



GROW YOUR MINDSET

**EASY, AFFORDABLE,
EFFECTIVE
“FRIEND RAISING”
& BUSINESS
TO BUSINESS
COMMUNICATION**
FOR YOUR
NONPROFIT
AND BUSINESS

Take the guesswork out of the work. You're a busy volunteer, not a career marketer. We get that, and we can help.

Affinity Connection is a direct marketing and communications solution for nonprofit and affinity groups, offering services **designed to get results.**

Read on for our volunteer-approved
**7-STEP PROCESS
FOR FRIEND-RAISING
SUCCESS!**



Affinity Connection, Inc.

📍 302 S. Burrowes St.
State College, PA 16801

Contact :

☎ (800) 598-4050 x131 / (814) 237-0481 x131

✉ connect@affinityconnection.com / greg@affinityconnection.com

🌐 affinityconnection.com

GROW YOUR MINDSET

Invest in meaningful relationships—not just transactional ones.

In today's competitive communications landscape, it's not enough to be clear and concise. You have to connect with your members, and it must be a two-way dialogue.

Have you struggled to hire the right person or staff for marketing or fundraising? Why hire one person when you can hire an entire team for less? Why rely on freelance designers, writers, printers, or ad agencies that are not outcome-based and not integrated?

Affinity Connection is a direct marketing and communications solution for nonprofits, associations, and affinity groups, offering services ***designed to get results.***

Whether your goal is to increase contacts in your database, accelerate your annual fund, improve your online presence, or enhance communications, ***a partnership with Affinity Connection can maximize your outreach to potential donors and constituents, as well as to and from members, donors, potential donors, and stakeholders.***

By integrating content, data, direct mail, online giving, and more, we streamline interactions and give your donors a voice and a personal, meaningful experience that engages them with your mission.

Our one-stop shop delivers marketing strategies designed to increase revenue, decrease expenses, and alleviate administrative headaches. ***Are you ready to go deeper with your donors by creating meaningful connections?***



Greg Woodman, CEO

greg@affinityconnection.com

Toll-Free: 800-598-4050 x131

814-237-0481 x131

P.S.: If you ask for money, you get advice. If you ask for advice, you get paid twice.

DON'T BUY A TOOL—BUY A SOLUTION

Tools Don't Raise Money, Our Process Does:



DATA

Clean data is the foundation of a successful direct marketing

program. We use personalization and segmentation to identify recipients by name, affiliation, relationship, and other key indicators to build a culture of engagement and to enhance relationships.



STORYTELLING

The true purpose of your organization lives in the hearts and minds of its

stakeholders. Through a dialogue with these stakeholders, we work to understand their point of view and create messages that resonate with them.



PROCESS

We maximize your investment by executing a carefully managed

process to ensure frequent, consistent communication across all channels of your marketing efforts. Through economies of scale, we customize to your unique needs while keeping your costs down.

Many communicate, few connect.

SO... *you volunteered to help your alumni group with fundraising and communications. Let us help! We've been doing it for 40 years and reconnecting alumni members is what we do.*

You're giving back to the organization that gave you so much during your formative years, ensuring it can continue giving to its alumni network and to future generations of active members.

But whether you're new to your position or you've been at it for a few years now, something quickly becomes clear when you volunteer: **running a successful alumni relations group is not as easy as it looks.**

Whether it's sorting out the outdated database, trying to update the dilapidated old website, or struggling to plan even a single fundraising event each year, the time commitment can feel overwhelming. Even sending a simple email to members may seem impossible when your bounce rate is through the roof. It's as if being a successful volunteer requires you to become a marketer, web designer, data analyst, event planner, and accountant, all rolled into one. It's not fair to you and it's definitely not realistic to expect you to do it all, even with the help of your fellow volunteers.

Here's the good news: We can take all of that headache-inducing, behind-the-scenes work off your hands so that you have time to focus on what's really important—your members and the continued success of your group.

Check out our **7-Step Path to Friend-Raising Success**. Use it, and you and your fellow board members just might become the heroes of your group.

WHY CHOOSE AFFINITY CONNECTION?



