job of this.

The GSACPC, which serves Girl Scouts throughout Arizona, was seeing a decline in donations and needed a way to cultivate new donors who might participate in an upcoming capital campaign.

A cross-media solution was developed that would build relationships with Girl Scout alumni.

- ❖ The primary objective of this campaign was to engage alumni and to begin to develop a network of donors for future campaigns
- ❖ The secondary objectives were to gather donations from those women who were ready to donate, and to build a database of new alumni

The campaign targeted the memories and emotions of former Girl Scouts in an effort to get them re-engaged, and ultimately make a donation to support today's scouts.

The campaign took advantage of the following mediums:

- ❖ Personalized direct mail
- ❖ Email
- ❖ Web - Personalized landing pages
- ❖ Social Media (Facebook Cause page, YouTube Video)
- ❖ Telesales follow up

The variable data direct mail piece was versioned by segment and featured prominent women of the community who had been Girl Scouts. The call to action drove recipients to a personalized involvement site via a Personalized URL.

The target audience for this campaign was Girl Scout alumni. It was clear from research that what was important to women varied based on their age. Therefore, a number of personas were created. Each persona had messaging that was specifically targeted and would resonate with that particular age group.



The personas targeted the following age groups:

Persona Name	Age Group	Message Focus
Jennifer	20 – 39	Girl Scouts helped develop your character
Susan	40 – 49	Invest in the future of today's girls
Martha	50 – 59	Today's Girl Scouts follow in your footsteps
Mary Pat	60+	Girl Scouting builds value and character

Each version of the postcards and emails had a “Support the Sash” theme. The copy and images were specifically developed to resonate with the recipients in each age group.

The personalized landing pages alumni were directed to were versioned by segment and provided compelling copy that would resonate with each age group. Visitors were asked to make a donation to help “Support the Sash.”

Those who indicated an interest in making a donation were sent to a site that would allow them to complete a secure online transaction. After they hit the donation site a representative would follow up with a phone call. In most cases this was to thank them for their donation. In some instances, if visitors noted that they would like to make a gift but had not done so online, the representative called and asked them if they preferred to donate in a different manner.

Respondents who did not want to donate right away were offered other avenues to get involved. This was part of a strategy that would cultivate future donations by keeping the women engaged. A “refer a friend” function enabled these alumni to invite others to participate in the campaign through an automated email.

The GSACPC achieved the following results with this multi-touch campaign:

- ❖ Total response of 8.2% with unique individual response of 4.9%. A visit to a Personalized URL was considered a response
- ❖ 31% of respondents made a donation
- ❖ Increased average donation from \$50 to \$250
- ❖ Grew Facebook Cause page to 141 members. Sixty-eight of these new members were not in GSACPC's database
- ❖ Collected 87 referrals from “refer a friend” function

The relevance of the communications helped drive the response. By segmenting its audience into different age groups, GSACPC was able to create messaging and imagery

that strongly resonated with Girl Scout alumni. This level of connection will help GSACPC in future donation drives.

Another Girl Scout Council, Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys (River Valleys), also developed a campaign that connected with constituents with relevant information.

The annual cookie program is a major fundraiser for River Valleys. Encouraging Scout participation is critical to the success of the program. In the past, staff had provided vital information through a monthly email that only reached the parents or troop leaders. River Valleys felt that communicating directly with girls would be important to growing the success of the cookie program. They needed a communication solution that would:

- ❖ Improve communication about the cookie program to Scouts and their parents
- ❖ Engage three key segments:
 - Newcomers – Girl Scouts in Kindergarten through third grade who may be new to the Girl Scout cookie program
 - Parents of Scouts
 - Older Girl Scouts who may need extra encouragement to continue their efforts in the cookie program

A three-phase campaign was developed to reach these goals.

First Wave: Welcome Cookie Rookies

This part of the campaign was targeted toward newcomers to the cookie program and consisted of an 11"x17" folded to 5-5/8" x11" mailer. The mailer was customized with 12 variable fields including the girl's name and program level within Girl Scouts (Daisies, Brownies, or Juniors).



Cookie Rookies mailer with personalization highlighted in orange including: Scout name, parent name, and Scouting level

