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Critical numbers for fundraisers

What results can nonprofits expect from direct mail? According to the justly respected Berkeley, California, fundraising consulting firm, Mal Warwick and Associates:

- Typically, **donor-acquisition programs** immediately pay back only 50% to 75% of their costs.
- Expect **newly acquired donors** to stay active for two to three years.
 - During that time, such donors will come up with an average of between **three and four additional contributions**, averaging between 1.5 and 2 times the amount of their initial gifts.
 - Donors acquired through direct mail are **twice** as likely to remain members long-term as contributors generated by other means.
- **Acquisition mailings** tend to cost a relatively inexpensive \$0.30 to \$0.70 a unit when produced in quantities of 50,000 to 1 million packages.
 - Expect **acquisition-mailing response rates** to average from 0.5% to 2.5%.
- **Cultivation mailings** to acquired donors generally cost more than donor-acquisition efforts — on average, \$0.50 to \$5 a unit — and usually mail in smaller quantities than acquisition mailings: 3,000 to 300,000 pieces.
 - Such house appeals or resolicitation efforts to known, active donors typically yield **responses of 5% to 10%**.

“Direct-mail fundraising is still the best way to build a stable base for a nonprofit organization.”

— Mal Warwick and Associates

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