How to Win Donor Mindshare

Colleges and universities have struggled for years with declines in their donor pools. As the number of fundraising organizations grows and the pace of appeals ramps up, donors find themselves inundated with solicitations and less inclined to give back to their alma mater. Advancement leaders worry that contractions at the bottom of the giving pyramid spell long-term trouble for their major gift pipeline.

The smartest fundraising shops confront the donor mindshare challenge through a targeted, multipronged strategy. They triage their donor populations, identify the obstacles each one faces to giving back, and implement customized tactics to mitigate pitfalls.



POPULATION

Last-year and current-year donors

KEY CHALLENGE

Interested, loyal "almost-givers" reach the cusp of making a gift, but get distracted or decide to procrastinate.

SOLUTION

Streamline the giving process and hardwire follow-ups to bring interested supporters onboard annually.

- 1 Minimize the "Melt Window" Simplify giving pages and accelerate checkout times.
- 2 Hardwire Follow-Up Triggers Gently remind drop-off donors to complete their gift.
- **5** Funnel Donors Toward Automatic Renewals Encourage supporters to give no-hassle monthly and recurring gifts.

POPULATION Lapsed donors and sympathetic non-donors

KEY CHALLENGE

Prospective donors who are on board with the case for support fail to take action because the institution's appeal hasn't stood out from the thousands of other nonprofit appeals they receive.

SOLUTION

Deploy best-in-class multichannel marketing strategies to capture donor attention and exceed their "inspiration threshold."

- **Cluster Appeals into Micro-campaigns** Periodically send short bursts of themed appeals through various, coordinated digital channels.
- Introduce Giving Deadlines
 Publicize cutoff dates for gifts to motivate donors to take immediate action.

5 Embrace the Transactional Mentality

Explore give-to-get campaigns for targeted groups of hard-to-reach prospects.

POPULATION

Skeptical non-donors, especially young alumni

KEY CHALLENGE

Many alumni reject the idea of giving back to their alma mater, fearing their money will disappear into a budgetary "black hole."

SOLUTION

Reframe appeals around discrete causes on campus that skeptical alumni are passionate about impacting through philanthropy.

- 1 Solicit for "Common Denominator" Causes Highlight a few fund designations that resonate broadly within the alumni community.
- Enfranchise Campus Partners
 Collaborate with campus partners to target individual alumni with the right appeal for them.
- **7** Put Donors in the Driver's Seat
- Empower prospects to find the fund that most inspires them through smart giving page redesigns.

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