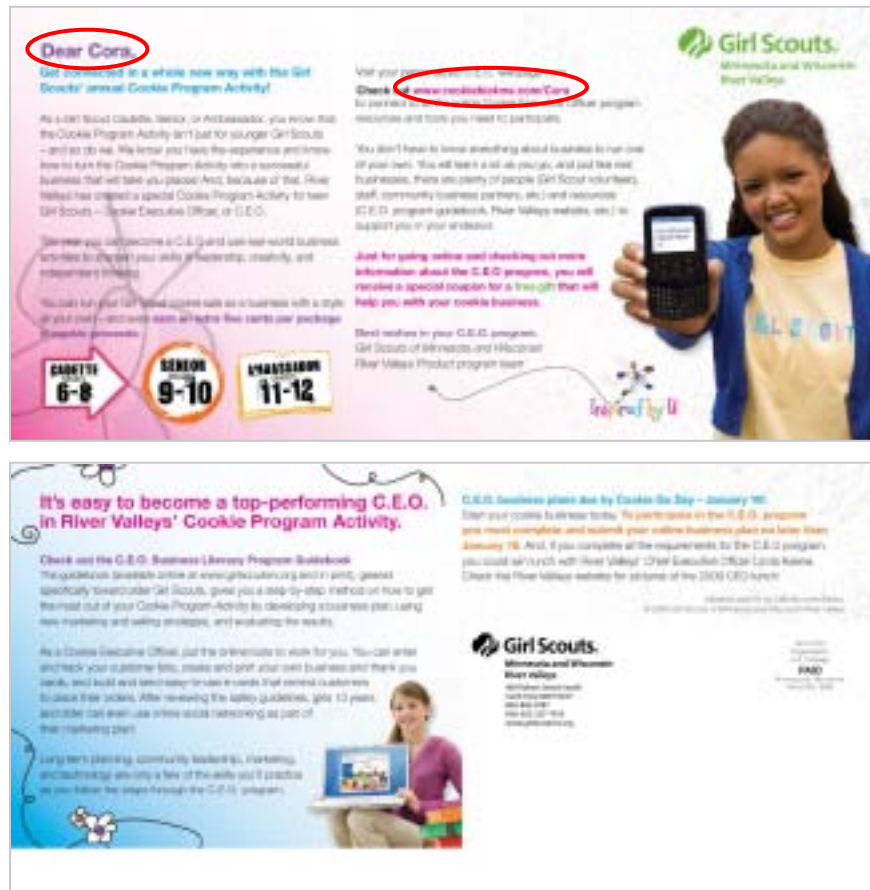
Second Wave: “Thank U Berry Munch for Supporting Your Girl!”

Segmented static postcards were sent to the parents of returning Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors. This run consisted of 11”x 6” postcards produced traditionally with inkjet overprint. These included information specific to the program level and got the girls excited about participating again.

Third Wave: Girl Scout C.E.O.

This part of the campaign targeted 10,400 returning junior and senior high school age girls (Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors). The goal of this communication was to increase retention and engagement within this seasoned group.

An 11”x 6” piece was mailed to Scouts encouraging them to visit a Personalized URL. At the site girls could gain valuable information on Girl Scouts’ older girl program, Cookie Executive Officer or C.E.O., which encourages girls to think about the cookie program in a business plan style.



Girl Scout C.E.O. mailer with personalization highlighted in red including: Scout name and Personalized URL

Girls were also asked to complete a survey providing feedback on the cookie program and suggestions for improvement.

With the targeted program, River Valleys reduced their overall marketing spend while increasing the effectiveness of the campaign.

- ❖ The integrated campaign contributed to greater Scout engagement, which in turn supported exceeding the council's cookie program goal
- ❖ A reduction in the number of calls to River Valleys showed that girls and families felt informed about the program
- ❖ 12% of targeted older Girl Scouts visited their Personalized URL and completed an online survey giving their feedback on the cookie program

Providing age-level appropriate information to the Scouts and their families helped to engage them in the cookie program. The segmentation also allowed River Valleys to tailor their messages to the interests of each group.

Ideas that Work: Use automation to speed fulfillment of donor packages

Many not-for-profits use an “adopt a child or animal” strategy to raise funds for their cause. In these models the donor is typically provided with a package providing details and images of the adoptee. These packages strive to establish a personal connection between the donor and the beneficiary. Automating the fulfillment of these packages can get information to donors sooner and reduce costs.

Compassion International is an evangelical Christian ministry dedicated to helping children around the world. Compassion International generates and mails a personalized Child Sponsorship Packet when someone agrees to sponsor a child through monthly financial donations to the organization.

The Packet includes a personalized letter, information about the child, a color photograph of the child, a map of the child's country, and information about their family situation.

When a child becomes available for sponsorship, Compassion staff within that country enters the information into a database. Information from the various countries is downloaded daily. Most of the time a digital photograph of the child is sent as well. Once the information is received at Compassion's headquarters, the child is immediately made available for sponsorship. When a child is sponsored, Compassion prints and mails the Child Sponsorship Packet to the sponsor.

Michael Slanco, the organization's Distribution Center Manager, said the new process of collecting data and printing packets on demand has saved time and money, as well as reducing a child's wait to become sponsored.

The organization has the ability to incorporate more color and additional pertinent information about each child. Plus, since packets are only generated when a child is sponsored (versus the old procedure of printing packets for each child available for sponsorship) the organization is able to provide sponsors with the most current information.

The time to produce sponsorship packets was reduced from seven days to less than 24 hours. Manual labor involved in the assembling the sponsor packages has also been reduced.

