

Good Advice: Reciprocate the Relationship

I presented the "Marketing and Communications for Fundraising & Development" module for the CFRE review course last summer, sponsored by the Dallas and Fort Worth chapters of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP). Much of the emphasis of this particular module is the concept that our marketing and communications for fundraising and development must be *donor-centric*, but what does that really mean?

It means the focus should be on creating *mutually beneficial relationships* with your donors, answering the familiar question of "What's in it for me?" from the target audience's perspective.

Just last month, a leadership team of volunteers from an education foundation called on a corporation in the district's "own back yard" to further a relationship. It was an outstanding meeting - a real win-win. The corporation representative heard personally from the superintendent of schools and the volunteer president of the foundation about the remarkable educational initiatives that benefit the students of today and our workforce and citizens of tomorrow, and of the work the foundation does to support this excellence in education. The corporation not only pledged significant financial support, but also discussed various ways to directly engage with the district and the foundation. Because the foundation has a donor recognition and communications plan in place, the corporation will benefit in many ways all year long - in a *mutually beneficial relationship*.

It is easy to forget that a gift to your mission requires a reciprocal response - information about how that donation makes a difference and recognition for their gift - but don't. Connect with your donors via a two-way communicative relationship. You will retain and grow your donor base and you will have lots of fun in the process.

Your partner for good,

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What is your most successful community engagement initiative?

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