

An Initiative of the Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team

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Ask & Receive

Raising Funds and Friends for Campus Ministry

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February, 2011

EXPANDING THE CIRCLE OF FRIENDSHIP

The concerns seem to be universally voiced: Our ministry has such a small database. The previous director was not good at keeping records. Our annual appeal is sporadic and we haven't kept track of our donors over time. We have a lot of names on our mailing list, but not many of them give. How can we build a strong base of loyal supporters who genuinely care about this ministry?

First, recognize that not everyone on your mailing list will be immediate donors. They have to get to know you and love what you do. They may be persons of interest, but they may not know much about your mission, even if they are lapsed alums from years ago. Your task is to inform them and invite them to take a deeper look at your ministry. You have to get their attention and make the case for your ministry. You have to grow their friendship and build their trust. If your ministry isn't among the top three causes to which they give, how can you position yourself so that you will be?

Second, people need reasons to give and most of us give for a variety of reasons. Some may do so out of appreciation—their life was changed in some way by your ministry. Some may give from a faith perspective and out of concern for young adults in the church. Some may give out of civic duty or family example. Your challenge is to connect with the multiplicity of reasons why people give and provide a way for them to connect with your ministry. If, for example, you appeal only to the alums who may have fond memories, you miss a host of others who may not be alums and may not have these great memories. Think about what they

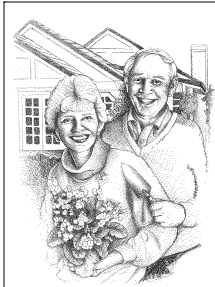
payoff is for them. What would they like to accomplish with their gift? How can you make that happen?

Third, remember that this whole business of fundraising is more about building a circle of friends than it is about getting the gift. Smart donors know when you are more interested in “picking their pocket” than you are in building a relationship. If you raise funds without raising friends, you have only done half the job, and it will have a deleterious effect in the long run. We need to learn to see beyond the gift to the person who gave it and find ways to build an ongoing relationship with the donor that is mutually rewarding. That's called “donor stewardship” and it pays off in the end for both the donor and the ministry.

Finally, be expansive in your thinking about whom to invite more deliberately into your friendship circle. At the center would be those who know you and love you best. This would include current and past board members, some alums, and faculty and staff with whom you have had frequent contact. The next ring might be leaders and pastoral staff of local congregations of your denomination. Another ring would include parents of students and other denominational connections in general. Still another ring might include friends of current donors, ecumenical partners, area businesses, neighbors of the ministry, those who volunteer and support similar causes, and philanthropic individuals in the greater community.

Make those persons more than a name on a mailing list or a signature on a check. Invite them to make a connection with your ministry that is enhancing for both you and them. Develop the friendship as you develop the funding.

BUILDING DONOR LOYALTY



"Our business is donor development, and that is only possible through the formation of a tangible relationship. As donors by and large, are honest and intelligent people, it is a process that can only be done with honesty and intelligence."

**Ken Burnett
RELATIONSHIP
FUNDRAISING**

Building donor loyalty with your ministry is significant, hard work these days. Equally as important as getting the first gift is the responsibility of deepening the commitment of that donor to who you are and what you do. Ongoing donor loyalty is built on connecting with the core values of your ministry and how those values are expressed through your mission.

In 2005 the DonorTrends Project¹ surveyed 2,333 American adults and rubbed those results against 35 years of experience and observations of the sponsoring groups. In the survey responses, 59% claimed "high loyalty" to the causes or charity they support. This kind of loyalty surpasses loyalty to doctors, sports teams, and automobiles, by the way. Loyalty is a big deal when it comes to giving.

Not surprisingly, as the size of the gift increases, the loyalty percentage increases as well. Of donors giving over \$1,000 annually, 81% espouse loyalty as the key ingredient. Increased education on the part of the charity also increases donor response. Loyalty increases with the age of the donors: pre-Boomers (born before 1946) are generally more loyal than post-Boomers (born after 1964). Also, online donors indicate more loyalty than offline donors. Gender does not appear to play a role in loyalty.

In this report the distinction is made between those who are simply "contributors" and those who are loyal donors who see themselves as "members" in some form or other. This

loyal group, only 33% of the total, actually seek to educate themselves about your organization. The other 66% are on a slide toward informational and emotional disengagement. Building donor loyalty is a constant uphill struggle, but one which must be done if you are to maintain and expand your friendship circle.

The study reported that the reason most often given for a donor leaving an organization is, "I can no longer afford to contribute." The commentary on the report, however, argues that this is probably not the real reason, although it may certainly be true in some cases. It likely has to do with donor priorities. These days donors are increasingly discriminating. They are performance-oriented and judge the value of their gift against the overall accomplishments of the organization. They pick winners and tend to stay with them, unless they discover otherwise. In addition, they invite others to join them in a cause they believe in, particularly younger donors.

Our ministries can learn from this study and become more effective in building donor loyalty by:

1. Spending more quality time with strong, consistent donors,
2. Giving priority to inviting repeat gifts,
3. Reconsidering how you tell your story to loyal supporters, so that their expectations are met by your accomplishments,
4. Monitoring your "casualties" so that you know what discourages loyalty,
5. Studying what other successful organizations do to keep loyal supporters.

¹A collaboration of Craver, Mathews, Smith & Company (CMS) and The Prime Group, © 2006.

