

Planned Giving Marketing: Benchmarking and Beyond

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Introduction

The topic of planned giving marketing can really be several topics.

For one, it's the story of marketing in general (that is, the process of generating leads). At the same time, it's the more specific topic of how people charged with closing more planned gifts generate interest from donors in their planned giving products. It can also be about how good development officers convert those leads into gifts, although marketing purists would label that more "sales" than "marketing."

The purpose of this discussion is to provide some background and then some benchmarks about planned giving marketing. We start out with some theory and along the way weave in how people are accomplishing these notions in practice. We end with best practices we've observed over many years of being involved in this arena. Throughout this paper there are quotes from the general comments of the recent survey (described below). The first one seems particularly poignant these days:

"Marketing PG seems to be stagnant because of my increasing responsibilities for leadership gifts."

Introduction to March 2008 Marketing Survey

In March 2008 we e-mailed surveys to more than 10,000 recipients to a cross-section of our mailing list. More than half of these recipients were not current clients. There is a possible bias to these results to the extent that the respondents may have tended to come from our client group, but there is no reason to think this skewed the data in any material way.

The purpose of the survey was to inform the content for this April 29, 2008 Webinar and the data are contained in this handout. We plan to produce a more summary version of the results in our next PG Calc-U-Letter as we committed to making the results more widely available than to the audience of the Webinar presentation. However, note that the information in this handout is more detailed. Furthermore, the Webinar presentation itself provides the opportunity to hear more detailed interpretation and participate in Q&A after the presentation.

We received 674 responses in the two week period following the launch of the survey. This provided us with an excellent sampling. Most of the information can therefore be viewed as accurate give or take about 4% in each direction. Below is a table, courtesy of Zoomerang, of how we come up with that statistic:

Size of Customer Base	Sample Size Needed (95% Confidence Level)		
	+/-3%	+/-5%	+/-10
2,000	696	323	92
3,000	788	341	94
5,000	880	357	95
10,000	965	370	96
20,000	1,014	377	96
50,000	1,045	382	96
100,000	1,058	383	96

For example, when we look at the answer to how people are or are not satisfied with the effectiveness of their planned giving marketing programs, we can say it's just about even with 48% satisfied versus 52% unsatisfied because each of these numbers could be plus or minus about 4%.

One of the most interesting findings in the survey was the universal indication that it is difficult/impossible to measure marketing effectiveness with any accuracy. Indeed, if you polled marketing professionals you would surely find that same sentiment!

Below are some tables that show demographic information about the survey respondents. This information may provide increased insight into the survey results. In the main, we think that the demographics of the respondents is close enough to that of the industry to be meaningful. If anything, the respondents represent the cross section of people who have a strong interest in the subject, but that may not translate to being those who are marketing better than others.

Tables 1, 2, and 3 are straightforward demographic data on the role of the respondent, the stage of the organization's planned giving program, and the number of gifts taken in on an annual basis.

Table 1: PG Calc Marketing Survey

Role-Based Demographics

Choose the title that best describes your role:	
Director or VP of Development/Advancement	23%
Major Gifts Officer	4%
Annual Giving or Membership Coordinator	0%
Director of Planned Giving	37%
Planned Giving Officer	13%
Other	23%
TOTAL:	100%

Table 2: PG Calc Marketing Survey

Program-Based Demographics

Describe your organization's planned giving efforts		
Nonexistent or inactive	7	1%
Just getting started	91	14%
Modest	266	40%
A significant part of total development program	295	45%
TOTAL:	659	100%

Table 3: PG Calc Marketing Survey

Activity-Based Demographics

How many planned gifts do you close annually? (including new bequest intentions)		
0-5	157	23%
6-10	137	20%
11-20	118	18%
21-30	67	10%
31-49	44	7%
More than 50 gifts annually	149	22%
TOTAL:	672	100%

Tables 4, 5, and 6 work together. In table 4 we asked about budget size and in table 5 we asked about the dollar volume of planned gifts. Please note that the question for dollar volume of gifts was phrased as “closed planned gifts and realized bequests.” We know that there are many other ways of figuring the effectiveness of a program, but this was a number we assumed people could get their hands on in a consistent way. Perhaps a better number would have been related to bequest intentions added to a list in a given year, but that question would have introduced other ambiguities; often we know that there is a bequest but not the size, and so often we don't know if there is bequest until someone dies. So this data is a bit skewed towards programs that have been promoting bequests for awhile over new programs.

