



FUNDAMENTALS OF STEWARDSHIP

By necessity, in the business of fundraising, we are goal oriented. We employ moves management techniques, a series of strategically placed moves or touches to further the donor toward the ultimate goal: a gift. Once a gift is made we may think “I’ve reached my goal, a gift has been made, I’m done!” When a gift is made, however, it is just the beginning.

This is where stewardship comes into play. To put it simply, stewardship equals communication. A good stewardship program means that you keep your donors well informed, that they know how important they are to your organization, and that they know their donation is being spent wisely. Without proper stewardship, donors will not properly connect with your organization and may eventually determine that their charitable dollars are not appreciated and are better spent elsewhere. In this sense, stewardship is an important institutional investment of time – one that will result in greater donor investment in the future of your organization.

Stewardship Basics:

- Prompt thank you of the gift – a letter or phone call (or both!).
- Providing recognition that is sensitive to the wishes of the donor.
- On going communication on how the contribution is being spent and recognition of how important the gift is and what it achieved.

Here are a few other ideas:

- Send out a quarterly “non-ask” communication – a letter from your CEO or a specially tailored newsletter. This will make your major donors feel closer to your organization and will give them the “inside scoop”.
- Consider sending out a major donor giving club member survey for donor feedback. Or, even better, meet with donors and ask them face-to-face.
- If you are revamping your case statement, solicit feedback from donors.
- Invite major donors to give a testimonial about why they support your organization. Write a story around this testimonial for a newsletter or annual report. Or, ask them if you can use a quote from the testimonial for your web page.