Single-Source Solution

Your entire communications platform is in capable hands, and you can oversee its success through our one-stop shop.



Expert Team

Why hire one person with limited expertise when you can hire a team of experts in direct response marketing?



Proven Results

Our aim is to get you the best return on your investment and help you achieve donor and dollar goals.



Unmatched Value

Fully bonded and insured donation processing, 40+ years of fundraising expertise, standard *and* custom products and services.



LET'S TALK!

To meet your Affinity Connection team, give us a call or schedule a webinar with us today at **(800) 598-4050 x131**.

You can explore more products and services at affinityconnection.com.



MEET YOUR MANAGING EDITOR

An Affinity Connection specialist works to keep each project on message, developing key points from the point of view of your donors and driving them home to achieve the best results.



DOWNLOADABLE GUIDES

Go to affinityconnection.com to sign up for our **Downloadable Guides**. While you're there, take our **Fundraising Fitness Test**



FUNDRAISING Fitness Test

FREE PLAN IN
SECONDS

affinityconnection.com/fitness-assessment

AFFINITY CONNECTION'S 7-STEP PATH TO FRIEND-RAISING SUCCESS

Our volunteer-approved “friend-raising” method is proven to help you alleviate administrative headaches, forge meaningful connections with your members, and develop a fundraising strategy that works.

THE FRIEND-RAISING APPROACH

Good fundraisers know that fundraising is about much more than raising money fast and soliciting your donor base constantly. In fact, that’s a surefire way to create donor fatigue. Instead, Affinity Connection uses a tried and true friend-raising approach that focuses on forging meaningful connections and creating a two-way dialogue!

Here’s the bottom line: When you start by asking your donor base for money, you get advice about how the organization should be run. **But when you start out by asking for advice, you get paid two times over.** The friend-raising approach used by Affinity Connection develops deep relationships with your stakeholders by asking for their opinions and advice before ever asking for their wallets. By listening to their feedback, we can work together with you to develop an effective fundraising strategy that delivers the results you’re looking for. And our research shows time and again that those donors are now interested and engaged in the health of your organization, and happy to give.



STEP 1: DATABASE MANAGEMENT

Who are your members and how can we contact them?



STEP 2: MARKET RESEARCH

Who are your key stakeholders? What are their criteria for a successful alumni relations program? The true purpose of your organization lives in the hearts and minds of its stakeholders. Through dialogue with these stakeholders, we work to understand their point of view.



STEP 3: CREATIVE BRIEFING

Based on feedback from your stakeholders, we can develop a clear vision for your alumni relations program and a strategy for successful, targeted communications that resonate.



STEP 4: CREATING AND MAINTAINING A WEB PLATFORM

In this day and age, every good communications program must have a home on the web. How can you cut through the clutter to reach your membership base and maintain a thriving online community?



STEP 5: CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

What is the key to successful fundraising? It’s telling a story that resonates.



STEP 6: DONATION PROCESSING

If you’ve followed the first five steps and given them time to work their magic, at this point you won’t know what to do with all the extra cash you have on hand. Let us take care of processing your donations for you so that the only thing you have to worry about is how best to spend it in order to further your organization’s mission.



STEP 7: REPORTING & ANALYTICS

You get what you measure. Direct marketing is about results, from donors and dollars to opens and clicks. Weekly and monthly reports and a comprehensive quarterly review help keep you on track or identify mid-course corrections to increase the return on your investment.



STEP 1: DATABASE MANAGEMENT

First things first: We need to know who your donors are and how to contact them.

Your database is your organization's most critical asset. Do you have their emails and mailing addresses? What about their donation histories? The more information we have, the better we can do our job developing effective, relevant, individualized communications.

If you have an extensive database with dozens of up-to-date fields, you deserve a serious pat on the back. We are happy to securely store your squeaky-clean data in our sophisticated database management software and to help you update it whenever needed. On the other hand, if you're dealing with a dinosaur of an Excel spreadsheet that no one's looked at since 2005, you're not alone. We can help you update your records for more effective communications that actually land in the right inbox.