Table 4: PG Calc Marketing Survey

Dollars Raised-Based Demographics

What is the average annual total dollars raised from closed planned gifts and realized bequests?		
Under \$50,000	65	10%
Between \$50,001 and \$100,000	80	12%
Between \$100,001 and \$500,000	158	24%
Between \$500,001 and \$5 million	209	31%
Between \$5 million and \$50 million	120	18%
Over \$50 million	21	3%
Other	15	2%
TOTAL:	668	100%

Table 5: PG Calc Marketing Survey

Budget-Based Demographics

What is the marketing budget for your planned giving program?		
I have no marketing budget	72	11%
Under \$5,000	114	17%
Between \$5,001 and \$15,000	135	20%
Between \$15,001 and \$50,000	165	25%
Between \$50,001 and \$75,000	38	6%
Between \$75,001 and \$150,000	50	7%
Over \$150,000	45	7%
I have a budget, but I don't know what it is	52	8%
TOTAL:	671	100%

While tables 4 and 5 are independent data, table 6 is a “crosstab,” or cross tabulation. In a cross tab table, one reads the information horizontally with respect to the columns. For example, you can read the table below to say “of the people who raise between \$100,000 and \$500,000 their marketing budget was usually less than \$50,000.” By shading the squares where the percentages are over 15% we can see an expected pattern. People who have higher annual dollars raised have higher marketing budgets. Using both the percentages and the raw data, see where your organization falls.

Table 6: PG Calc Marketing Survey

Budget versus Dollars Raised Crosstab

What is the marketing budget for your planned giving program?								
	Total*	Average annual total dollars raised from closed planned gifts and realized bequests						
		Under \$50,000	\$50,001 to \$100,000	\$100,001 to \$500,000	\$500,001 to \$5 million	\$5 million to \$50 million	Over \$50 million	Other
Total	665	10%	12%	24%	31%	18%	3%	2%
No marketing budget	11%	34%	20%	13%	5%	1%	0%	13%
Under \$5,000	17%	31%	41%	24%	9%	2%	0%	20%
\$5,001 to \$15,000	20%	20%	20%	33%	21%	8%	0%	7%
\$15,001 to \$50,000	25%	6%	13%	20%	37%	31%	0%	20%
\$50,001 to \$75,000	6%	0%	1%	3%	7%	15%	0%	7%
\$75,001 to \$150,000	8%	2%	4%	2%	8%	16%	24%	20%
Over \$150,000	7%	0%	0%	3%	4%	17%	57%	0%
Don't know budget	8%	8%	1%	4%	10%	12%	19%	13%

Know the Marketing Fundamentals

Marketing fundamentals are the underlying elements of a successful marketing program. This includes an internal analysis of your organization’s culture, offerings, values, and processes. Before you can begin to craft a strategic marketing plan, or create web pages and brochures, there are some fundamentals - three we have identified here in particular - that are the building blocks of a successful planned giving marketing program. You need to understand your organization, understand your value proposition, and ensure that you have a strong relationship with the whole development staff.

There are a number of strategies that for-profit firms and non-profit organizations employ to conduct a thorough internal review of what makes their organization different from others. A business school and consultant favorite is the “SWOT” analysis. In a SWOT analysis, key individuals in the organization conduct an intellectually honest workshop in which they discuss the following (seemingly simple) elements of their programs and operations: Strengths (internal), Weaknesses (internal), Opportunities (External), and Threats (External).

The SWOT can and should define your path to the construction and articulation of your organization's value proposition. It must be unique. As you define your threats, you will see that you are always at risk of losing funding to another organization in your space or otherwise. You must determine how your value proposition will be reflective of the strengths that your team identified. Articulation of your value proposition is just as critical; it should speak to existing and prospective donors in moving language and be simple to understand. Use your understanding of value propositions and prospects to craft messages and deliver them in a compelling way.

