


The Power of Saying Thank You: *Using Donor Cultivation Calls to Boost Your Bottom Line*

Jeff Aron, *Fountain House*
 George Whelan, *Consumer Reports Foundation*
 Giselle Holloway, *Int'l Rescue Committee*

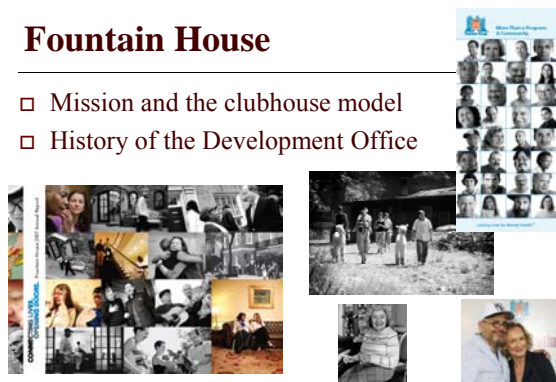
The Power of Saying Thank You: *Using Donor Cultivation Calls to Boost Your Bottom Line*

Jeff Aron
 Director of Development



Fountain House

- Mission and the clubhouse model
- History of the Development Office




Phone-A-Thon

- Campaign goal
- Community building
- Diversifying outreach





The Fountain House Donor Experience

- Written acknowledgment for a gift within 5-7 days
- Includes: letter, event calendar, bounce back and insert of other ways of giving



Environment Of The Phone Room

- When people arrive
- When calls are made
- Food and camaraderie
- Recognition of successful calls

Miscellaneous Opportunities

- Birthday Cards
- Organizing The Phone-a-thon Room
- Writing Thank You Cards
- Look Up Phone Numbers

You don't have to make calls to be a part of the phone-a-thon

Impact On Donors

Within the first 12 months after being called, donors:

- Increased their average giving by 7.12%
- Gave 4.08% more gifts

Impact On The Clubhouse

- Deeper connection between staff, donors and members
- Additional contact with Board Members and other clubhouses

Future Of The Phone-A-Thon

Phone-A-Thon

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George Whelan
 Special Membership / Fundraising Strategy
 Consumer Reports
 June 13, 2008

You Mean that Telemarketing Can Be Good???

- DMA Do Not Call Lists
- Pushy Solicitors
- Prohibitive Costs
- Upper Management Distaste
- Negative Stigma

But there is Telemarketing that everyone can be happy with!

Overview of Session

- Donor Cultivation
- Case Study #1 – WNET Mid-Level
- Pre-Recorded Calls
- Summary / Future Plans

Donor Cultivation

- Importance of Donor Cultivation
 - Donor-Centered, not Non-Profit Centered
- Donor Cultivation can take many forms
 - Acknowledgements
 - Donor Benefits
 - Customer Service

What to Expect with Strong Cultivation

- Improved Donor Retention
- Improved Program Performance
- Less Donor Complaints
- Long Term, Stable Growth of the File

Case Study – Thirteen WNET Mid-Level

- The Thirteen Associates
 - Membership File
 - 55,000 Donors
 - Broken into Two Levels
 1. \$100 - \$499 – Level 1
 2. \$500 - \$1,499 – Level 2
- Annual Revenue of about \$8 million

Level 2 Associates

- 2,500 donors
- 6 effort renewal series
- Limited additional gift appeals
- Two upgrade DM/TM campaigns
- Raised close to \$1 million annually
- Very strong donor retention
- Focus on donor cultivation and treatment

Associates Thank You Call

- Donor Cultivation was a top priority.
- All donors with a gift of \$500 or more receive a personal thank you call from a Customer Service representative thanking them for their support
- No solicitation, no ask, no offer
- Call within 2 weeks of renewal gift

Results of Thank You Call

- Call received very positively by donors
- Complaints reduced dramatically
- Donors came to expect the call
- Retention increased from 74% in 2000 fiscal year to 83% in 2004 fiscal year
- Active file increased from 1,800 donors to 2,200 over the same period
- Strategy was adopted by other PBS stations

Challenges to the Thank You Call

- Need dedicated Customer Service representatives or volunteers
- Can be time intensive, particularly during busy times of the year
- If there are no internal options, the costs of employing a TM vendor can be prohibitive

Some Thoughts on Getting Started

- Try to thank as many donors as you can
- Use volunteers or reps
- Start small if you have to
- Pre-Recorded Thank You calls
- The goal is "long-term," not "short term"

Pre-Recorded Calls

- Was to be introduced this fiscal year at Consumers, but was not
- Use of pre-recorded message from the President, board members or other prominent individuals affiliated with organization
- Short thirty seconds to one minute message
- Can be automated

Pre-Recorded Call - Pros

- Inexpensive - cost can be as low as .10 to .15 per call
- Can reach a much larger universe than traditional TM, volunteers and staff
- Messages can be personalized (seasonal, by appeal, etc.)