- ✓ Secure storage, hosting, and maintenance of database in premier software
- ✓ Management of contact information, gift history, contact logs, and more
- ✓ Robust reporting
- ✓ Ongoing analysis of your fundraising data
- ✓ Ongoing initiatives to keep database up-to-date

ONE-TIME SETUP FEE



STEP 2: MARKET RESEARCH

Now that we know more about your donors and how we can contact them, it's time to survey your key stakeholder groups. We want to stay keyed into the hearts and minds of your most important audience. We do this by creating an ongoing dialogue so that we can identify and incorporate their priorities into every component of your communications program.

- ✓ Custom survey development
- ✓ Segmentation of your database
- ✓ Bounce management
- ✓ Curation and analysis of responses



STEP 3: CREATIVE BRIEFING

Securing the best results from your program requires messages that resonate with your key stakeholder groups. We work through a creative discovery process with you and focus on the point of view of your donors and prospects to create effective content.





STEP 4: CREATING & MAINTAINING A WEB PLATFORM

The website is the hub of your community. Affinity Connection collaborates with you to create a one-stop, mobile-friendly space for online giving, database management, event registration, storytelling, and more.

WEBSITE

- ✓ Needs assessment for capabilities
- ✓ Custom content development with copywriting and layout into a selected design template
- ✓ Dynamic honor roll of donors
- ✓ Content management system
- ✓ Integration with social media accounts
- ✓ User-generated content capabilities
- ✓ Monthly site analytic reports
- ✓ Robust platform with integrated email marketing

Your website is the hub of your community, where donors and friends can interact with each other and your organization.

Integrate your website with email marketing, digital appeals, and donations!





STEP 5: CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

Affinity Connection focuses on the point of view of your members to create effective content in the form of eletters, appeal letters, and custom publications such as postcards, newsletters, magazines, and more.

ELETTERS

We recommend frequent and consistent eletter marketing on a monthly basis to drive readers back to your website and to keep your site's content fresh. Your organization can send eletters monthly or à la carte.

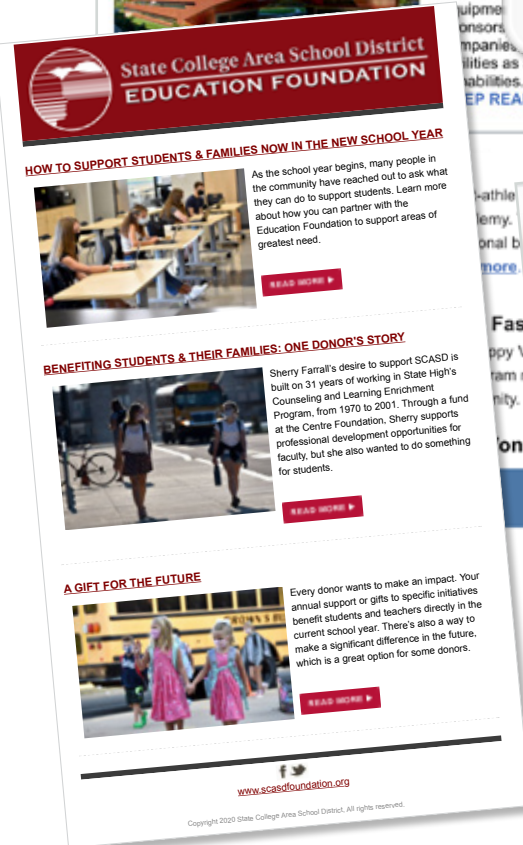
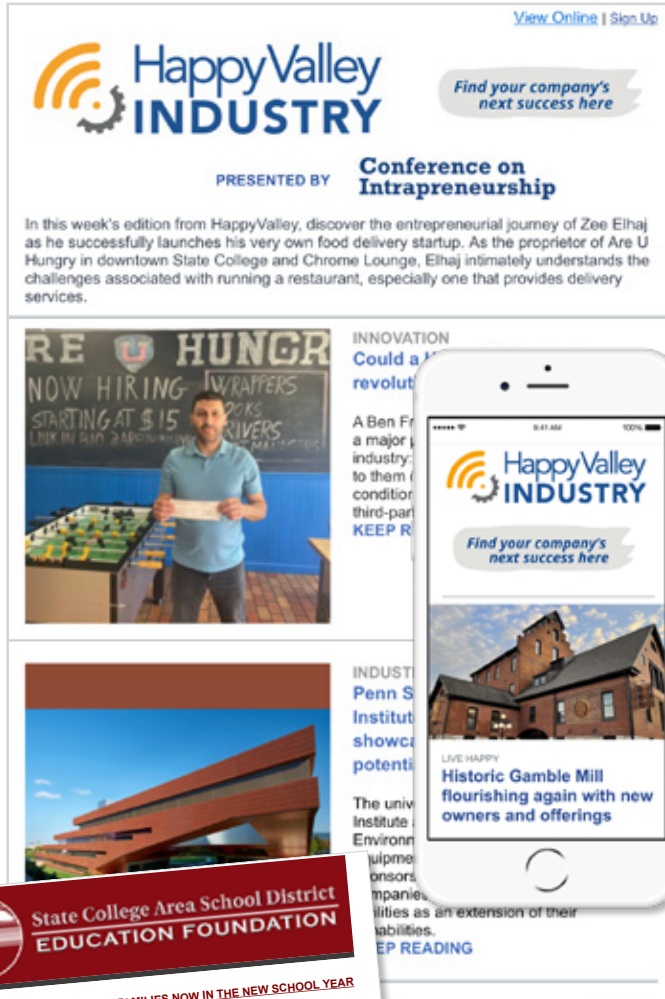
- ✓ One-to-one data-driven messaging
- ✓ Content development of three custom articles per eletter
- ✓ List loaded and sent
- ✓ Marketing analytics
- ✓ Professionally designed and laid out mobile-responsive email
- ✓ Procurement and packaging of user-generated content
- ✓ Bounce management