To be sure, these definitions aren't simply a planned giving officer's challenge – this is an opportunity at the organization level, and perhaps refined at the development office level, to articulate a strong case for resources needed “forever.”

Every institution requires internal processes that support collaboration. Likewise, in a planned giving program, a mutually recognized alliance must exist between planned giving staff and other members of the Development team. It cannot be overemphasized that Major Gifts, Annual Fund, and Development departments must keep their eyes open for planned giving potential in a particular donor. You need to educate development staff (particularly Major Gift Officers) to identify and cultivate donors with planned giving potential.

The lines of communication among all departments under the Advancement umbrella must remain open for information exchange of all kinds. You need to achieve a holistic understanding of the messages your donors are receiving. This will help you avoid tripping over communications pieces that your donor will assume you were aware of. For instance, if you want your donor to consider an annual gift as well as a planned gift, you should be particularly sensitive to the timing of both requests from your organization in relation to one another.

Furthermore, if you want to send a planned gift mailing, you need to know the calendar of other communications from your charity. A donor should not hear from you three times in one month and then have no communication from you for the rest of the year. Just as importantly, your planned giving message must be consistently delivered through as many varied media as possible. Collaboration among staff at your charity is imperative.

“The most success we have had is to market through the training, coaching, and encouraging of the constituency development officers. This is successful to the point of having more donors to follow up with than time in which to do so. We average between \$35 - \$50 million each year in new gifts with a staff of one experienced planned giving officer and two new staff...”

Create a Strategic Marketing Plan

Once you have the fundamentals down, you can turn to crafting a strategic marketing plan. Without the base set in the section above, you're likely to go off track with your strategy. But if you understand your organization, its value propositions, as well as have the right fundraising structure in place, you are ready to generate interest in planned gifts at your organization.

An important aspect of this strategic thinking is considering how to tailor your plan to specific interests among your varied stakeholders. For example, your segments might include current donors, lapsed donors, and advisors. They might be young or old, and have heirs or no heirs. Certainly issues of consistent giving and wealth are critical indicators, but those might be used as reasons to include or exclude people from your database. You still have to decide whether the people you choose to market to should get the same message or different messages based on other criteria listed above. For example, you might segment young donors for electronic communication – but will the same message resonate the same way with young donors who have given every year versus other young donors whose interest is newer?

Garner appropriate internal support from the Board of Directors, top staff person in development, and other development colleagues.

Be sure to budget wisely. Marketing budgets vary widely, and often in direct relation to gifts received. While we would all hope that gatekeepers of funds be progressive minded and understand the value of marketing, that's not always the case. Assume that you won't be able to spend as much as you'd like (which is another reason it's critical to make your plans as measurable as possible).

Table 7 shows the different ways that strategic marketing plans are formulated. By allowing people to check all that apply we were able to see that people have many ways in which these plans are drawn up. Most people did some work themselves, but it was interesting that up to 40% didn't include themselves which may be in part because they didn't actually have a plan.

Given that some of the respondents come from organizations that may be too small to have internal marketing/communications staffing it is interesting to see how many people relied on such colleagues. Consultants also seem to play a strong role here, although it's possible that these answers to the "how is your marketing strategy plan formed" question might be confused with the "how do you create your brochures and collateral" type question that appeared later.

Table 7: Strategic Marketing Plan

Benchmark: Strategic Marketing Plan Practices

How did you formulate your organization's planned giving marketing plan? (Check all that apply)		
Myself	395	59%
In consultation with marketing/communications staff	380	57%
Outside consultant	630	54%
Other	70	10%

Build your Marketing Mix

The important methods of marketing are often called “The Marketing Mix.” Not to be confused with varied messaging, these are the different delivery methods employed by the successful marketer. No one program should focus on a single element of the mix, and it is equally true that there is no magic formula of what to use and when. That decision is based entirely on budget and constituency.

