Confluent Impact communications

CONFLUENT E NEWSLETTER TOPICS

Tip of the month: Multi Touch Required! Christa Heibel

We all know it takes multiple "touches" to bring someone to the point of sale or donation. I have seen research saying 7-10 touches; 6-8 impressions; an average of 9 targeted attempts…. you get the picture.

But in today's world the consumer is being targeted with messages from multiple mediums: TV/media, radio, print advertising, direct mail, phones, email, online advertising and now social media. So how do we make sure we are doing the **right** quantity and quality of touches, and winning the battle to captivate our audience's attention?

The following are some recommended best practices:

1. **Consistency**: We must be consistent in brand and message so that every impression builds on the previous one so that no impression can be confused with another's product/service.
2. **A plan**: "To fail to plan, is to plan to fail". Although a good organization can be flexible and adapt as needed; all concerned parties in charge of producing profitable fundraising results should be on the same page with a clearly thought out and executable plan. Removing errors from the flow of internal communications means removing missed opportunities! This plan should also include an approved budget to ensure that all projects come to fruition.
3. **Integration**: Make sure the plan uses all logical mediums for your targeted audience based on demographics such as age, income, interests and location so that the most effective platform is utilized. This platform could be TV/media; radio, print advertising, direct mail, phones, email, online advertising or social media that fit your prospective donor without busting your budget.
4. **Customization**: With today's management systems that allow us to gather and analyze data on donors and prospective donors, we must develop a smart approach based on donor preferences. That does not mean we leave the best practices of integration, and target individuals through a single medium. Instead we should know how the donor prefers to receive information so we can optimize results by targeting their comfort zone for information updates (i.e. email, telephone, Facebook). Tools like voice variable calls and variable print can also personalize a message to successfully reach prospects and continue to cultivate existing donors.
5. **The Right Partner(s)**: Work with firms that demonstrate the ability to be strategic and long-term thinkers for your organization. You do not need somebody looking to turn a quick buck. You need partners at the table who are willing to work together, support your plan and make recommendations that serve your best interest both short and long term. Good partnerships should allow for win-win relationships, and new partners should be able to honor existing relationships even where services may overlap to give you the best return.

Stay tuned for more information from Confluent on an upcoming webinar in the fourth quarter of 2010 on how to make sure these steps are part of your process for maximum donor participation and new donor development in 2011.

Product Highlight or Case Study: The Tipping Point – Jack Tracksler

We all spend a fortune attracting donors. Countless hours and dollars are spent designing the mail piece, writing the letter and formatting the perfect reply device. Then we create the live calling program, and again, we draft and craft a script with "the right feel" so the person we are calling feels compelled to donate or make a pledge. And then we wait for the money to come in….

With the live calling program, we send out multiple follow up pledge reminders and continue to wait. Sometimes we send out as many as three pledge reminders; more printing, more postage, more cost -- lower net.

Several hundred years ago when I started in Development, the adage was "you can't thank them enough" and "you can't ask them too often." It seems to me that we have all forgotten the former and only remember the latter. Shame on us all!

As you all know, or at least I hope you know, **an automated phone call in front of a fund appeal will increase the response rate of that mailing by anywhere from 15% - 40%**. This simple little call will add approximately 10% to overall cost and almost double the response. I will never understand why everyone is not doing it. The script just needs to simply tell the donor what their contribution has accomplished and thank them. I call it the "ultimate envelope teaser".

In head-to-head tests, **our live calling programs outperform our competitors -- every time!**

We write great scripts and our callers are trained specifically for each client's needs and requirements. Our pledge reminders are thoughtful and timely. BUT, we have a secret.

Just before the second pledge reminder mailing, we send out an automated phone call to remind the donor of their pledge, and thank them for what their gift will accomplish. This gesture pushes our response rates above and beyond those of our competitors. In fact, for many programs, we do not need to send a third pledge reminder letter!

Call Christa or myself to find out how this and other innovative solutions from Confluent can **dramatically lower your overall costs and increase your fundraising totals**.

Partner Profile: DMW Direct

DMW Direct helps build membership and donor programs for mission-driven organizations nationally, in the public broadcasting, arts & culture, religion, education, healthcare and social service arenas.

We help our clients develop the full potential of their donors through financially-accountable, direct response fundraising and marketing.

The Fundraising Services Group within the agency is staffed by 20 direct response professionals with in-house list brokerage, strategy, analytical, creative and production management experience. They're led by Tom Hurley who started raising money for public television when President Nixon threatened to cut off all funding during the Watergate Hearings, and he's been building donor constituencies ever since.

Tom, do you have advice for newcomers to fundraising?

Over the years, I've been privileged to work with some incredibly bright and effective clients. Some developed their skills over time; others were stars from their first campaign.   Each shared common traits that *everyone*, including newcomers, should develop:

1) **Give clear instructions**.

I've attended many creative input sessions in which clients were not prepared to clearly state what they were looking for and then were disappointed with the first design and copy draft. Tell the next person in the process chain exactly want you want, or better yet ask their advice. Always communicate a clear understanding of what you want.

2) **Stick to deadlines.**

Simple statement – hard to do. But a lot of folks still don't realize that even if you're only a day late with an approval or file transmission, you could cause a major delay in your campaign. Develop a reputation for timeliness so when you do have a deadline problem, those who serve you will recognize it as a real emergency and bend over backward to help you.

3) **Pay your bills on time.**

If your organization has cash flow problems, fess up. Your providers will work with you. Don't allow your accounts payable folk to become 'slow pays' as a matter of habit. You'll be amazed at the extra cooperation you'll receive from your agency and vendor partners when you pay your invoices promptly.

4) **Never make copy or design changes at proof stage**.

Not so many years ago, artists and writers collaborated to develop a loose 'comp' that would be approved or rejected by a client before any more work was done. Changing some words, and moving a few photos meant starting over. But at least progress was being made. Now I often see the final decision maker waiting to review creative projects until moments before going to print or deployed as an e-mail blast. Stick to deadlines; review concepts early on and approve great work as early as is practical.

5) **Return calls promptly**.

Many of the good habits I mentioned earlier all involve clear communication. But sometimes, I'd welcome *any* communication. E-mails, voice mails, and text messages fall on you like hail in a thunderstorm. None of this can be used as an excuse. Folks downstream from you in the project chain need to hear from you – before your boss does. Ignoring them is not a form of control; it's a sign you're out of control. Pay real close attention to the people who serve you.

6) **Don't sweat the small stuff.**

Direct response fundraising can be an awesomely complex medium. Stay focused on your strategy, and execute your plan. Trust your support team. And don't sweat the small stuff.

I wish I could claim these as rock-solid personal habits, but I can't. But I'm working on them and I hope you are too!

If individual donors and members are a major part of your development program, perhaps DMW Direct can help you – and your organization's bottom line. Feel free to contact Tom Hurley at 508-202-4007 or thurley@dmwdirect.com.