

The Power of Updating Your Donor Wall

Updating your donor wall

Donor recognition displays have always been a valued method of thanking those who have contributed to your cause. Many early displays were typically oak and brass boards that listed the names of donors. Times have changed. The need to thank your donors is as important as ever, but what motivates donors has evolved in recent years.

[The Recognition Paradigm Shift®](#) has shown us that donors want to be part of your fundraising story. They want to be recognized and appreciated for their contributions – and for making a difference.

The new generation of younger donors is taking a different approach to giving than their parents and grandparents did. They are the “impact” generation. They want to make a difference now and be around to see the benefits of their giving. But, before they give, they want to understand what their donation dollars have the potential to do.

Once they’ve decided to give, they usually give quite generously. And, they don’t limit it to just monetary donations. This generation is interested in offering less conventional donations like time, professional skills and resources as well. If you would like to learn more about the dynamics of the younger donors, please see our whitepaper entitled “Motivating the Next Generation of Donors”.

Communicating the impact that a donor’s gift is making has never been more important. They are giving to your cause because they believe in it. Reinforcing this emotional connection is crucial to ensuring their long-term support.

What can a recognition refresh do for you?

Today’s donor recognition is much more than just a list of names. It’s a way to communicate to current and prospective donors. Ensuring your display is doing this well is far more important than how new or old it is.

Giving your recognition display a refresh not only gives you the opportunity to unveil a new, more effective system, but it offers an opportunity to reconnect with past, current and potential donors. Reaching out with news of a beautifully refreshed recognition system, along with a powerful story about your cause, will definitely pique donor interest. This could be a great step toward a successful campaign.

A real life example

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When a totally new and refreshed recognition system was designed and installed at a college (a Brook Recognition client), the donations and gifts began to pour into the Foundation office. What really makes this remarkable is that these gifts came without an actual request for funds from donors – only an invitation to view the new display.

The refreshing results:

- Staff donations above the donor wall threshold rose 27%.
- Annual external donors rose by 41%.
- The fiscal year ended with a 39% increase in overall donations.
- Each successive year had an average increase of 10 – 15% in annual donations, and was even higher when further refreshes were completed in specific areas of the college.
- The next 2 – 3 years showed 25–35% of donors moved up to the next society level.
- Capital campaign donations rose by 44% after the initial refresh was completed.

These results simply would not have been possible without refreshing the recognition system. Donors were motivated by the enhanced communication and appeal of a fresh new display. They took a renewed interest in where they wanted their name to appear within the hierarchy of the cumulative wall.

The increase in donations was a welcome surprise for the college's fundraisers. And, it spurred them on to develop additional recognition displays that motivated more donations.

The results of refreshing your recognition system

While your existing traditional donor recognition system may still look great, displaying your donor names in a list format, it can be so much more. It is a tool with the potential to produce the kind of increase in donations experienced by our client above.

Refreshing your recognition system can provide you with a number of advantages to consider.

- It provides an opportunity to truly communicate and promote your cause.
- It may reflect more appropriate donor distinction.
- It is an opportunity to recognize additional societies or categories.
- It enables you to tell your story in a dynamic way, such as the history, the impact, the motivation, etc.
- It provides increased ease of updating, with better functionality.
- It provides increased capacity.
- It provides an opportunity to move the display to a better or more appropriate location.
- It can result in increased in donations, and donors - making it an outstanding ROI.

Your existing traditional donor recognition system may look great but, it can be so much more. You

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can turn this into a tool that generates a buzz about your cause. It can reconnect your organization with your donors and attract new ones into the fold. And that has the potential to make a significant impact on your fundraising efforts.

Contact us today to learn how we can help you begin refreshing your donor recognition system. We can work with you to evaluate the size, scale and location to best meet your needs. And we can help you determine and develop a budget for your project.

We've seen the incredible results that a strategically planned, well-executed recognition refresh can have. And we'd be happy to discuss how this could work for your organization.