President's Blog Launch Guide

Instructions

Mid-level donors often seek enhanced access to senior leaders. A presidential blog can meet this need easily and with little time commitment from the president. Follow these steps to launch a blog that effectively stewards donors.

Step 1: Select a Blog Manager

Although the president will be the face of the blog, another staff member must take ownership of coordinating and editing posts, drafting posts when the president is busy, and managing comments on posts. Use the checklist below to identify an ideal blog manager.

Blog Manager Candidate Checklist

Attributes of Blog Manager	
Access to president	
Point of contact with donors	
Experience with stewardship	
Strong writing skills	

Potential Blog Managers

- · Leadership society director
- · Stewardship manager
- · Director of the annual fund

Step 2: Set Minimum Gift Level for Access

Establish a minimum dollar amount that will grant donors access to the president's blog. An ideal minimum gift level will alleviate a pain point in the giving pyramid where donors upgrade slowly or not at all. Use the questions below to identify a minimum gift that will inflect giving behaviors.

- What giving tiers are already established?
- At which giving levels are a large number of donors currently parked?
- Which giving levels are you trying to move donors toward?
- Which giving level currently lacks strong stewardship initiatives? Which level does not receive the attention it deserves due to problems of scale?
- Which giving level is characterized by low satisfaction scores in donor surveys?

President's Blog Launch Guide (cont.)

Step 3: Finalize Logistics

Set the groundwork for a sustainable initiative by working through key logistical matters ahead of time. Answer the following questions for various aspects of the blog process.



Password Log Ins

- How will passwords be delivered to donors (e.g., by email, in leadership society welcome packet, etc.)?
- Will donors have a single sign-on option that links with their Facebook or email account?



Editing Process

- Who will edit each post?
- What are the criteria this individual should use to edit each post?



Posting Calendar

- How frequently will blog posts be published?
- How will posts align with other donor communications or events?

Step 4: Determine Content

Blogs posts should draw in readers and give them a feeling of insider access. Determine topics using the following criteria.



Board-Level Topics

Identify topics that might be presented to a board member or trustee



Uniquely Presidential

Consider topics in which there is deep and unique value in hearing the president's point of view



High Alumni Interest

Track blog post views, review donor surveys, and consult with alumni relations to identify topics most interesting to alumni

Example Titles from Ithaca College's President's Blog

- "I Do Not Invest in Buildings-I Invest in People"
- "Seeing the Future in a Moment of Darkness"
- "Learning from Tragedy"

President's Blog Launch Guide (cont.)

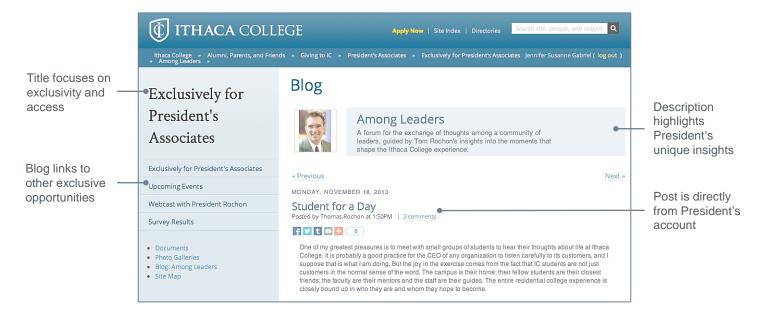
Step 5: Market and Brand the Blog

Eligible donors must know they have access to the blog—and they must know that access is exclusive. Set the groundwork for a sustainable initiative by developing strong marketing and branding initiatives.

Potential Marketing Pushes

- Email blast to all eligible donors introducing the blog
- Email blasts to all eligible donors for each blog post
- Personalized emails from MGOs to high-touch donors
- Inclusion of upcoming blog post topics in newsletters or other standard communications

Branding Techniques from Ithaca College's President's Blog



Step 6: Add Value for Donors Through Comment Thread Discussions

Continue the discussion by allowing donors to comment on blog posts. Add an additional level of stewardship by addressing donor comments. The blog manager should shift through comments and divide them into three categories.

- 1 Comments that do not require a response
- 2 Comments to be addressed by the President
- Comments from top donors that should be addressed by their MGO