

The Major Gifts Report

MONTHLY IDEAS TO UNLOCK YOUR MAJOR GIFTS POTENTIAL

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DONOR STEWARDSHIP

Celebrate Your Campaign's Investors

By Kerry Nenn

It's crucial that every campaign donor feels appreciated. You also want them to know they were part of something special. To maximize stewardship, Kathryn Munro, executive director of recognition and stewardship at Dartmouth College, recommends the following steps to celebrate campaign participants.

- ❑ **Don't wait to celebrate.** Munro explains, "So many institutions wait until their goal is met to celebrate the success of their campaign. That's a mistake because you're not leveraging the window to inspire new or repeat gifts. Instead, institutions should use their platforms — online, print, events — to tell stories of impact, to recognize those who rally around specific initiatives and to thank those who have stepped up. This practice should start early and ramp up in the final months of campaign." Munro notes that celebrating before campaign close also provides opportunities to refine messaging, inspire non-donors, and build momentum.

- ❑ **"Show 'em you know 'em."** Munro says, "This phrase, which I heard several years ago from Mark Lanum at Brown University, rings in my head every day. In a campaign, you will ideally have a high volume of donors at all levels of the pyramid. Yet, it is our job to ensure that each donor feels valued, known, and appreciated. It is therefore imperative to have the

systems, technology, and people in place to maintain and analyze high volumes of donor data and to have in place guidelines for any activities or recognition that will commence when a donor gives at a certain level or to a certain designation. Some donors love recognition, some prefer anonymity. Some donors get excited about detailed fund reports, while others would rather not receive anything at all. Let's get the robust systems in place so that we can show our donors we are listening."

- ❑ **Diversify.** Use all your platforms to celebrate campaign investors and accomplishments: in-person and online events of all sizes, one-on-one meetings, videos, email, websites, social media, printed reports, letters, recognition walls, specialized token gifts that carry a meaningful connection to your institution. "There are so many ways to consume information now," notes Munro. "By diversifying how you celebrate supporters you can reach the widest audience possible. And back to the first tip: If this diversification is done before the end of campaign, you're also building momentum toward your campaign goal." ♦

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