



# Cutting Through the Noise

Part Three of the Winning Donor Mindshare Webconference Series

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Advancement Forum



# Welcome to the Attention Economy

## Fleeting Mindshare Makes It Harder to Win Alumni Donors

**WIRED** Attention Shoppers!

**FORTUNE** The Attention Economy  
and the Implosion of  
Traditional Media

THE  
WALL STREET  
JOURNAL

Attention Pays

“It's beginning to dawn on people who ponder these kinds of things that it's attention, not information, that lies at the heart of the new online world. In a world full of information, the **scarcest commodities are your eyeballs and ears.**”

### Key Features of the Attention Economy



#### Information Overload

Individuals must sort through more information than every before



#### Split-Second Decisions

Appeals for money or attention elicit gut-check responses from busy consumers



#### Top of the Inbox Wins

Endless influx of communications means consumers focus on the last organization to reach out



#### Relevance Is Paramount

Consumers stay tuned in and primed to buy as long as the organization is engaging them with content that is relevant to their lives

# The Rise of Impulse Giving

## Donor Loyalty Declines as Giving Options Grow

### A Shift in Behaviors

“The next generation of donors have different philanthropic behaviors. **They do more one-off giving** than their predecessors. They come, they go. There’s been a shift away from doing checkbook philanthropy at the end of the year where you look up what causes you gave to last year and make those same gifts again.”

*Barbara Turman  
AVP Annual Giving  
Rutgers University*

Unpredictable

42%

### Impulse Givers

Support a constantly shifting roster of nonprofits whenever the mood strikes

6%

### Habitual Supporters

Make regular donations, but to somewhat random causes

17%

### Selective Givers

Give spontaneously, but do so to a fixed set of causes

16%

### Philanthropic Planners

Routinely give and deliberately select nonprofits to support<sup>1</sup>

Predictable

1) Remaining 20% of respondents' survey answers did not place them into any one of the four categories.



# Winning Donor Mindshare in the Attention Economy

## Maximizing ROI Through Multichannel Annual Giving

### Beginning at the End of the Annual Giving Pipeline



#### Make It Easy to Give



**Goal: Plug Leaky Renewal and Acquisition Pipeline**

*Today's Focus*

#### Cut Through the Noise



**Goal: Expand Pipeline to Include Interested Lapsed and Non-Donors**

*Webinar Date: July 12*

#### Connect Alumni to a Cause



**Goal: Augment Traditional Donor Constituencies with New Donors**

*Webinar Date: July 19*

# Raising the Bar for Outreach

## Commercial Marketing Strategies Shape Alumni Expectations

### Expectations of Today's Alumni...

### ...Not Met by Annual Fund Outreach



#### Daily Offers

Constant product updates, sales pitches, and buying reminders



#### Infrequent Outreach

One-off seasonal solicitations are easily overlooked and forgotten



#### Buying Deadlines

Time-bound deals for customers who act quickly



#### Open-Ended Asks

Alumni are not given any timeframe in which to take action



#### Give to Get

Crowdfunding projects that offer incentives for donations



#### Unpersuasive Value

Annual giving staff are caught off guard by "what's in it for me?"