An Exercise in Finding Lost Donors

Every organization has a lot of deadwood or "low tippers" on their list of prospective donors. Consider this exercise in recovering those who appear outside your circle of supporters. In as personal a way as possible, through conversation, phone calls, or a survey instrument, find out why you have the name in the first place (former students, board members, etc.) and why they have discontinued their support. Be direct and ask for direct feedback. You may not get an overwhelming response, perhaps 10%, but those who are kind enough to respond will tell you volumes about what you need to do to re-interest them and retain others like them who may be ready to drop off the edge. Involve your board in the research and in the conversations. At this point you have nothing to lose and everything to learn.

FUNDRAISING/BOARD DEVELOPMENT SEMINARS ON THE HORIZON

The Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team is sponsoring a continuing series of seminars on fundraising and board development across the country this spring. The seminars are open to all campus ministry leadership, including staff, board members, denominational representatives, and student leaders. There is no cost for the seminars, except for the cost of travel to the location. Contact the coordinators listed below for more information about these future seminars.

- ◆ March 4, 2001 in Palo Alto, California
Lutheran/Episcopal Campus Center at Stanford University
Coordinator: Greg Schaefer prgreg@stanford.edu
- ◆ March 19, 2001 in University Park, Pennsylvania
Pasquerilla Religious Center at Penn State University
Coordinator: Alicia Anderson ara2@psu.edu
- ◆ March 26, 2001 in La Grange, Texas
Lutherhill Retreat Center
Coordinator: Brad Fuerst pastor@lcmhouston.org
- ◆ May 14, 2001 in Chicago, Illinois
Brent House at the University of Chicago
Coordinator: Stacy Alan stacyalan@brenthouse.org
- ◆ May 21, 2010 in Ft. Collins, Colorado
Lutheran Campus Center at Colorado State University
Coordinator: Connie Winter-Eulberg lcmcsu@lamar.colostate.edu

Two successful seminars in Columbus, Ohio and Charlotte, North Carolina are already completed. More seminars are in the planning stages and will be held in the coming months, time and budget permitting. For more information about seminars or for general resources, you may contact the Rev. Galen Hora, ECMT consultant at ecmtconsultant@hotmail.com

"When you look at the data, it appears quite clear that giving is not based on the economy. As the economy rises, giving rises with it, but seldom as fast as the economy. Now here's what's interesting. When the economy declines, philanthropy continues to increase, but at a slower pace. In boom periods Americans give a lower percentage of their income, but in tough times they give more."
Jerry Panas, "Raising Funds in Tough Times," ideas@philanthropy.com

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

Ask & Receive is a newsletter designed to supplement the Fund Raising Initiative of the Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team. It presents a series of ideas and resources on a monthly basis to address the challenges of fund raising and board development, focused on the particular context of campus ministry. Each issue deals with an aspect of fund raising, such as the annual appeal, visiting donors, or tuning up the board.

Ask & Receive is published on behalf of the Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team at 2481 Como Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55108. The editor is Galen Hora. Phone: 763-350-3898 E-mail: ecmtconsultant@hotmail.com

A BOARD JOB DESCRIPTION

In tandem with a having a competent, energetic, creative staff member or campus minister, it is highly important that the board be highly qualified, carefully trained, and deeply committed to the mission set before them. One of the ways this is accomplished is by working out a comprehensive job description that can be used in recruiting, educating, and evaluating the work of the board over time. It becomes a dynamic understanding of how talented, interested people can blend their interests and energy into a focused, effective organization. It is a unifying document that brings everyone together on the same page and gives unity to the tasks ahead.

The three primary responsibilities of any board are: (1) vision, (2) resources, and (3) effectiveness. These are directly related to the core values held collectively by the ministry and the stewardship of what God and faithful supporters have provided to carry the ministry forward and accomplish its goals. To some extent congregation committees that oversee campus ministry are charged with the same responsibilities.

However the ministry is organized, those who serve in the governing structure must know why they were invited to serve and what their responsibilities are once they come onboard. To do less would only invite frustration and confusion, in many cases allowing one or two members to guide all of the decisions and shoulder all of the responsibilities. A healthy board is in line with what St. Paul described as a healthy body—members with particular gifts, but building up the strength of the whole community.

It is both a courtesy and a matter of good management that everyone who signs on to be a board member receives a job description. This allows them to know in advance what will be expected of them and will serve as an evaluative tool throughout their time of membership. However, it is not so much a listing of tasks to be performed, as

focuses on "performance outcomes" rather than on activities, which are better delegated to staff or student leaders. Is the ministry effective; are there enough resources to do what is intended; and does it sync with the overall vision?

In order to faithfully accomplish the mission that has been entrusted to it, board members should agree to:

- ♦ Understand the mission and goals of the ministry,
- ♦ Become knowledgeable with the life and culture of the university and the needs of young adults on campus,
- ♦ Provide vision and direction for the future of the ministry,
- ♦ Contribute financially to the ministry on an annual basis, as generously as possible,
- ♦ Secure, manage and allocate funds provided to the ministry by all sources,
- ♦ Maintain liaison with congregations and the wider denomination to interpret the ministry and seek feedback,
- ♦ Be knowledgeable of important deadlines and issue accurate reports,
- ♦ Attend regularly scheduled meetings of the board,
- ♦ Serve on special committees or task groups as assigned,
- ♦ Hire, direct and evaluate the work of professional staff,
- ♦ Attend programs of the ministry as appropriate or when invited,
- ♦ Oversee property management, including upkeep, insurance and expansion,
- ♦ Participate in a regular evaluation of the board, and
- ♦ Ensure that the ministry complies with all applicable local, state and federal laws.

As potential new members for the board or committee are interviewed and recruited, this job description will be useful in describing expectations, allowing the person to gauge their own interests and skills over against the common expectations. There should be no surprises. Likewise, once a person has signed on to serve on a board, they should be expected to keep their commitment. A healthy board will thrive with mutual understanding.