For example, organizations where likely donors are never on site have different challenges than those where potential donors interact with the organization on a regular basis. Similarly, organizations where the mission is clear to all would use different marketing tactics than those where garnering support requires extensive education about mission and value. Finally, all planned gift marketing has to be informative on a technical level yet also let donors know what their money will be doing twenty years after they die – what’s the best messenger to deliver that message?

In addition to the ideas in the table below, don’t forget that letters, phone calls, and visits count in the marketing mix. These elements are not traditionally considered ways to generate leads (the pure marketing definition) but they are certainly ways to captivate interest and close gifts.

Table 8 shows some of the most popular marketing tactics, along with percentages given by the survey respondents as to their impression of their effectiveness. Later we will test how these impressions are related to the ways in which one can actually measure this effectiveness.

Table 8: Build your Marketing Mix

Benchmark: Effectiveness of Marketing Mix Elements

How effective are each of these planned giving marketing tools to your organization?				
	Very Effective	Reasonably Effective	Not effective at all	My org does not do this
Advertising	5%	40%	15%	40%
Advisor Cultivation	12%	38%	13%	37%
Direct Mail	11%	56%	17%	16%
E-mail	2%	23%	17%	58%
Events	7%	48%	14%	32%
Newsletters	11%	56%	14%	19%
Web site	7%	58%	27%	7%

Web sites

Let's drill down on the two areas that are used the most, starting with web sites. According to Table 8, a full 93% of respondents used web sites for their planned giving marketing. And why not? Probably 100% of these organizations have web sites, and if your site includes at least one page for planned giving topics and contact information you don't have to say that your organization "does not do this."

However, only 7% feel that their web sites are "very effective." Perhaps this is because donors and advisors probably don't say they've visited the web site, and for the very real reason that only a fraction of the target audience really surfs the web. There is good news on this front, however; the fastest growing group of Internet users is the age group of 50-64.

Almost 60% say their web site is "reasonably effective." It's likely that is the perception because of the reasonable nature of the cost of a web site – either one you write yourself or if you outsource this work. Table 9 shows alternative ways people produce content for their site. Respondents were encouraged to check all that applied. Notice there is about an equal number of people who consult with their development staff and the communications staff when working inside. Many organizations (55%) use an outside consultant and that includes the many organizations that have planned giving web sites hosted by vendors (even though the vendors try hard to make donors not know they aren't on your site).

Table 9: Build your Marketing Mix

Benchmark: Web site Content Generation Practices

How do you produce the planned giving content for your web site?		
Myself	252	38%
In consultation with other development staff	249	38%
In consultation with marketing/comms staff	224	34%
Outside consultant	352	55%
Other	57	9%

A web site is as good as its content and freshness. Tables 10 and 11 help us answer the question of how often is often enough to update the web. Most people centered on quarterly. In Table 11 when the frequency is less frequent than quarterly people tend to think that's not often enough. More frequently seem to overwhelming feel it is often enough. Fewer than 10% update more than once a month. Once can assume that you're performing nicely if you're watching your web site quarterly.

Table 10: Build your Marketing Mix

Benchmark: Web site Update Frequency

How often do you update your web site content?		
Daily	13	2%
Weekly	46	7%
Monthly	172	27%
Quarterly	117	18%
Semiannually	72	11%
Annually	96	15%
Other	122	19%
TOTAL:	638	100%

Table 11: Build your Marketing Mix

Benchmark: Web site Update Frequency Crosstab

How often do you update your web site content?			
Is this frequent enough?	Total	Yes	No
		307	261
Daily	12	12 100.00%	0 0.00%
Weekly	45	43 95.56%	2 4.44%
Monthly	169	124 73.37%	34 20.12%
Quarterly	113	50 44.25%	56 49.56%
Semiannually	71	18 25.35%	50 70.42%
Annually	95	26 27.37%	63 66.32%

Web sites are ideal for measurement because it's easy to track online activity with the right tools, but activity is not always the measure of effective content. It takes effort to keep your web

site cutting-edge and attractive. It should be attractive, easy to use, educational, and interactive.

