

Major Gifts Thank You Policy

When establishing a Major Gifts Program, you want to consider the importance of having a clear, effective Thank You policy to ensure that high level donors understand the impact of their gift. While every donor should receive a timely receipt and an acknowledgement thank you letter, major donors require more attention.

Many experts say donors should receive at least 4 thank you's between asks; others recommend 7. These thank you's may take various forms, but donors need to hear consistently about the great work their gifts support before you ask for another gift.

In designing this policy, you must consider your organizational capacity in relation to the potential revenue growth from properly stewarded major donors.

Aspects to consider:

1. **Gift levels:** While your major gift program might indicate \$1000 as a major gift because of the limited number of such gifts and the positive impact such gifts have on your program, this does not preclude even higher level gifts. What happens if you receive a \$5000 or \$10,000 gift. What will your thank you process entail?
 - a. Minimum-level major gift
 - b. Mid-level major gift
 - c. Upper-level major gift
2. **Communication methods:** Beyond the form letter, personal attention further engages major donors
 - a. Receipt/Acknowledgement letter
 - b. Phone call
 - c. Personal note
 - d. Video clip (For example: a video of a group of children shouting thank you)
 - e. Token of appreciation
 - f. Benefactor events
3. **Timeframe:** The larger the gift, the more immediate the demonstrated appreciation – depending on who will be initiating contact and in what manner.
 - a. Within 4 hours of receipt
 - b. Within 24 hours of receipt
 - c. Within the week of receipt
 - d. Within the month
 - e. Three months out
 - f. Six months out
 - g. Nine months out
 - h. Just before renewal date
4. **Responsible party:** Determine the best person to initiate contact in the thank you process
 - a. Program Director
 - b. Director of Development
 - c. Executive Director
 - d. Board Member
 - e. Board President
 - f. Participants/Clients impacted (For example: students reaching out to alumni)