Pre-Recorded Calls - Cons

- Some feel are impersonal
- May not viewed well by some donors
- Not a real live communication
- Can not have a dialogue

Consumer Reports Pre-Recorded Strategy

- ❑ Customer Service staff and volunteer resources not available for personal thank you calls
- ❑ Intended to kick off a “Thank You” call strategy to Mid-Level donors this spring, but we were unable to
- ❑ Will begin to thank mid-level donors through a pre-recorded call this fall

In Closing

- ❑ Donor cultivation is one of the more critical overlooked areas in fundraising today
- ❑ You can never go wrong thanking donors
- ❑ How many donors you can thank through the phone depends on your resources

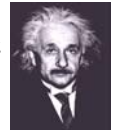
Using Board Calls to Cultivate High-dollar Donors

IRC’s Case Study

Giselle Holloway, Director, Direct Response
International Rescue Committee

Who Are We?

- ❑ International Rescue Committee (IRC) is a global leader in providing aid to refugees
- ❑ Founded in 1933 to rescue people fleeing Europe; now in 25 countries
- ❑ Direct response program raises about \$13 million annually from 140,000 active donors
- ❑ High-dollar file is small (2,400) but revenue is big (\$4 million).

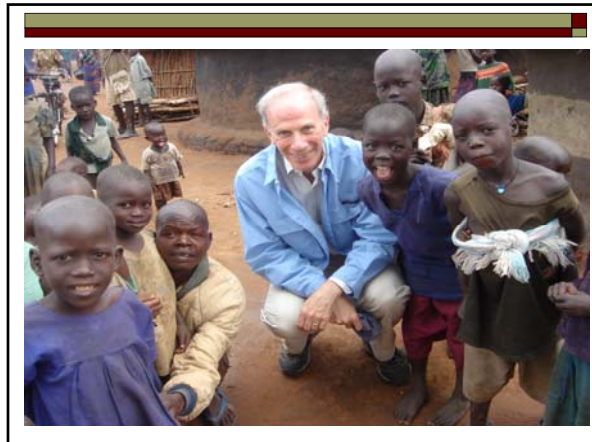


The Challenge We Faced

- ❑ Staff didn’t have enough time to make thank-you calls to all high-dollar donors
- ❑ Head of Board Development Committee needed to find a way to engage board members beyond asking them for money

The Solution...

- ❑ Have Board members make the thank-you calls!



How did we get buy-in?

- ❑ **Step 1:** Used industry research to illustrate the effectiveness of board cultivation calls
- ❑ **Step 2:** Gave them an easy pitch: Just say thank you!
- ❑ **Step 3:** Connected the call to a matching gift campaign (Children's health in Rwanda)
- ❑ **Step 4:** Got them to commit on the spot!

The Matching Gift Campaign: Child Survival Program in Rwanda



The Matching Gift Campaign: Child Survival Program in Rwanda

- ❑ **Goal:** To raise \$150K in order to receive a match grant of \$600K (3-to-1 match)
- ❑ **Direct mail and phone results:** Raised over \$800K!
- ❑ **Program results:** Thousands more children saved in Rwanda

Board Cultivation Calls

- ❑ Purpose
 - Thank donors for helping us make the match
 - Find out why they support IRC
 - Hopefully increase donor support
 - Make board members and donors feel more connected to IRC

Board Cultivation Calls

- ❑ Execution
 - Pulled test and control panels for board calling
 - Provided board members with materials for making the call
 - Gave board members a deadline for making calls

Results: 18 Months Later

- ❑ 80% of donors who were called gave a subsequent gift
- ❑ 52% of donors who were not called gave a subsequent gift
- ❑ 55% of donors who were called upgraded
- ❑ 18% of donors who were not called upgraded

Conclusion

- ❑ Board cultivation calls work!



Next Steps

- ❑ Board calling will focus on best high-dollar donors
- ❑ Staff will make calls that require immediate attention
- ❑ Remaining calls will be outsourced

Thanks!



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