



# CHARITABLE GIVING KC

Connecting Hearts & Minds

## *Connecting Hearts and Minds*

In our Connecting Hearts and Minds emails we share articles and resources with you that we think will enhance your nonprofit knowledge database and give you ideas for your own nonprofit work based on our experience.

### **Not Targeting Mid-Level Donors is a HUGE Mistake!**

#### **Are you targeting Mid-Level Donors?**

If not...you could be making a HUGE mistake! If you aren't cultivating this critical donor group then you could be missing out on a wonderful opportunity. Even though many organizations don't target mid-level donors as a specific group, the research shows mid-level donors represent one of your biggest opportunities for future growth!<sup>1</sup>

#### **What makes someone a Mid-Level Donor?**

Typically, a midlevel donor is someone who gives between \$1,000 to \$5,000 to a nonprofit organization.<sup>3</sup> Different organizations may have different standards for their own programs, but generally this is what the research is referring to when they speak about midlevel donors. The giving amount of these donors is typically more than the lower level donors and should receive additional attention from the nonprofit that differentiates them from lower level donors.

#### **What Nonprofits are NOT doing**

Nonprofits aren't calling their \$1,000+ donors! Nonprofits are oftentimes sending communication from the name of their organization, rather than from a real person and they aren't calling the donors by name in these mass communications. Nonprofits aren't saying thank you enough. Best practices say that a nonprofit should thank a donor at least three times for every gift they give you.<sup>1</sup> The more personalized you can make these communications, the better. It lets your donors know they are more than just a dollar number, but also a person who cares about your cause.

#### **How can your organization cultivate Mid-Level Donors?**

There are a variety of ways you can cultivate mid-level donors within your nonprofit organization. As previously mentioned, more personalization in your communications with your donor base, the better. Another option is to have your mid-level donors on a specific

email list separate from your more blanket, mass emails and sending them different emails in addition to the mass emails. In these emails, ensure that they are personalized and feature something that will help draw your donors even more into your nonprofit cause. It also pays to really watch your analytics to see which emails tend to get opened more to help you judge what sorts of additional information these donors are interested in hearing about.

Another way to engage mid-level donors is through surveys. You can ask almost anything in these surveys and it can help you with the above suggestion as well, finding out what they would like to hear more about from your organization. The surveys can also be used to help calculate giving potential for donors. Dr. Russell James has some amazing research on ways to cultivate surveys that get specific information from donors without seeming to be asking them only about money. Remember, they want to be seen as a valued member of the organization, not just as a dollar sign.

Lastly, have specific events that bring these donors together. Oftentimes nonprofits have a legacy society for people who have named the organization in their will or a giving society for those who give very large donations, but not for mid-level donors. There is no reason this has to be the case! Mid-level donors may very well become your major donors and legacy society members in the future, so cultivating that relationship is key.

We leave you with the following, "While mid-level donors may only make up to 5 to 10% of your nonprofit's donor base, their contributions can amount to nearly half of your organization's revenue!"<sup>3</sup> It is very possible that with the right cultivation these mid-level donors will turn into major donors.

**Up Next?** Stay tuned for our next *Connecting Hearts and Minds* article in a few weeks!

**Sources:**

1 Long, Lindsay. (June 8, 2021). "5 Effective Tips for Your Mid-Level Donor Strategy: How To Launch an Effective Mid-Level; Donor Program." *Faircom NewYork*.

2 TruSense Marketing. (2022). "Success with Mid-Level Donors: How to Single Out, Engage, and Cultivate Your Most Important Audience Segment."

3Kachuriak, Tim. (2017). "The Mid-Level Donor Crisis." *NextAfter*.

4 Axelrad, Claire. (2022). "Donor Thank You Calls." *Clarification: Philanthropy not Fundraising*.

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**Quote**

"Donor communication is not an add-on. It is a core fundraising function that produces long-term income security. Make meaningful communication with your donors your development department's top priority."<sup>4</sup>

*Penelope Burk, Donor Centered Fundraising*

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