

FOUNDATIONS

Wyoming Library

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FUND RAISING REQUIRES CUSTOMER SERVICE

In the giving pyramid the tip consists of philanthropists who are nurtured to provide the large donations. At the base of the pyramid are the hundreds of individuals and families who make the \$20 to \$100 contributions. Research has shown that those at the base of the pyramid are your library users and make the contribution because of the resources and services that they have received. To ensure that those contributions continue to flow to your foundation, a philosophy of excellent customer service needs to exist in the library organization. Without such excellence those potential donors along the base of the pyramid may take their contributions to other activities that provide satisfactory (or better) customer service. It is no one thing that makes excellent customer service because every person coming in contact with the library has a different interest or need. Customer service is a process of continually analyzing past events and future possibilities to determine what works well for customers and what does not. Customer service means that employees are focused on the public whether in constant contact or behind the scenes. It means that the facilities are customer centered, policies are customer centered, and importantly, library employees are customer centered.

Fund raising efforts and library customer service go hand in hand so don't overlook that important relationship.

ONLINE GIVING STILL STRONG

The publication NonProfit Times reports that philanthropic giving large and small will continue through this holiday season despite Wall Street problems. Of those who make contributions through online web sites, nearly 7 out of 10 people surveyed plan to donate the same amount or more in the 2008 holiday season than they donated in the 2007 holiday season. People who plan to donate find the charity/organization's Web site most helpful in deciding which charity to support (27%) followed by email from friend or family member asking for support (15%), according to the survey results. The article summarizing online giving is at <http://www.nptimes.com/08Oct/news-081027-1.html>.

ASKING OUT LOUD

From Jason Dick on the fundraising blog, A Small Change (www.asmallchange.net), comes the following advice: practice the ask out loud. Find a friend or a fellow board member, and role play asking for money in the way you plan to ask your potential donor. Asking out loud lets you work out the "nerves" and work out the wording so that the actual ask will go smoothly. Read the entire article, "Ask Out Loud," at <http://www.asmallchange.net/ask-out-loud/>, and if you're fumbling for words, try his "Sample Solicitation Semantics at <http://www.asmallchange.net/sample-solicitation-semantics/>

FEATURED WEBSITE: WEBJUNCTION

WebJunction (www.webjunction.org) is an online community for library staff, trustees and advocates can “connect, create and learn.” Under their “Library Management” section are a number of fund raising and advocacy resources including these:

- Funding Brainstorm – <http://www.webjunction.org/funding/articles/content/442669>
- Fundraising Thank You Letters – <http://www.webjunction.org/fundraising/articles/content/433866>
- Elements of a Good Grant Proposal <http://www.webjunction.org/grants/articles/content/445685>

DRAFTING VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Any job is a lot easier if you know what you’re supposed to do! Volunteer job descriptions can aid in recruiting foundation board members, organizing fund raising efforts and guarding against burnout. The website FundraisingIP.com (www.fundraisingip.com) has advice on how to draft volunteer job descriptions at <http://www.fundraisingip.com/fundraising/drafting-volunteer-job-descriptions/>.

Comment: When recruiting board members, it can be too easy to downplay time and financial commitments, and to not make it clear that the job of foundation members is to ask for donations. Having a written job description makes it clear up front what the expectations are and ensures that the people who join your effort are willing and able to do the work.

FUNDRAISING DONATION REQUEST LETTERS

Also from FundraisingIP are tips on how to write fundraising donation request letters www.fundraisingip.com/fundraising/help-me-write-fundraising-donation-request-letters/. Direct mail can reach a large number of donors, but people are often so inundated with “junk mail” that you will need to find ways to make your appeal stand out. Among the advice are these tips:

- Identify yourself clearly – sounds obvious, right? But if you do not make this clear, even your supporters may toss your mail.
- Start with good news, and emphasize benefits – donors don’t want to know how desperate your situation is. Instead, they want to know that you are doing good work and that their donation will enable even better things to happen.
- Ask, ask, ask – ask for a donation at least three times in your letter so that those who skim will have a better chance to see your appeal.
- Make it easy to donate – return envelope (preferably stamped or business reply), contact information, options for telephone or online donations are all good to include.

This **Wyoming Library Foundations** newsletter is sent to the Wyoming county library directors for distribution to their library foundation and library board members. Individuals interested in viewing this can bookmark <http://will.state.wy.us/slpub/foundations/index.html>. Comments on the content of this publication or contributions to share with other library foundation board members can be sent to Jerry Krois at jkrois@state.wy.us or Susan Vittitow at svitti@state.wy.us.