Your organization's official masthead

Custom articles featuring current, engaging content developed specifically for you

PLUS:

- ✓ *Upcoming events*
- ✓ *Links to event registration*
- ✓ *Easy online giving*



APPEAL LETTERS

Direct-Response Fundraising

Our experienced team relies on a proven discovery process to generate messages that will resonate with your key stakeholders, motivating them to engage as donors. Every appeal letter we produce utilizes the highest levels of segmentation available to assure that recipients have a personal and meaningful experience that moves them to action.

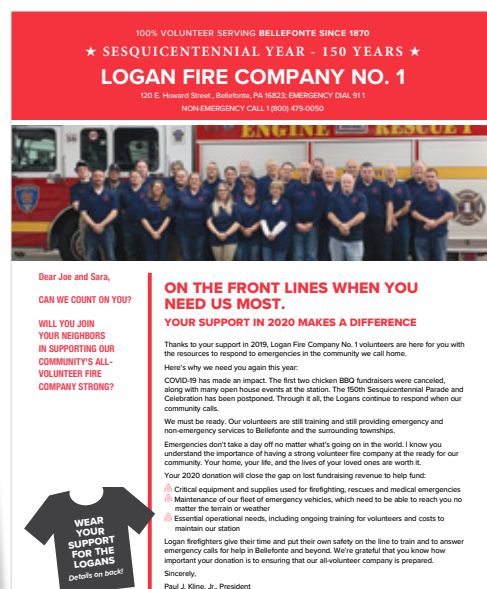
EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR SUCCESS:

- ✓ Creative brief discovery
- ✓ Editorial direction
- ✓ Copywriting to meet your objectives and incorporate your donor point of view
- ✓ One-to-one data-driven copy, targeting based on donor history, age range, etc.
- ✓ Personalized response device to capture donation information and biographical updates
- ✓ Design/layout
- ✓ National Change of Address (NCOA) check, Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) certification, labeling, sorting, and mailing to make sure your communications land in the right mailbox
- ✓ Segmentation for up to five donor groups (donors, lapsed donors, non-donors, geographic, giving level, and more)
- ✓ #10 showcase envelope and #9 response envelope

DESIGNED & WRITTEN FOR RESULTS:

