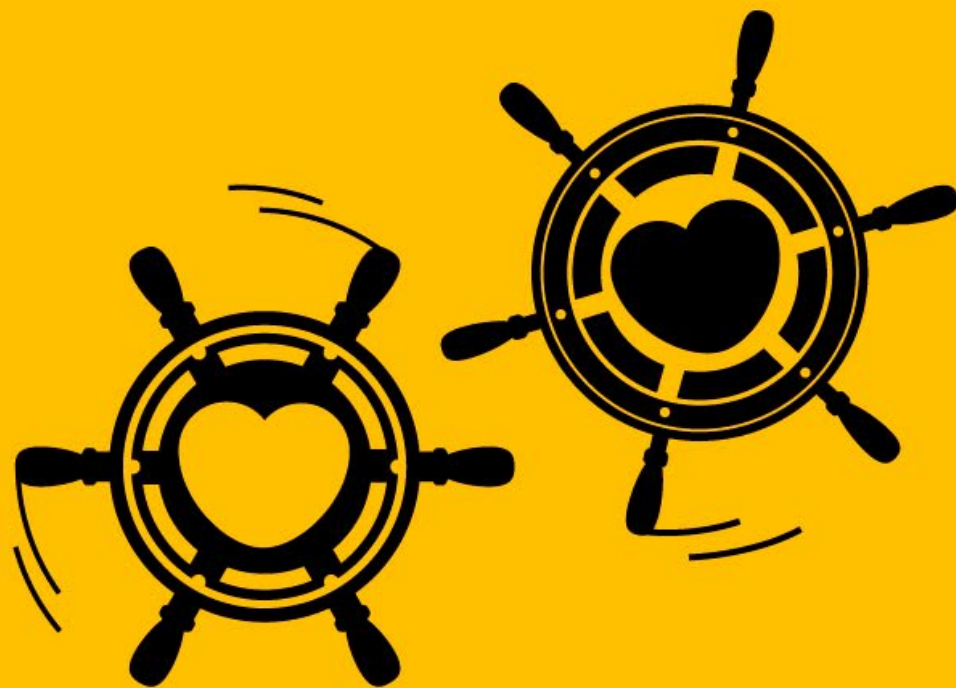


LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS WITH DONORS



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LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS WITH DONORS

Creating and maintaining long-term relationships between a CSO and its donors is an ongoing process that does not end with the act of giving. One of the main mistakes that has a negative impact is remembering our donors only when we are in the process of actively raising resources. We need to be aware that the goal of a campaign is not only to raise a certain amount of funds, but also to gain new supporters and sympathizers for the organization's activities, whose support we can rely on in the future. This implies a concerted effort to build on the relationship initially established during the campaign between the two parties, in which the active party must be the fundraising organisation.

Some ideas that would help an organization to establish good and long-term relationships with its donors are:

- **A thank you letter to each donor** - even though we have already thanked the person or company that provided us with a donation at the time of receiving it, it is a good idea to send a thank you letter at a later stage, after everything is over, to show that we have not forgotten about the donation gesture and appreciate its importance. This can be the first step towards creating a longer-term relationship.
- **Evidence of implementation of the activities for which funds have been raised** - at the earliest opportunity it is good to demonstrate to donors something visible and measurable that speaks eloquently enough. This will firstly prove that the idea for which we have asked for support is actually feasible and achievable, and secondly - it will give assurance that their money will actually be used to achieve the cause for which they have donated.
- **Ensuring that every donor has the opportunity to participate in the activities to which they have donated** - sometimes some donors may wish to attend some of the activities in person - some as spectators and others as participants. We should always be ready to provide them with this opportunity. For one thing, they will be able to see for themselves how their money is being spent. On the other, we will show them that we do not see them only as a source of resources, but also as potential participants in the activity who can always contribute something more to achieving our goals.

- **An up-to-date list of donors** - this should include the names of all donors, regardless of the type or size of the donation. This list should always be updated so that the donor can see their name on it the day after the donation is made. A list of donors can be made for each campaign, but it is then important to include the names of all people and companies on a common list of the organisation's donors - this will make them an integral part of our donor family and show them that we do not see them as donors to just one cause. This triggers purely psychological mechanisms that activate people's willingness to do something again.
- **The will of the donor** - before including a person or organisation in the list of donors, it is good to ask for their explicit consent. We must remember that there are those who, for one reason or another, wish to remain anonymous and we must respect their wishes.
- **Information for the donor** - it is good to regularly prepare short informative texts to the donors, informing them about the milestones in the implementation of the activities and the results that have been achieved at certain points. Periodic good news reassures donors that they have made the right investment and that they have a partner in us who does quality work and manages the funds entrusted to them properly and responsibly.
- **Final report on the activities** - at the end of the implementation of all activities it is good to send a summary narrative and financial report to all donors.

- **Information from the media** - we can send our donors copies of all media materials that document the implementation of the activities for which funds were raised. Often the media image of our organization is a major guarantor for donors.
- **Invitations to donors and congratulations for the holidays** - showing respect for every significant holiday and inviting them to attend our events can be another proof that we accept people and companies not only as donors, but also as current and future partners. It's a way to remind us of our existence and demonstrate a willingness to build on relationships.
- **Annual Report of the organization** - including the names of donors in our annual report and reminding them that part of our success is due to their participation and support is another good way to express gratitude. We can send a personally addressed printed copy or link to all our donors.

Keeping in touch with donors is not a sufficient condition to keep them as long-term partners of the organization. Along with the respect and appreciation we must show them, we must also make efforts to deepen the relationships we have built and work to maintain a good public image among the general public. It is good to emphasise that the organisation is not raising funds for funds' sake, but is recruiting supporters and supporters on whose support it can rely for its future activities. At the heart of maintaining long-term relationships is the importance of developing both working and emotional ties. Turning donors into friends of the organization is a long but crucial process that can benefit both parties.