



Stewardship Secret Sauce

23 Expert Tips For Retaining Your
Donors

INTRODUCTION

The statistics are alarming.
As a sector, we aren't doing a great job of keeping our donors.

Consider:

For every 100 new donors acquired, 105 current donors are lost through attrition.

77.1% of first time donors will never make a second gift.

For every \$100 gained in donations, \$96 are lost due to non-renewal of gifts.

The good news?

This is an opportunity to achieve a significant increase in revenue by ensuring your current and new donors continue to give.

Source: [Association of Fundraising Professionals, 2013](#)

A DONOR RETENTION STRATEGY IS VITAL TO A STABLE REVENUE STREAM.



We've collated 22 actionable tips from our bench of Coaches to help you create a retention plan and fire up your own creativity.

#1. Send a handwritten 'thank you' note

In an increasingly cluttered world of communications, a personal touch goes a long way. Sure, it's more time-consuming than a mail merge, but it might be more effective.

#2. Follow them on social media

Nothing makes someone feel special like having followers. Show donors you are interested in what they have to say. (They're also likely to follow you back).

#3. Invite them to complete an information survey

Why did the donor select your organization? Why does the donor think you are the best choice, with the best solutions to the problems your organization wants to address?

#4. Invite them to a 'supporters' party

Celebrate your donors (and if the time is right, make a second ask).



#5. Send program updates, progress reports

Messages shouldn't always be about the problem. Tell them how it's being solved, and how they have contributed to the solution.

#6. Put their names on your website

Tie your donors to your cause by displaying them on your website. It doesn't have to be on your homepage. Many nonprofits have a section dedicated to their supporters.

#7. Thank them on social media

Thanking donors on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc. gives them the opportunity to share your post with their own networks - expanding your reach to potential new donors too.



#8. Find out why the donors that did leave, left.

Create a questionnaire specifically for lapsed donors and use their responses to inform your stewardship strategy (to avoid making the same mistakes).

#9. Be transparent with how your organization operates

Develop trust by telling your donors exactly how their money was spent and how it has impacted your cause.

#10. Give them the option to subscribe to a newsletter

A donation shouldn't be a dead-end. If the transaction is made online, once it is complete, ask the donor to subscribe to your newsletter. It doesn't have to be weekly - you could provide a monthly update on how your programs are faring.

#11. Respect their wishes

When it comes to communications, solicitations, and acknowledgments, always respect your donors (for example, if they wish to remain anonymous).

#12. Speak their language

Lose the technical fundraising jargon and speak to donors on their level.



#13. Don't always make an "ask"

Every once in a while, send a campaign update that does not solicit another gift. Show your donors you think of them as partners, not as just a funding source.

#14. Create authentic, donor-driven content

Keep a mindset that puts your donor at the center of your communications. What does your donor want to know about your organization? What do they need?

#15. Set up your online donation page to encourage recurring donations

Stewardship starts the moment you acquire a new donor. Give donors the option to commit to regular giving, and make sure you highlight how a recurring donation will have a greater impact than a single donation.

#16. Use segmentation to communicate in a more personal way

Use what you know about your donors - who they are, where they're from, how much they gave - to follow-up on their donation, instead of sending generic material.

#17. Try using video

Messages with links to videos are a convenient way to thank donors and show impact of donations. Video content is engaging and people love actually seeing the fruit of their donation.

#18. Simplify the donation process

The easiest way to dissuade a potential donor from making a donation is to complicate the process. Don't make them hunt for the "Donate" button or have too many calls to action.



#19. Have exclusive content for recurring givers

Give recurring donors the VIP treatment by offering them exclusive content about your mission. Creating content is hard work, but can pay off in the long run.

#20. Set up giving levels

Some donors may not be able to give \$100 to your cause every time. By allowing them to set their own donation level, it may encourage them to stay when times are tough.

#21. Focus on donors with capacity to give more

Focus 80% of your energy on the 20% of donors who are going to champion your cause and give larger amounts. Don't try to be everything to everybody.

#22. Don't be afraid to ask

While you shouldn't make an ask in every piece of communication, conversely you shouldn't be afraid to ask for a second donation when the time is right.

