



LOTUS LETTER

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The days are getting cooler and holiday decorations adorn our stores. As we come into this season of gratitude and giving, I encourage all of you to be gracious unto your donors. Without them, you wouldn't be where you are today. Without them, you wouldn't be where you want to be tomorrow. So call them up, send them a card and thank them for their unwavering support of your mission and efforts to improve your community.

Vivian

Lucky Number Seven

Recently, I had the opportunity to hear the Dalai Lama speak at the California Governor and First Lady's Conference. When questioned by First Lady Maria Shriver on how to handle the chaos in our lives, His Holiness the Dalai Lama reflected on an incident which showed that we create our own chaos with the choices we make.

We all know that running a nonprofit organization and the efforts at reaching sustainability often take over our lives. We end up dreaming of details of our upcoming special event and work all hours crafting and re-crafting budgets to make ends meet. The chaos created by fundraising is often endless.

Yet, if we take a moment to reflect on the supporters that we already have and graciously thank them for their time, attention and support of our mission, we can often lessen some of that chaos with the subsequent gifts these moments of appreciation inspire.

In the nonprofit world it is said that it takes seven "thank you's" before a donor makes another gift. How can we thank a donor seven times for a \$25 gift you ask? With creative thinking and another perspective, you are sure to come up with myriad ways of demonstrating your appreciation.

Obviously, the initial thank you letter applies, as does the name listing in the donor section of the newsletter.

By changing your perception and valuing this donor as a significant contributor to your organization and his donation as a major gift to your operations, you can easily come up with a few more.

How about the hand written note at the bottom of the thank you letter? Or the hand written note from a board member? Maybe a personal telephone call can be thrown in. That's five already.

Perhaps there's room in the newsletter to do a brief article about this donor who continues to support your work year after year, even though the donations are small.

What about the invitation to see the program in action? Now, you are not only thanking the donor, but reconnecting him to your mission and why he donates in the first place.

That's seven off the top of my head. What else can you think of?

Remember, it's those small, on-going donations that provide much needed operating support and often lead to major capital gifts and legacy gifts when the donor passes on. Don't discount their value to your agency. Go ahead and draw up a plan to thank your donors seven creative and unique times and lessen the chaos in your fundraising efforts!

Best Wishes for Wonderful Holiday Season!



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