



Step 7: THANK

If you want to hold on to your donors and certainly if you want them to give more it is essential that you thank them in the most appropriate and timely way. It is also important that the way you thank them is consistent with the way you have thanked donors who have given a similar amount in the past.

You should consider:

- How you should do it i.e. what is the most appropriate method – phone, a visit, in writing, with a gift etc
- Who should do it i.e. member of staff, the director or chief executive, a trustee, a beneficiary etc
- What level you should do it at i.e. what have you given to people who have given similar amounts
- What considerations should be taken into account i.e. if they are particularly fond of crafts perhaps it would be most appropriate to give something that has been made by one of your beneficiaries.

If you do decide to give a gift remember that it doesn't have to cost the earth. In fact your donor may be concerned that you are wasting money if you give something they consider extravagant. This highlights once again how important it is to get to know your donors personally.

Also there is not much in terms of material goods that you can give a rich person. They are more likely to appreciate something that costs you little but has a sentimental value. Be creative and think outside the box.. For example if your beneficiaries produce things you could give something which is specially made by them for the donor which reflects their interest for example in nature or in children.

Step 8 – STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship is a term taken from the United States. In order to encourage your donors to keep giving, an organisation needs to take care of them in a way that responds to their expectations and needs. It is about putting your donors' needs at the heart of your fundraising.

Remember that it is easier and much more cost efficient to encourage current donors to give more money than to find new ones. So once you have some donors they are well worth investing in.

There has been a lot of research done in the United States on the impact of stewardship on fundraising and the likelihood of getting higher and/or repeat gifts. Research¹ has shown that:

¹ Thanks! A guide to donor centred fundraising by Penelope Burke

- 80% of donors said just the promptness of a thank you made a difference to how positively they felt about an organisation
- 57% of donors said they would give a bigger gift if they were stewarded well
- 63% of donors said they would give again because of good stewardship

How might you steward?

- Build relationships with your donors
- Survey donors from time to time about their views and preferences
- Ask what communications donors wish to receive, how often and through which medium
- Ask how often they want to be 'Ask'ed
- Focus on donors as people rather than their money
- Respond swiftly to complaints
- Provide meaningful information
- Thank promptly and personally
- Don't intrude on people
- Make sure some of the mailings in between gifts are informative only
- Offer donors appropriate means to become more meaningfully involved in your work. For example by visiting a project, meeting a beneficiary, getting involved in a petition or demonstration etc.

What resources could you use to steward?

- Reports, emails, letters, phone calls, website
- Communication from stakeholders
- Letters from patrons²/the Chief Executive/Trustees
- Personal messages e.g. 'I saw this and thought of you'
- Photos and case studies
- Videos
- Articles taken from the media about your work
- Organisational publications

² Someone that supports and champions your organisation