

## First Month of Fiscal Year Is Pivotal

Whether your new fiscal year is just getting under way or you're in the midst of your fundraising year, recognize that the first month of your new year is pivotal because it sets the tone for the rest of the year.

If making face-to-face calls is a top responsibility, make more contacts during your first month than you have ever made before. If you are in charge of telesolicitation, begin early with an extra calling effort to a new group of prospects. If you are in charge of organizing special fundraising events, get all of your volunteers enlisted and trained sooner than you have ever done in the past.

It's very easy to come off the end of a fiscal year and think, "Now I can breathe easy for a couple of months before hitting it hard again." As understandable as that may be, now is the precise time that you should be giving your job your all. Outpace everything you have ever done before. Then, ideally, as you near the end of another fiscal year, you can slow your pace somewhat because you will have achieved and surpassed all goals earlier than ever before.

## Count On Insiders to Push For Annual Support

How are you encouraging board members, current contributors, volunteers and others to "beat the drums" on your organization's behalf? Think about your board as an example: If each member was to think of ways to encourage annual gifts among his/her business associates and circles of contacts, you could gain a healthy number of first-time contributors.

Remember, it's not the dollar amount that matters so much in the beginning, rather, it's building a habit of giving. So if even one tenth of your current supporters were to make a genuine attempt to encourage \$20 gifts among their circle of friends and contacts, you'd be well on your way to expanding annual support.

Now, what can you do to convince your insiders to act more proactively on your behalf?

## Find New Ways to Market Your Monthly Giving Program

By Kerry Nenn

It's a great tool to generate reliable, frequent and larger donations. So what are some effective methods to bring donors on board your monthly giving program?

### Go green.

The University of the Ozarks (Clarksville, AR) markets its monthly giving program by referring to it as the Green Giving Program. Donors are encouraged to give online or directly through electronic funds transfers to keep their giving paper-free. "Anything that saves us having to put something in the mail is considered green," says Kody Eakin, advancement services manager. "It is time-saving, paper-saving and cost-saving. It also makes giving really easy for the donor."

### Cultivate through HR.

Employees of the University of the Ozarks are encouraged to give through payroll. This option to give through payroll deduction is included on the school's website. "It's so easy to have a few dollars taken out of their paycheck every month," Eakin explains. "Employees give more and more often than they would without this option."

### Bankroll a Food Box.

The Arkansas Foodbank's (Little Rock, AR) monthly program bears this name. It makes giving very tangible for donors. Visuals on the website display the impact of monthly donations (e.g., \$10 per month fills a box of food, which provides 30 meals). This demonstration of return on investment can be very motivating. "We have seen success with this special circle of committed supporters," states Jennifer Belt, chief development officer. "These dedicated donors are also great prospects for planned gifts." Belt recommends follow-up to ensure monthly donors receive a special thank-you.

### Make it a challenge.

Women Against Abuse (Philadelphia, PA) found the most success in attracting attention to its monthly giving by creating a challenge match. "Find a supporter who is willing to donate a sum of money for each new monthly donor. This creates a nice incentive for donors to make the decision to give monthly," recommends Katie Young Wildes, director of advancement. "We gained some brand-new donors through this challenge match and saw several long-term donors for whom the idea of having their dollars matched encouraged them to increase their commitment as monthly donors."

### Promote a project.

Motivate donors through support of a major organizational endeavor. Women Against Abuse also promoted its monthly giving program as it geared up to open a new safe haven for women and children fleeing violent homes. "We encouraged donors to help us 'open the doors' of this new critical facility by signing on as monthly donors," states Wildes.

### Send a welcome kit.

Entice donors by offering a welcome kit for signing up. Women Against Abuse includes personal updates on the organization's latest news, the opportunity to tour the facilities and invitations to special events, as well as a piece of artwork made by a child from their safe haven.

Sources: Jennifer Martinez Belt, Chief Development Officer, Arkansas Foodbank, Little Rock, AR. Phone (501) 569-4315. E-mail: [JBelt@arkansasfoodbank.org](mailto:JBelt@arkansasfoodbank.org). Website: [www.arkansasfoodbank.org](http://www.arkansasfoodbank.org)

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