More and more organizations are achieving this level of excellence every year. In many ways your web site dollars go the furthest, because they have broad reach and because there are good ways to leverage other people's efforts into your own image. But it's just one aspect of the marketing mix. Don't spend all your money here because there are many other ways to do so.

● Pros

- Easy to track online activity with the right tools
- Easy to get help from others to put your ideas on the web

● Cons

- Hard to measure effectiveness of content
- Takes effort to keep cutting-edge fresh and attractive

● Risks

- Is your audience Web-savvy?
- You might think it's being read just because it's there

Direct mail

The second most frequently used elements of the marketing mix are closely related – direct mail (typically letters and brochures or postcards) and newsletters. Inserts in gift acknowledgements are a form of direct mail and are an extremely good practice. Many people attribute finding a large percentage of donors who have put their organization in their wills from tear-offs and check-boxes of all kinds. Direct mail also includes holiday or birthday acknowledgements that routinely have a light-touch technical message, but have a high-touch stewardship and mission message.

Direct mail is certainly less expensive than visiting each prospective donor. After all, the letter carrier is going right by the house every day anyway. Why not drop a note and a brochure/newsletter with a stamp and have your letter put right into the hands of your donor? The simple answer is that the donor gets plenty of mail on a given day and your piece has to stand out or it will be either unopened or briefly read. So the trade off is that by sending mail to a large group you should only expect it to be acted on by a much smaller one. But even those who don't act on the direct reply often are influenced by the message and the ground is softer for the next promotion.

Newsletters can serve a very useful function. Not only can they feature compelling donor stories that tug the heartstrings of your audience, they can also have timely and accurate technical information about the types of planned gifts you are trying to promote. They can have both photos of the heritage society's last event as well as an article designed to pique the interest of readers who might have low yielding yet highly appreciated stocks in their portfolio. Ten years ago, newsletters were the province of only the largest organizations with professional staff on board. More so than ever newsletters are accessible to any size shop who wants to

add to their marketing mix. Newsletters can also drive people to deeper articles on your web site.

Brochures in print are also an excellent vehicle for conveying your message. If your audience is one for whom direct mail works, a letter and a simple brochure can also be a great way to attract attention. For some, a brochure with many options works well – for others, a brochure with a single focus (e.g. wills or annuities) is the best idea. Table 12 shows how many people handle the hard work of developing content for print-based collateral.

The decision of letters versus postcards is one for which the jury is still out. Obviously a postcard can't include a confidential reply device, but they are less expensive and therefore you can have more impressions to your busy audience. Letters with envelopes carry more weight, both figuratively and literally.







Either letters or postcards can be customized as much as you'd like. You can use a service like BatchCalcs to personalize the experience with more variable data such as the payout rate they would get for an annuity or their charitable deduction rather than a table of them. The invitation to make a repeat gift with the specific parameters laid out will be a stronger one.

Table 12: Build your Marketing Mix


Benchmark: Direct Mail Content Generation Practices

How do you produce the planned giving content for your printed materials and direct mail?		
Internal Resources	205	32%
Outside Vendor	75	12%
Combination of internal resources and vendor	357	55%
Other	13	2%
TOTAL	650	100%

 Pros

-  High readership, especially postcards
-  Generally contain information the recipient wants
 -  Alumni news (Education)
 -  Success Stories (All)
 -  Exhibits/Readings (Cultural)
 -  Events (All)

 Cons

-  Expensive to print and send

- Low response rates
- Postcards have fewer confidential response device choices
- Messages may get lost in flurry of information

“In 2007, the number of new donors who responded to charity mailings dropped by a median of 6.2% in a study of 72 of the nation’s biggest charities, on top of another 10.4% median drop in 2006.”

- *“New Rules of Attraction,” Holly Hall,
Chronicle of Philanthropy, April 3, 2008*

Direct e-mail

Direct e-mail is the least used element of the marketing mix, according to Table 8, which shows 58% not employing this method. What we’re talking about here is not corresponding with donors electronically one at a time, but the act of sending e-mails in a bulk fashion (although almost always with customized salutations) to a group of potential donors.