# Cutting Through the Noise

## Adapting the Annual Giving Playbook to Today's Consumers

### Three Lessons from Best Practice Institutions

#### 1 Cluster Appeals into Micro-Campaigns

Send multiple appeals in a short time window

##### Profiled Practices

- Concentrated Email Blitzes
- Multiplatform Digital Nudges

#### 2 Introduce Giving Deadlines

Specify a campaign end date to inspire immediate action

##### Profiled Practices

- Society Membership Calls to Action



#### 3 Embrace the Transactional Mentality

Explore give-to-get campaigns for priority alumni populations

##### Profiled Practices

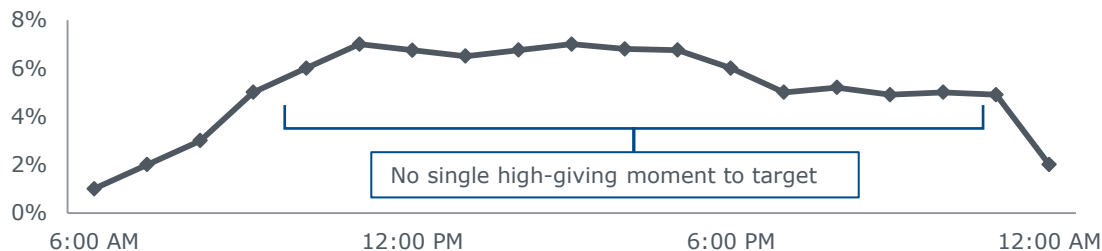
- "Give to Get" Fundraising Campaigns
- No-Cost Experiential Rewards

# Capitalize on December 31

## Multi-Touch New Year's Eve Campaign Brings Outsized Returns

### Last Minute Gifts are Spread Across December 31

Percentage of Online NYE Donations by Hour for All Nonprofits



### Ensure No Gift is Forgotten

Georgetown's NYE Outreach Schedule

- |              |  |   |
|--------------|--|---|
| <b>7 AM</b>  |  | "Last day of 2015 to get your gift in!" |
| <b>12 PM</b> |  | "We're halfway there!"                  |
| <b>4 PM</b>  |  | "Time's running out!"                   |
| <b>10 PM</b> |  | "Only two hours to make your gift"      |



### Phenomenal Results

**2,490**

Donors brought in by NYE emails

**10%**

Of all donors annually

**\$740K**

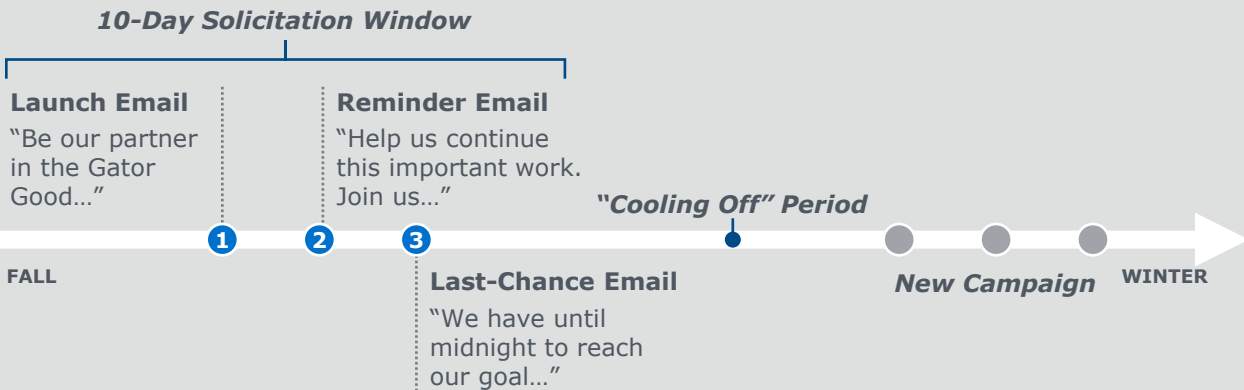
Dollars raised

1) NYE campaign sent to alumni of four schools at Georgetown, numbering about 25,000 individuals.

# Building Momentum over a Week and a Half

Short Multi-Touch Campaigns Develop an Audience for the Ask

## Digital Micro-Campaigns at the University of Florida



## Getting Noticed in Crowded Inboxes

“We wanted to do more in the digital space. Our asks were buried in long copy and contained graphics that had been retrofitted from print media. We saw email and online giving as **an area of huge untapped potential for UF** and were excited to begin testing different tactics.”

