Research Abstract

Title: Don’t Forget to Say Thank You’: The Effect of an Acknowledgement on Donor Relationships

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Abstract: Donor attrition is a major cause of concern for non-profit organisations. Non-profits can improve retention by nurturing donor relationships. Acknowledging or thanking the donor is a vital building block in the non-profit organisation-donor relationship. This paper examines the impact of such acknowledgements on donor relationships. In study 1, we employed cross-sectional data obtained from 478 donors to a regional public television station in the United States. We found that the effect of acknowledgements on the donor relationship is moderated by how frequently the donor gives to the organisation, and that acknowledgements help strengthen the non-profit’s relationship with less frequent donors. In study 2, we used an experimental design (111 respondents) to probe the emotional effects of a thank-you note. The findings indicate that acknowledgements enhance positive emotions and alleviate negative emotions; the converse effect is observed when the donor does not get a thank-you note. Thus acknowledging the donor’s gift provides a promising means of fostering donor relationships and retaining donors.

Link: [http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02672571003780064](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02672571003780064)