If you are one of the 42% who does do this, or are considering doing so, here are some suggestions about what works and why you should consider it. As with many other things, this would follow the general practices and procedures of your organization – no point going at this alone. As with postal direct mail, you need to start with the right target audience and good addresses. In this case, e-mail addresses will be either something you have and can use, but need to check carefully the ability to use based on donors’ preferences laid out when they gave you the e-mail addresses. Unfortunately e-mail addresses change about as often as people move.

The target will often be younger donors, who, as noted above, might be screened out for cost considerations from your postal efforts and who also are more likely to have and use e-mail as a regular way of receiving promotional information. You can do much the same thing with direct e-mail as with postal mail, including sending letters, PDF versions of newsletters (or links to the newsletters on your web site), or PDF version of your brochures (or links to the brochures on your web site). As with postal direct mail you can further personalize the experience with variable data such as the payout rate they would get for a deferred annuity, their specific charitable deduction, possible gift size and other fields.

One last bonus of direct e-mail is that it can contain easy to follow links back to our web site for more information, back to the web site for the specific purposes listed above, or perhaps to a GiftStory link that will let them watch a flash movie on one of a variety of planned giving topics.

- Pros
 - Easy to measure results if recipient is sent to a landing page
 - Inexpensive
 - Easy to coordinate and send

Cons

- Many recipients are overloaded with e-mail
- Hard to measure if recipient is not sent to a landing page and/or has no follow up action

Risk

- Send too many e-mails and annoy prospects
- Do not e-mail to recipients who have not provided permission to make use of their e-mail addresses

Advertising

Advertising can be an excellent way to promote planned gifts. From Bequests to Lead Trusts, you can usually tell a story and paint a picture in a way that will attract interest. Ironically, the pros and cons are almost identical! Advertising is usually easier for larger institutions, who often have support for creating the pieces and easy ways to place them, whereas for smaller organizations without a natural way to put them in a glossy magazine the exercise can be more frustrating.

Good advertising for planned giving is much like good advertising anywhere – it needs to be creative and done to the same professional degree as the other ads in the publication. You don't want your ad to stand out for the wrong reason! As with all aspects of the marketing mix, 75% mission, 25% technique goes a long way. Personal stories are always welcome in ads.

Pros

- Easy to measure results if recipient is sent to a landing page
- Inexpensive if you already have publications you're sending
- When done right, can be an excellent way to communicate

Cons

- Usually hard to measure
- Expensive if you don't already have publications you're sending and you have to pay for placement

It's interesting that Table 13 shows that there is no one area that everyone thinks is failing them. People were the least unhappy about events, but this question doesn't take into account that events aren't frequent, and are easier for a typical development officer to pull off (and one area where there is more support from one's staff).

So with no one thing significantly more challenging than others (direct mail does lead the way, but not by enough to show a trend) we can assume that respondents felt that everything can be

improved to some extent. It's heartening to know that there is a correlation with Table 8 that shows that the elements of marketing that people find the most effective are the ones that they want to improve.

Table 13: Build your Marketing Mix

Benchmark: Recognized Areas for Improvement

If you could improve just one aspect of your planned giving marketing program, which of the following would it be?		
Direct Mail	156	24%
Newsletter	82	13%
E-mail	74	11%
Events	52	8%
Advertising	70	11%
Website	118	18%
Other	94	15%
TOTAL:	646	100%

Phone calls and visits

While not truly marketing in the pure sense, making phone calls and visiting friends of your organization can be a highly effective way of generating leads.

“Nothing beats shoe leather, and it is important to focus on the personal visits with donors.”

📍 Pros

- 📍 Can do one at a time
- 📍 Can provide excellent education and mission selling
- 📍 Often results in a closed gift

📍 Cons

- 📍 Can only do one at a time
- 📍 It's not really marketing unless it's generating leads

Measure and Be Accountable

Accountability applies to your donors, of course. However, this section applies to working with your Board of Directors and senior management team. Remember that the Board and the management team make important decisions about the funding of your program and should be motivated and convinced to be your programs most vehement supporters. Consider for a moment the metrics you have in place to communicate progress to your Board members and senior management team.