*Elizabeth Keppel, Associate Director of Annual Giving  
University of Florida*

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

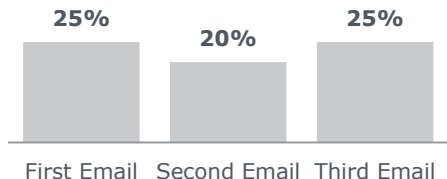


# High-Volume Strategy at the Core

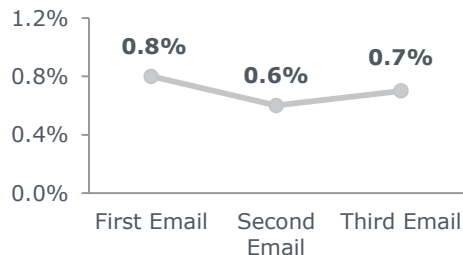
## Multiple Email Touches Significantly Boost Giving

### Alumni Interest Sustained Over Duration of Campaigns

#### Campaign Email Open Rates



#### Campaign Email Clickthrough Rates



### Florida Exceeds Dollar and Donor Goals

#### FY2016 Goals and Outcomes

	Dollars	Donors
<b>FY15 Results</b>	\$143,540	1,017
<b>FY16 Goal</b>	\$186,602	1,576
<b>FY16 Growth Goal</b>	30%	55%
<b>FY16 Results</b>	\$317,359	2,540

**121%**

Growth over  
FY2015

**149%**

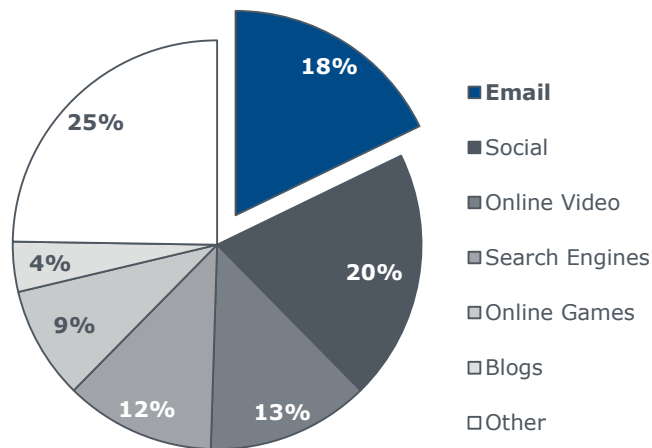
Growth over  
FY2015

# Divided Attention Online

## Email-Only Digital Strategy Out of Sync with Alumni Behaviors

### One of Many Channels

*Daily Time Spent with Digital Media, 2012 (Minutes)*



**Email accounts for less than 1/4 of time spent online**

### Email Appeals Rarely Cut through Digital Noise



Reads newspaper online...  
"Kanye West said what?!"



Browses Facebook...  
"Aunt Lisa is posting again..."



Checks email...  
"Give now? I should, soon."



Shops online...  
"They have it in my size!"



**Email appeal drowned out by other channels**

# Boost Visibility Across the Web

## Institutions Adapt Campaigns to a Multichannel World

### Four Digital Channels to Test

#### Paid Social Ads

- Campaign ads appear in alumni social media feeds
- \$35 spent on 3 ads with average reach of 2,400 alumni per post.

**MUHLENBERG**  
COLLEGE

**BOSTON**  
COLLEGE



#### Text Message Solicitations

- Alumni asked to opt into texts from the university
- Two-thirds of texts are news and updates; one-third are asks



**UC San Diego**

#### Alumni Website Pop-Ups

- Visit to alumni website on Giving Tuesday triggered matching gift pop-up appeal
- Median pop-up gift was \$75, 200% higher than all other channels

