



ACOW Fundraising Workshop

Saturday, October 5, 2013

How to Write Winning Appeals

- Who: Old friends and new
 - Your members and donors are more likely to give than anyone else.
 - #1 reason for not donating: WASN'T ASKED.
 - Make sure you have 100% giving, at any level, from your board: funders like this, and they can say, "Join me in supporting our chapter with a generous gift."
 - Track your members' and your donors' giving history!
 - Ideally with a database, much better than Excel.
 - Salesforce is a good one. Other recommendations?
 - Clean your list: someone needs to manage the list, update with corrections
- When:
 - Welcome new members from National: get names from monthly report
 - Write a template welcome letter, add a personal welcome note. (See web site for sample letter)
 - Invite to your events, add them to your appeal list.
 - New National donors are automatically local chapter members. After that, they have to renew their local membership with the chapter*.
 - Send appeal to members and donors at least once/year.
 - November before Thanksgiving ideal for year-end, no later than first week of December.
 - Twice/year even better – some people give EVERY TIME YOU ASK!
 - Every appeal is also a cultivation, connecting with your members and donors, informing them about what the organization is accomplishing.
- What:
 - Inspire through pictures, stories, numbers: people tend to skip over the blah blah blah and go straight to the 1. Photo 2. Caption 3. Bulleted items 4. The P.S.
 - Thank you! You make XX possible (what does their \$\$ accomplish? X number of Y, allows us to increase Z, connect children to nature, etc.)
 - Ask: Make a gift/renew support of \$XX
 - Name the amount: Set a default (\$50?)
 - For past donors, customize with the amount of their last gift, say "renew your support with a gift of \$XX or more" or "increase your support with a gift of \$XXY so we can reach even more children with our programs."
 - Include a P.S.
 - Special offer: Matches can really increase gift size for many people!
 - Give a gift of \$XX by X date and you will be invited to our annual donor dinner.
 - Send your gift now so we can accomplish XX!

- How:
 - Personalize!
 - Their name on letter and envelope, and get it right
 - Hand-written note on each letter: board and volunteer activity. Works!
 - Make sure your chapter name and address are on the envelope.
 - Hand-written envelope would be super personal if you have time/volunteers.
 - Mail merge vs. mail house
 - Microsoft Word mail merge: Mailings/Start Mail Merge/Mail Merge Wizard
 - Mail house if have more than volunteers can handle, they can personalize.
 - 1st class vs. bulk
 - 1st class stamp gets the best result: doesn't look like junk
 - If go bulk, can't personalize letters. Only do if really high volume, maybe to a speculative list, like a zip code mailing to bring in new prospects.
- Thanks!
 - Thank within one week. No more than one month after!
 - Write a template thank you letter that reflects appeal message. Photo if you can.
 - Add a handwritten note. (Thanks so much! Your gift makes such a difference for the birds and children of the valley!)
 - Thank your donors 7 times/7 different ways
- Follow up resources
 - The Grants & Fundraising section of the Audubon Washington Chapter Resources web site: <http://wa.audubon.org/grant-opportunities-fundraising-ideas>
 - The Fundraising section of Audubon Chapter Services web site: <http://chapterservices.audubon.org/chapter-leader-guide/funding-fundraising>
 - Contact kbowen@audubon.org , 206-652-2444 x111 with questions or if you would like feedback on your appeals or plans.

*Note: New chapter donors or donors of \$20 or more who give after 18 months are automatically National members if write check to National Audubon. See Chapter Services site for details.