

ENGAGING PHILANTHROPY - Year End Giving - Never Too Late

Fall sports, rallies, championships, parent meetings, conferences, and the list continues. Every effort on that list has taken a lot of thought, preparation meetings, planning, coaching, or time leading up to them. Now, upon you, that welcome sense of a holiday break.

Before you settle into the holiday break though, an extensive year-end giving program, structured with appropriate counsel and planning, could become the most impactful fundraising effort of your school year. Year-end giving can surpass raffles, benefits, outings, and mini-campaigns combined. For perspective, a strategic year-end giving program could raise from 30 - 50% of your school's donations in a given year. That could definitely be a great holiday gift to your school's financials.

For now, looking at Thanksgiving only days away, what can a school do at this point in the giving season to be in consideration with possible supporters? Whether you have a seasoned fundraising program, or none at all, here are a few ways to stay in front of those considering year-end gifts to non-profits.

Let everyone know - In a day and age of fast e-messages, it's worth distributing a seasonal reminder to your alumni, parents, friends, parish, etc... to keep you in consideration as they make their year-end giving decisions. Include a link, an email address, phone number, or postal address, for them to offer their support. Make sure that someone on the staff is responsible and knows how to respond to all those categories. Nothing turns a person off more for support than being ignored or missed when they offer a gift.

Thank your supporters and volunteers - Giving is a two way street. It is just as important to give thanks, as it is for donors to give support.

Every school has individuals that have shown unusual financial or volunteer support to your organization in the past year. If there is nothing more off putting than being ignored, there is nothing a donor appreciates more than receiving a personal call of thanks from a President or Principal during the holiday season. The moments you put in to a short conversation, or voicemail, can surpass the entire effort you have placed in the last 11 months. You never know, the call just might surprise you with an additional gift.

Let them know they're missed - Make time for those who have gone missing in their financial support this past year. In fundraising, we call these individuals 'LYBUNTS' (Last Year But Unfortunately Not This Year). Maybe you have noticed that specific impactful gifts you have counted on in the past, just weren't realized this year. If possible, or makes sense, include these individuals in your calling list to 'touch base' with them and personally provide a school update. Let them know that you appreciate their past support, and ask if they could do the same this year. You'll find many donors seriously 'just forgot', or thought they gave earlier in the year. They'll appreciate the reminder in time for end of year giving.

Be the Charitable Deduction - For most, your school qualifies as a charitable tax deduction to your donors. Unless the donor is consistently engaged with your school, a general giving population can procrastinate until year-end before realizing they haven't made donations that meet their target amount for the year's charitable deductions. You want to *be* that deduction, and as the saying goes, "if you don't ask, you don't get." As you send out communications, be sure to remind them that donations made by the end of the year are deductible to the fullest extent of tax laws relevant to your school.

Keep in mind that each and every organization your donor has supported or is affiliated with, is sharing their story in hopes of giving consideration. You want to be in that mix of considerations!

Year end giving and the health of your Fundraising Program - Year end giving programs are far more important than most schools realize. The above suggestions are small efforts as you look at the Thanksgiving holiday knock on your door next week. These small efforts can help you make this giving season a bit more bright. However, to get to the 30-50% of your funds raised through year-end giving, many organizations conduct extensive planning, and have very engaged programs.

A well developed and strategic year-end giving program adds a robust health to the possibilities of your entire fundraising effort. DeBrincat Consulting Group can help your school open up new approaches to your overall advancement efforts to increase your financial support. Our commitment is to help you develop accomplished advancement programs.

It is always worth an initial conversation with a DCG professional to consider how we can assist in amplifying your fundraising efforts to support the sustainable financial goals and mission of your school. We can be reached at 734-418-8843, or visit us at www.dcgthefuture.com

We also welcome topic suggestions and questions throughout our 'Engaging Philanthropy' series. Topic suggestions and questions can be sent to dcg@dcgthefuture.com or by contacting DCG at 734-418-8843.

DCG wishes you and yours many reasons to be thankful, and the blessings of the holidays.

Drawing on more than 120 years of in-the-field advancement experience at complex world-class institutions, the DeBrincat Consulting Group understands the day-to-day challenges organizations face to reach fundraising success. Serving private schools, higher education, medical centers, religious and community organizations, DCG partners with you to accomplish mission sustainability through fundraising. For more information call 734-418-8843 or visit www.dcgthefuture.com.