



The Donor-Centric Pledge

WE _____ believe:

1. Donors are essential to the success of our mission.
2. Gifts are not “cash transactions.” Donors are not merely a bunch of interchangeable, easily replaceable credit cards, checkbooks, and wallets.
3. No one “owes” us a gift just because our mission is worthy.
4. Any person who **chooses** to become our donor has enormous potential to assist us in our mission.
5. Having a program for developing a relationship with a donor is how we can tap that enormous potential.
6. We waste that potential when donors are not promptly thanked.
7. “Lifetime value of a donor” is the best (though often overlooked) way to evaluate “return on investment” in fundraising.
8. Donors are more important than donations. Those who currently make small gifts are just as interesting to us as those who currently make large gifts.
9. Acquiring first-time donors is easy but keeping those donors is hard and requires effective stewardship.
10. A prerequisite for above-average donor retention is a well-planned donor-centric communications program that begins with a welcome.
11. Donors want to continue to support us, and that it is our fault if they don’t.
12. Donors want to make a difference in the world – and our mission is one of many means to that end.
13. Donors are investors. They expect their investment to prosper, or they’ll invest somewhere else.
14. We earn the donor’s trust by reporting on the impact their investment has.
15. Asking a donor why she or he gave a first gift will lead to an amazingly revealing conversation.
16. Fund development serves the donor’s emotional needs as much as it serves our financial needs.
17. We are in the “feel good” business. Donors feel good when they help make the world a better place.
18. A prime goal of fundraising communications is to satisfy basic human needs such as the donor’s need to feel important and worthwhile.
19. Each donor defines what a “major” gift is from their perspective.
20. Every first gift can open a door to an entirely new world for the donor, by assisting us in achieving our mission.

From Keep Your Donors: The Guide to Better Communications and Stronger Relationships by Tom Ahern and Simone Joyaux