#### Targeted Web Ads

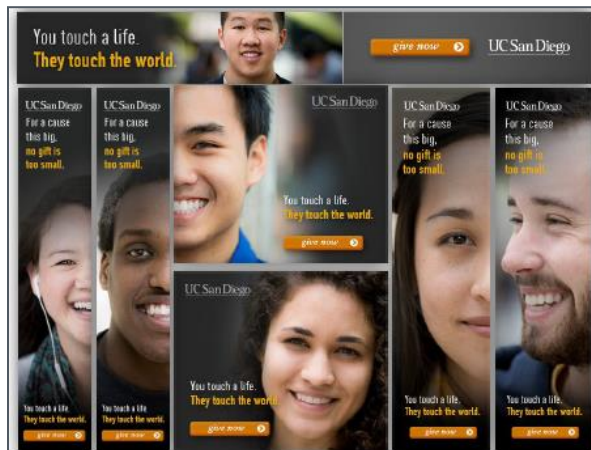
- Side bar and banner appeals appear on third-party sites
- Targeted alumni were 20 times more likely to make a gift

# Everywhere You Look

## Targeted Web Ad Campaign Repeatedly Reinforces Ask

### At UC-San Diego, A Consistent Ask...

- ✓ Clear call to give
- ✓ Unified branding across channels
- ✓ Campaign landing page preserves messaging



### ...Played on Repeat Across the Web

#### Campaign Impressions

**2.1M** Total campaign impressions

**26** Average impressions per household

**4** Months of appeals running

“From a multichannel standpoint, it repeats key messages and lets us get in front of people. It’s very powerful.”

*Meredith Blair  
Executive Director of Annual Giving  
University of California, San Diego*

# Strong Returns from Unexpected Segments

Campaign Performs Particularly Well with Least Loyal Donors

## UCSD Web Ads Bring 8.5:1 ROI...

Campaign KPIs	
Households	79,848
<b>Gifts</b>	<b>1,044</b>
Donors	892
Response Rate	1.12%
Average Gift	\$162
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>\$169,798</b>
Revenue per Donor	\$190
Campaign Cost	\$20,000
<b>ROI</b>	<b>8.5:1</b>

## ...And Make Headway with Challenging Donor Populations

### Gifts by Donor Type

<b>595</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>250</b>
Frequent Donors	Infrequent Donors	Non-Donors

### Dollars Raised by Donor Type

<b>\$105K</b>	<b>\$28K</b>	<b>\$36K</b>
Frequent Donors	Infrequent Donors	Non-Donors

**43%** Of gifts contributed by infrequent and non-donors

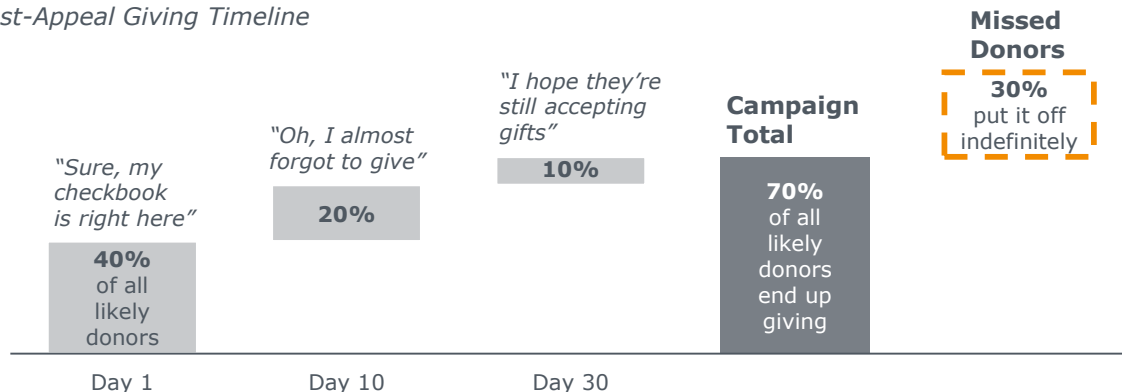
**38%** Of revenue contributed by infrequent and non-donors

# The “I’ll Give Tomorrow” Mentality

Traditional Solicitations Fail to Inspire a Feeling of Urgency

## Gifts Slowly Trickle In, But Some Donors Still Forget

*Post-Appeal Giving Timeline*



## The Long Tail of Giving

“I’m still getting gifts from direct mail appeals we sent out two years ago. Alumni put them in their drawer and say, ‘I’ll do it later.’ But lots of times they don’t.”