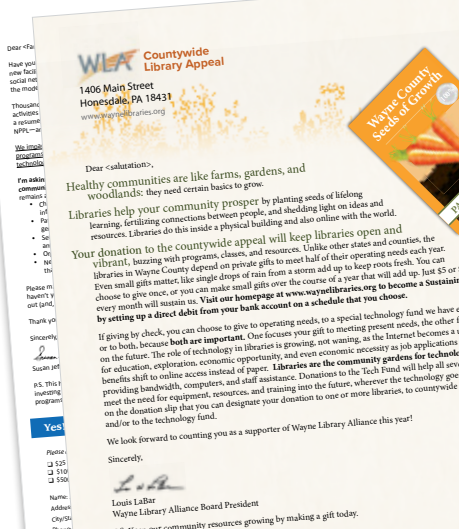
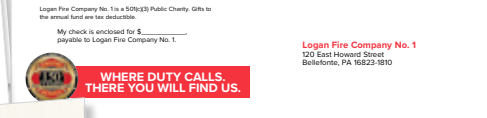
List purchase available at approximately 13¢ per name
(we pay for postage and printing and pass the costs on to you later)

Discovery/copywriting/layout
Project management
Data manipulation/segmentation



When our Education Foundation started, we established a consistent communications program that includes distributing a magazine three times a year. The publication features how donors are making a difference using personal stories from educators and students. This hasn't just helped to grow our annual giving. One issue of the magazine prompted an alumnus to contact us about making a major commitment to our capital effort. He made a \$1 million pledge to the project."

— Chris Buchignani,
President, State College Area School
District Education Foundation



Our professional storytellers use direct mail magazines, postcards, newsletters, invitations, and more to reach your members.

- ✓ Content development (*our “Special Sauce”*)—We have professional writers who interview and craft articles that capture the heart of your organization and effectively communicate your needs to your fellow members. It transforms a boring update into a story that we are inviting your members to join. It’s our “special sauce” and it’s a key component of friend-raising.
- ✓ Print production management
- ✓ Copywriting that incorporates donor point of view
- ✓ National Change of Address (NCOA) check, Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) certification, labeling, sorting, and mailing to make sure your communications land in the right mailbox
- ✓ Response/remittance devices and mailing





STEP 6: DONATION PROCESSING

Our third-party donation processing partner is fully bonded and insured and provides fast, secure, and accurate recording and processing of gifts. Depending on your preferences, gifts can be received through U.S. mail or online, and by check or credit card.

- ✓ Opening and processing of gifts made online, via phone, and by USPS
- ✓ Recording of gifts in secure database within 72 hours of receipt
- ✓ Postcard or letter mailed to each donor to thank them for their gift
(mailing may be used by the donor as a tax receipt if applicable)



STEP 7: REPORTING & ANALYTICS

Robust reporting allows ongoing analysis of your solicitation efforts, helping you cultivate your best donors and establish a culture of giving that supports your annual fund, events, special funds, or major fundraising efforts.

WEBSITE METRICS

- ✓ Tracking of visits to individual pages
- ✓ Analysis of top content that visitors are viewing
- ✓ Utilization of metrics to enhance website content

EMAIL METRICS

- ✓ Measurement of open rates, clickthroughs, opt-outs, and bouncebacks
- ✓ Recommendation for enhancement of email content, subject line text, special offers, etc., based on metrics

DONATION METRICS

- ✓ Weekly and monthly reports highlighting donations and donor data to funds via all donation channels
- ✓ Analysis of results by mailing or by annual trend (up to five years)



PACKAGES

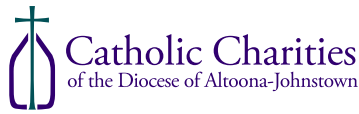
Convenience and Unmatched Value

It's our job to know your organization's unique goals and challenges, and it's our years of experience with clients large and small that helped to shape our fundraising packages.