“It is difficult to track the effectiveness of some of our PG marketing efforts when we receive so little response per initiative. Unfortunately senior management compares the response rate to our direct mail campaign - I realize this is an issue of education within our organization, however, having benchmarks from similar organizations would go a long way to substantiating our PG marketing budget.”

Much like a science experiment where you need a good hypothesis, you need to know what to expect from each marketing effort in order to assess its effectiveness later. Perhaps you are looking for general awareness only. In this case, you don't need to count the cards coming back in. Instead, you need to deduce how many people have increased their knowledge of either the mission or the vehicle after the marketing campaign has started.

In any case, measuring starts when marketing starts. Gaining buy-in for your marketing plans includes communicating your best estimates regarding program outcomes, measure in any ways that it makes sense and is measurable. Ensure that you and your internal supporters (Board of Directors, management team, other development officers, people who set your budget) **understand** and agree upon the specific goals for the Marketing campaign, whether it is a direct mail or new website page. **Document** these specific goals so that they can be actively measured against campaign progress. Some examples of specific, measurable goals include:

- Number of face-to-face meetings generated
- Number of hits to web site or landing page
- Number of positive responses to receiving future mailings from your organization

It is also useful, in some campaigns, to project target accomplishments on a week-by-week basis. In this case, tracking progress can be much more engaging for your constituencies. Finally, even if the objectives and goals are written down, **communicate** the objectives in another medium to your most important campaign players. This can come in the form of a one-on-one conversation, a presentation at a team meeting, or an e-mail targeted to each individual that you need to support your campaign. An informed team is a supportive team.

Communicating your goals is the first step in being accountable. You've now set expectations regarding the expected value of your campaign, and measuring starts there.

“While a single event can cost \$250,000 and raise \$500,000 without scrutiny... every year I have to justify my paltry \$50,000 annual PG marketing budget because it's rare that a planned gift results

directly from a single marketing effort. I just view marketing as 'gill net fishing'...you drag a wide net and hope some fish swim in there every once in a while."

Finally, it makes sense to emphasize the importance of visual representation of the metrics you are measuring and collecting. It underscores your progress and can, if designed correctly, make reviewing the data a snap for the typical Board member that is pressed for time. One way to do this is to use Microsoft Excel to create visual insight into your metrics. Display targets vs. actuals clearly on the sheet so that a glance at the data informs the reader of where the campaign stands in terms of each individual objective.

Display progress and results on a pre-determined schedule. If you expect a certain campaign to last 6 weeks, commit to sending an update on a weekly schedule that contains a visual representation of results for that week as well as notable accomplishments in text. This works much better than sending an e-mail each time you receive a large gift or run into a project challenge. Additionally, it sets expectations clearly so that a recipient can set aside time in advance to review your project status report.

When you can provide measurable results, you will gain credibility and, perhaps, additional funding.

Table 14: Measurement and Accountability

Benchmark: Measurement Capabilities

Do you have a mechanism to measure the effectiveness of each of these planned giving marketing tools?			
	Yes	No	My org does not do this
Advertising	24%	38%	38%
Advisor Cultivation	24%	41%	34%
Direct Mail	57%	27%	15%
E-mail	27%	29%	44%
Events	35%	38%	26%
Newsletters	46%	34%	20%
Web site	51%	40%	9%

Table 15: Measurement and Accountability

Benchmark: Measurement Practices

How do you measure the effectiveness of the marketing of your planned giving program?		
Surveys	91	14%
Donor feedback	428	66%
Data provided from vendor	144	22%
Tracking hits on a specific landing page on a campaign by campaign basis	137	21%
Tracking hits throughout all my web pages	247	38%
Using a donor database that tracks the source of each gift	332	51%
We don't measure	114	18%

Market to Younger Donors

Knowing that 15% of planned gifts are set up by donors 45 and younger, omitting this segment from your marketing efforts is missing one in six gifts. Recent surveys, including NCPG's Donor Profile, show that an individual's first estate plan is generated soon after age 40. While the old adage of "it's better to be in the last will than the first" is true, charitable organizations listed in early wills tend to stay in them. Even if your organization is originally in a will as a contingency in the case of an entire family wipeout, when that will is later revised for specific bequests to charities there is a natural bias to retain the ones listed, so long as the donor has remained interested in the charity and that the charity has done the same to the donor.