*Annual Giving Director  
Public Master’s University*

# Give Them a Reason to Donate Now

## Using Donation Deadlines to Inflect Alumni Behavior

### Three Urgency Levers

#### Higher Returns When You Add Urgency

**\$60**

Average gift when nonprofit **does not use a deadline**

**\$93**

Average gift when nonprofit **uses a deadline**

**15%**

More clickthroughs for email campaigns with an expiring offer

#### 1 Calendar Deadlines

- Fiscal Year End
- Calendar Year End

#### 2 “Unlocking” Deadlines

- Challenge Grants
- Society Memberships

#### 3 Goal-Oriented Deadlines

- Dollar Goal
- Donor Goal

Less  
Arbitrary

More  
Arbitrary

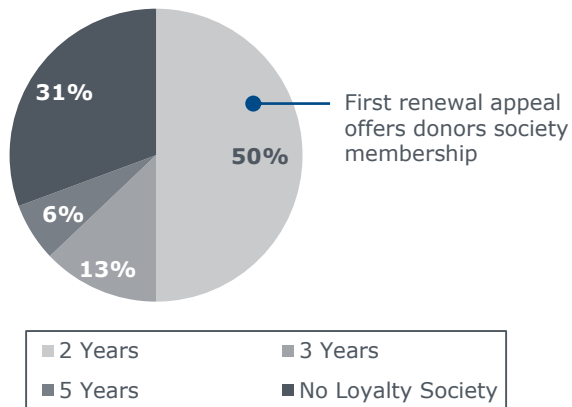
Source: Network for Good, “Online Fundraising Tactics – What Works?,” November 28, 2007; <http://www.networkforgood.com/nonprofitblog/online-fundraising-tactics-what-works/>; Cheney P, “Email Copy Tested: How Adding Urgency Increased Clickthrough by 15%,” June 4, 2012, <http://www.marketingexperiments.com/blog/research-topics/copywriting-research-topics/urgency-email-marketing-copy.html>; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

# The Rise of Two-Year Loyalty Societies

## Stewardship Strategy Combats Attrition and Inconsistent Giving

### Two-Year Minimum for Half of All Consecutive Giving Societies

*EAB Analysis of Member Institutions' Societies*  
n=62



### Georgetown University's Loyalty Society

#### Levels

- Charter: 2-4 years
- Milestone: 5-9 years
- Lifetime: 20+ years

#### Benefits

- Exclusive webinars
- Special access at homecoming events
- Bookstore discount
- Career services support
- Georgetown address labels

