

RECOGNITION COUNTS (ANNUAL REPORT)

One of my clients, a college, publishes an Annual Report. But not an Honor Roll of donors.

I encouraged (well . . . actually pushed hard) the President to add an Honor Roll the following year. The President was adamant. “Absolutely not.”

“If I publish a list of donors, every other small Catholic College in the country will go after my donors.”

I lost the battle. (A client is, after all, a client!) But the President is absolutely wrong.

First, I don't believe you can pick up prospects from a publication or the plaques on the wall of a rival hospital. If the hospital is doing a good job of stewardship, donors will stay loyal.

The second important reason the Honor Roll is important is it provides a great opportunity for recognizing friends and supporters. Even non-donors look at the list and are motivated to join.

Our studies show people read the Honor Roll first of all when they receive an Annual Report. They flip the pages until they come to the list. That gets their primary attention.

If they're a donor, they look for their name. (It better be spelled correctly!) Then other names.

I encourage our clients to list names by giving levels. I know for a fact this encourages donors to move to a higher level. They see who is in a higher bracket and they want to join.



Some of my clients ask what they should do if they have five thousand or ten thousand donors. “It could look like a telephone book.”

I tell them that’s wonderful. It provides proof positive of great support.

In order to save printing costs, more and more are going to an electronic listing. That’s okay, I guess. But in our studies, it doesn’t get nearly the audience the printed piece does.

You make the choice. Which do you go for— saving money or greater readership and impact.

One thing more I tell my clients. It adds great emphasis to the need for ongoing support. Year after year after year.

I suggest the names of donors be followed with the number of years of continuous giving. Be certain to list the names of the spouses (or partners) even though one in the group may not be involved or be an alum.

This is important. It encourages consistent giving. After four-years of giving, donors will not break the chain— if proper appreciation is shown, good stewardship is practiced, and there is plenty of applause.

— Jerry Panas

