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## Tips & Techniques for an Effective Annual Campaign

- ✦ **Keep a calendar.** Annual giving takes place for a limited time period each year, but a successful program requires year-round planning. Annual reports and regular communications with donors lay the groundwork for a successful annual giving campaign.
- ✦ **Develop a mailing list.** At all events, keep a list of attendees with addresses and phone numbers. Use your board and coalition members to develop an initial list by asking each member to give a set number of names.
- ✦ **Write long letters.** Tests show that longer letters generate more donations than shorter ones. Successful appeal letters include five essentials:
  - They create a link between the person who sends and the person who receives the letter.
  - They offer an opportunity to participate in the organization.
  - They make a compelling case for the offer.
  - They establish urgency.
  - They ask for a specific sum of money.
  - They include a handwritten P.S.
- ✦ **Train your volunteers.** Volunteer training is a critical ingredient in ensuring that your entire team understands your mission and knows how to do the solicitations properly.
- ✦ **Ask for a specific amount.** Many people would prefer not to ask for a suggested amount, but it is essential to train your volunteers to do so. This lets the donor know what is needed.



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- ✦ **Pay attention to both ends of the giving spectrum.** At least 80 percent of your dollars will come from only 20 percent of your donors. Spend time identifying leadership gifts and approach these individuals more personally.
- ✦ **Allow people to make pledges.** A pledge payment system lets people stretch their giving across more than one paycheck. The down side is that it will require you to follow up with reminders to those that are slow to honor their pledges.
- ✦ **Understand the year-end push.** The end of the calendar year is a key time to get donors and/or to ensure that donors are making progress in their pledges. The end of your organization's fiscal year provides another natural time to stress the urgency of the campaign.
- ✦ **Set up a database to track donors.** A systematic way of keeping track of donors and their giving history is essential. Computerized systems can be designed without spending exorbitant sums.
- ✦ **Acknowledge gifts and give proper receipts.** It is important to say "thank you" after a gift is made and also to provide necessary receipts for tax purposes. Be sure you set up an acknowledgment system to comply with IRS rules.

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