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**Wednesday
Morning
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6 ways to deliver more than your donors expect

Most donors give money to a number of causes. That is why — to keep looming large on its contributors' radar screens — a wise nonprofit should deliver more satisfaction than its supporters expect. Here are six time-tested ways to do the job:

- **Thank your donor:** Prepare a thank-you message in advance as an integral part of your donor-acquisition program. Important advantages:
 1. You don't need to rely on memory (hell hath few furies like a donor who feels slighted or otherwise taken for granted).
 2. You can insert personalized copy, specifically citing the individual donor's gift, into your message — and get it into the mail in a timely manner (within 48 hours after you receive a donation).
- **Burn in your core values:** Make sure that every communication between you and your contributor restates your organization's reason for being. And states exactly what good you plan to accomplish with his donation.
- **Analyze your competition.** Donor expectations certainly reflect what you do. But you do not operate in a vacuum. Collect material from the other nonprofits that likely are seeking the same donors as you. Then go them at least one better.
- **Clear up your voice-mail messages:** By all means, use voice mail or an answering machine to respond to donor

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phone calls when nobody can answer in person. But remember that many contributors are old enough to be grandparents. Make certain that your automatic message is slow, loud, and clear. And always specify when you can answer "live."

- **Surprise your contributors** with an unexpected extra. Perhaps a free subscription to a periodic (monthly, or at least quarterly) newsletter about your activities and accomplishments. Or mail donors a newspaper clipping about your work. Or tell them about a forthcoming TV or radio interview they might want to tune in.

Do not ask your donors for money in these messages. You are trying to cement friendships, not raise immediate dollars. Avoid giving the impression that you are grubbing for money.

- **Invite your donor to an event at your offices.** Your purpose is not to show off your real estate (edifice complexes often backfire). It is to establish personal connections with your staff members, and to give your donor a rapport-building opportunity to mix with other individuals who share his concerns and generosity.

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