SERVICES	Jumpstart Package	E-Package	Foundation Package	Connection Package	Create Your Own Package
Database Management					
Setup (one-time fee)		■	■	■	Your Choice
Storage / Hosting / Maintenance / Updates / Reporting / Analysis		■	■	■	Your Choice
Data Acquisition / List Services					
List Purchase (optional; additional fee)	■	■	■	■	Your Choice
Market Research / Content Strategy					
Email Survey		■	■	■	Your Choice
Communication					
Website Setup (one-time fee)		■	■	■	Your Choice
Monthly ELetters / Analytic Reporting		■	■	■	Your Choice
2 Direct-Mail Newsletters				■	Your Choice
3 Emailed Fundraising Appeal Letters		■			Your Choice
1 Direct-Mail Fundraising Appeal Letter	■				Your Choice
2 Direct-Mail Fundraising Appeal Letters & 1 Lapsed Donor Appeal			■	■	Your Choice
Donation Processing					
Setup (one-time fee)	■	■	■	■	Your Choice
Processing / Monthly Reporting & Analysis	■	■	■	■	Your Choice
Donor Acknowledgement Letters (email/print)	■	■	■	■	Your Choice

Create Your Own Package. Select the products and services from the features chart, then call us for pricing. Most of the items listed here are also available separately, as well as our **Pilot Program Stakeholder Audit**, **Full Extensive Stakeholder Audit**, **Eblasts**, **Media Releases and Byline Articles**. For more information, visit affinityconnection.com.

Case Studies



Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Situation

The regional social services nonprofit was approaching its 75th year of providing financial assistance to individuals and families in need, but was struggling to grow its donor base. Leadership within the organization and the diocese believed that parishioners were tired of being asked for money and that non-Catholic prospects were the key to acquiring new donors.

Solution

Affinity Connection completed an integrated marketing audit to collect and analyze insights from key stakeholders. The results included a strategic communications program designed to educate parishioners within the eight counties of the diocese, focused on the powerful, local, community-based impact of putting one's faith into action by giving.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| ✓ Dedicated website with online and recurring giving | ✓ Database prospecting |
| ✓ Monthly (electronic) and quarterly (print) donor-centered newspaper insert into the existing Catholic Register | ✓ Special events |
| | ✓ Targeted appeal letters |
| | ✓ High-level giving society |

Result

BEFORE

- ✓ Annual fundraising
- ✓ 195 donors
- ✓ \$39,000

AFTER

- ✓ 1,300+ new donors
- ✓ \$185,000+
- ✓ 4X increase in database



State College Area School District
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

SCASD Education Foundation

Situation

The State College Area School District started its Education Foundation in 2014 with a goal of establishing a donor community to support projects and initiatives to benefit students and support faculty. The startup nonprofit had to build itself from the ground up.

Solution

After identifying the Education Foundation's key stakeholders, Affinity Connection conducted an integrated

marketing audit that collected important insights about opportunities for creating a strong donor community. In addition to revealing priorities of the stakeholder audiences, the audit helped to create a plan for strategic communications designed to build a culture of giving among audiences such as State High alumni, parents, donors, community members, businesses, and retired faculty.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ✓ Dedicated website with online and recurring giving | ✓ Special events |
| ✓ Monthly (electronic) and quarterly (print) donor-centered magazine | ✓ Targeted appeal letters |
| ✓ Database prospecting | ✓ Special giving opportunities, such as the Mental Health Matters Fund and Student Opportunity Grants |

Results

Since its inception, the Education Foundation has grown into a community of more than 700 donors contributing more than \$100,000 in annual giving, plus more than \$1 million in pledge commitments for special projects. In addition, the nonprofit has a robust, clean database of donors and prospects, including 14,000 valid email addresses.



STATE COLLEGE
FOOD BANK

State College Food Bank

Situation

The State College Food Bank's annual donors and dollars had plateaued after many years of using a minimal direct mail program with the same database. The new executive director wanted to increase donor acquisition and grow total annual giving.