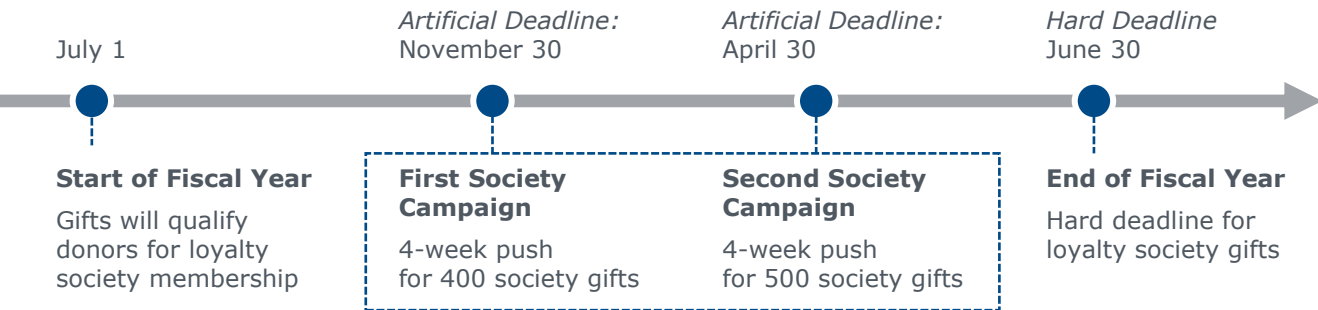
**Date established:** 2010



# A Push to Expedite Renewals

## Mid-Year Deadlines Frontload Loyalty Society Gifts

### Georgetown University Preempts End-of-Year Push with Mid-Year Campaigns



### Key Campaign Elements



One email per week sustains urgency over campaign's duration



Thermometer in emails tracks progress to fundraising goal



Solicitations sent to all eligible loyalty society prospects

# Renewing Donors Across Segments

## Deadline Campaign for Loyalty Society Brings In Diverse Donors

### Loyalty Society Appeal Goals by Segment



#### Boost New Donor Retention

Get donors to second year of giving to boost long-term retention

**113** Donors responded



#### Renew Loyal Donors Earlier

Spread renewals out to avoid rush at the end of the year

**669** Donors responded



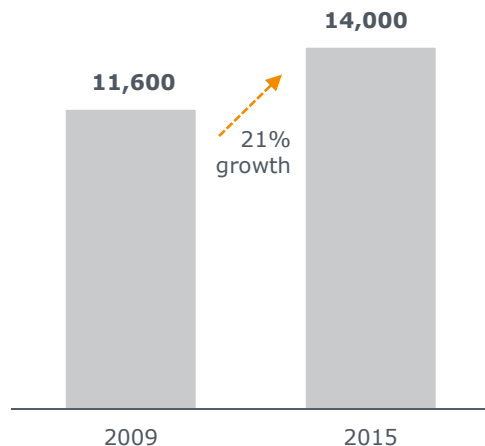
#### Recapture Lapsed Donors

Offer opportunity for renewal to donors whose membership has recently lapsed

**128** Donors responded

### Explosive Donor Growth

*Undergraduate Loyalty Society Members, 2009 and 2015*



# Controversy Surrounds Transactional Giving

## Chief Advancement Officers Disagree About the Wisdom of Incentives



### Not a Good Use of Donors' Dollars

"In the early 1990s, we sent out a lot of widgets and swag as part of the annual giving program. We thought that it might motivate donors to give. But the feedback we ended up getting was, **'Don't spend my money on trinkets.'** I would rather this money be used to support the university's programs.' We have mostly shied away from it since. For a lot of our supporters, it doesn't feel like true philanthropy. Public radio uses it well, but I don't know if it's right for us."

*Chief Advancement Officer  
Public Research University*



### Despite Old Misgivings, It Really Works

"I've completely flip-flopped on the transactional mentality in just the last five years. I used to think that it was only right for athletics donors, who give to get their tickets. For everyone else, it was sacrilege. But in those five years **I started realizing that donors need some sort of carrot** to take action. Our appeals that have a decal or bumper sticker or magnet are always more successful than identical appeals without them. So I think we have to move in this direction."

*Chief Advancement Officer  
Public Master's University*

# Embrace the Transactional Mentality

## Incentive Campaign Offers Socks to Donors

### University of Chicago Sock Campaign Micro-Site

#### UChicago Socks Collection: 2015 Traditions Socks

Traditions Socks are back for one day—today—only! This is your last chance to get UChicago traditions socks before they walk out the door forever. These 2015

UChicago custom socks are inspired by the quirky and intellectual traditions UChicago calls its own: Kuvia, Scav, Shake Day, and the recently reinstated Lascivious Costume Ball. The socks were designed by an undergraduate-founded company, as were 2013's history of the "C" socks and last year's scholar socks.



Salute the sun and your shins.



Give Now

College alumni supporters who make a gift of \$35 or more today, June 30, 2015, will receive a pair of traditions socks as a thank-you for their generosity. There's a limited supply left, and after today we're closing out this design.

#### SOCK DETAILS

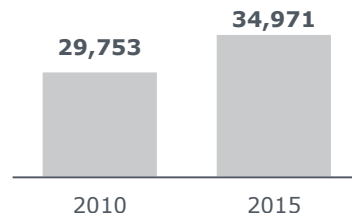
The socks are midcalf dress socks and a blend of cotton, nylon, and spandex. They are available in small/medium (women's size 6-9, men's 4-7.5) and medium/large (women's size 9.5-12.5, men's 8-13). Indicate your size preference in the special instructions section when you make your gift.

#### SHARE YOUR SUPPORT

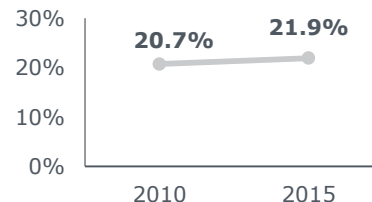
When you share your support you magnify the impact of your gift by inspiring others to give. The details of your gift and private information will not be shared.

### Giving Gains at Chicago

#### Alumni Donor Counts, 2010-2015



#### Alumni Participation Rate, 2010-2015



Source: University of Chicago, Chicago, IL; Make a Gift: University of Chicago, [http://ard.uchicago.edu/socks/index.html#.V5DFY\\_krJhE](http://ard.uchicago.edu/socks/index.html#.V5DFY_krJhE); Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

## Will Incentives Hurt Retention?

### Some Signs Point to “No”

“In my analysis, I have not seen lower retention rates with incentive donors. You can almost look at it as, if you send them socks, or coasters, or a tote bag, **you’re actually creating a relationship that’s beyond the email.** They’re potentially thinking about you for longer than that one transaction point. We’re actually seeing those people come back. We’re retaining them.”

*Elizabeth Sullivan*  
*Executive Director of Annual Giving*  
*Northwestern University*

# Incentives Without the Transaction

## Naming Rights for Minor Campus Landmarks Playfully Attracts Donors

### NAMING RIGHTS FOR THE REST OF US

➤ (OPEN TO ALL) ➤



### THE FLAT SPEED BUMP

...will from this point on be known as Altieri Hill, thanks to Michael ('03) and Danielle ('06) Altieri. Every time you awkwardly hesitate, pump the brakes or brace for a bump that doesn't exist, we hope you'll thank them.



### Wake Forest's "Naming Rights for the Rest of Us" Campaign

- Fully digital campaign: 2-3 emails a week, social media, microsite with videos
- Nine campus landmarks eligible for naming, including a "flat speed bump"
- Two naming rights raffled off every week
- Campaign ran during February, a low-giving month

### Keeping the Campaign Top of Mind

“ We offered two new things to name every week. That meant there was a reason to keep paying attention across all of February. It was a powerful call to action.”

*Blake Absher, Director Of the Wake Forest Fund,  
Wake Forest University*

# “Naming Rights for the Rest of Us”

## Quirky Campaign Captures Alumni Attention

### Campaign Engagement Metrics



**10K+**

Unique page views

**94%**

Of microsite visitors  
had never viewed  
giving page

**31%**

Open rate for campaign  
emails (versus 20%  
overall average)

### Giving Rates for February 2016



**32%**

Increase in  
alumni donors  
(versus February  
2015)

**80%**

Increase in  
dollars (versus  
February 2015)

**\$180K**

Dollars raised  
during campaign

# Compete for Awareness

## Next Steps for Advancement Leaders

### Nine Questions to Cut Through the Noise



#### Cluster Appeals into Micro-Campaigns

- 1 How many email touches do we send as part of our solicitation pushes?
- 2 How many standalone digital campaigns have we launched in the past year?
- 3 What digital channels besides email do we use to reinforce the ask?



#### Introduce Giving Deadlines

- 4 Which slow times of year could use a boost from a giving deadline?
- 5 What urgency levers, like society membership, do we have at our disposal?
- 6 Which alumni populations are most likely to donate if given added urgency?



#### Embrace the Transactional Mentality

- 7 How concerned have our donors been about overhead costs in the past?
- 8 What low-cost incentives could we offer priority populations?
- 9 What special privileges or recognition could we offer in lieu of physical object incentives?





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