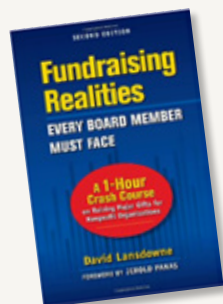
Solution

Affinity Connection worked with the Food Bank to purchase a list based on various criteria such as household income and presence of children. In addition, the organization's website, newsletters, and appeal letters were revamped to focus more on donor impact than on organizational news. The Food Bank's annual holiday mailing brochure was also redesigned into a holiday card-style keepsake that included a personal client testimonial and a response envelope.

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| ✓ New donor acquisition | ✓ Creative brief discovery |
| ✓ Compelling content | ✓ Updated design |

Results

The Food Bank's investment in growing its prospect database delivered more than \$10,000 in gifts from new donors in its first use. In addition, annual giving has grown consistently and the Food Bank has received several large holiday-time gifts, including donations of \$25,000 and \$10,000.



Expertise You Need

Fundraising Realities Every Board Must Face

~ by David Lansdowne (*Just the Highlights...*)

We know you don't have time to read books on making your organization successful, so we read them for you. Even if you don't end up purchasing our services, here are some best practices you should know about from one of our favorite reads.

These guidelines can drive your organization toward a growing donor base, where you are securing new gifts, renewing gifts, and setting the stage for large, transformational gifts when you need them most.

Define your mission.



Why does your organization exist? If you expect someone to support you financially, you must be able to answer this question. But not necessarily with a direct quote from your bylaws. How it's relevant today is equally as, if not more, important.

The buck stops with you. As a leader of the organization, you are a steward of its mission and must find the resources to carry it out. The buck starts with you, too. Successful fundraising starts from the inside out. Solicitation, and giving, begins with your organization's family—the board and key volunteers.

Money costs money. Cultivating and stewarding your donors consistently is an investment in your organization's future which is not an expense you can afford to cut off from year to year.



A few contribute the most. Maximum participation is a worthwhile goal, but it's important to realize that not everyone can or will give. That's why it's critical to build relationships with your loyal donors and seek out the best prospects to join your donor community.



Make connections, personally, and encourage and help facilitate your other volunteers to do the same. You won't need to make a personal phone call every year to secure gifts, but personal notes, emails, invitations, and calls will help keep volunteers and donors engaged.



Set goals, just like you do in your business or your life. Invite your volunteers and your top, most loyal donors to participate in the process of goal-setting and putting tracking mechanisms in place.



Your need alone won't inspire someone to give even a little. Focus on the deeds their gifts will accomplish, not the needs of the organization. People give when they're inspired and when they're confident the cause is worthy and led by people with integrity and commitment.



Strangers seldom give.



To attract lasting and significant support, invite your donors and your best donor prospects to get involved, to learn about the organization up close, and to make the organization part of their lives. The technical term is "cultivation," but really, it's just common sense.

Be consistent. If your donors and members don't hear from you regularly, they doubt your commitment to the mission and feel insecure and uncertain that their gifts are being put to good use. Communicating the impact of their support with regular updates is more critical than most leaders realize.



Those who ask must give. If your signature closes out a solicitation letter, or your name is listed among the board of directors of other key volunteers, it must also appear on the honor roll of donors. Otherwise, you lose credibility among your donors and members.



Think like your donors and potential donors.



They're likely interested in helping, but, like you, they're busy and they're smart. They want you to be direct and they want to be sure of your commitment to the cause they are supporting. Having an ongoing dialogue with them, through surveys, direct conversations, and ongoing communications makes it easy to anticipate their questions and concerns, and the likelihood you'll renew or secure their support.

Don't apologize for asking. It demeans your cause. You aren't begging, you're asking on behalf of a worthy cause, a common cause you share with your donors and members.



Be grateful, say thank you. This childhood Golden Rule applies but is easily forgotten, postponed or underestimated. A sincere thank you, as personal as you can manage, is not optional.





Email

connect@affinityconnection.com
greg@affinityconnection.com
affinityconnection.com



Phone

P : (800) 598-4050 x131 Toll-Free
P : (814) 237-0481 x131 Local
F : (814) 237-4296



Address

302 S. Burrowes St.
State College, PA 16803

*Easy, Affordable, Effective Fundraising Communication
for Your Nonprofit or Affinity Group*

***What will you do with your increased
donations this year?***