So what's a busy development officer to do? There are limited opportunities for life income arrangement for donors under age 60. Charitable trusts, especially ones written for the minimum of 5% are an alternative if there is a sufficient sized gift. Deferred payment charitable gift annuities, including the flexible deferred and the commuted payment annuities are other choices. And outside of the life income arena, there is the charitable lead trust to pass on wealth to later generations as well as gifts of unusual assets such as real estate or tangible personal property that are often within the purview of planned giving marketing efforts.

To be considered in wills, you must begin to market bequests and other planned gifts to your consistent donors around age 40. You should cultivate, but balance likelihood of planned gift from this age group with budget of money and time. Do not send them printed materials specifically focused on traditional life income planned giving vehicles, and make greater use of electronic marketing to this group. For example, send general legacy messages to them through e-mail or when done in print literature such as a magazine, drive this segment of your donor pool to your web site for more information.

Market to Advisors

Keep in mind that it is your donors that make gifts, not their advisors. This isn't to say that advisors might not have influence over who is the ultimate beneficiary of trusts or bequest provisions, but to assume that this source would be a primary one would be to mistakenly allocate resources and time.

You should give advisors easy access to the information they need to help their clients complete gifts to your organization. For example, your web site should always have accurate bequest language on it. Even if your donors aren't web aware, advisors certainly are and if they are trying to quietly add a bequest provision for a client, and they want a source of the information that isn't their client and isn't the development officer, then the web is the place.

Advisors should also know the types of gifts accepted, and who/how to contact for more information. Depending on whether you have a close circle of advisors you know well or a wide group you should make sure they have access to this information. A button on your web site that says "for advisors" could be full of this information, tailored to your institution, not canned.

Advisors are bombarded with technical information. The credibility of sources is critical to them and there are many choices available today for web based resources for gift planners and advisors. Branding generic information as coming from your organization can be good ways to have busy advisors appreciate the knowledge that passes their way from you. But don't think this is the only touch that's needed. If you really mean it, treat advisors like donors and make sure they are sufficiently apprised of your mission for them to speak intelligently and comprehensively of your organization when the time arises.

Planned Giving Marketing Best Practices

The following list of best practices ideas are in no particular order, either in terms of the life cycle of your program or by importance. Think of this list as a smorgasbord of thoughts presented in summary.

- Know your touch points so you can take advantage of opportunities to meet donors and prospects
 - Seminars and other fundraisers
 - Tours of facilities
 - Recognition of annual gifts and others
 - Focus Groups
- Spend efficiently
 - Costs vary considerably among tools in the Marketing Mix
 - Be proportional to the size and sophistication of your program
 - Target messaging as tightly as possible
 - Make use of existing communications such as your organization's Annual Report
- Make use of your organization's existing web site

- A visitor should at least be able to find what types of planned gifts are accepted
- Ensure your web address is on each communication (e.g. brochures, newsletters, annual reports, business cards, and letterhead)
- Feature a planned gift donor story whenever possible
- Make your planned giving web page consistent with the site as a whole
- Web page should reinforce look and feel of other collateral, your organization's mission, your value proposition, and other messaging
- Encourage bequests in *every communication*
 - Response cards for small or larger gifts
 - Phone system on-hold messages
 - Letterhead
- Create a planned giving marketing committee with representatives from your Board of Directors, internal development staff, and volunteers
- Create a Bequest Society
 - Board should be members of society
 - This practice will encourage donors to make estate gifts to your organization and to alert you to them
- Don't forget the basics -- acknowledge every gift on a timely basis
- Keep messages simple; avoid technical talk
 - "Leave a Legacy" ads are good examples
 - Consistent message – repeat the same message in the same way every time
- Major gift and planned giving donors should have a mechanism to tell you how many messages they want to receive from your organization
 - Allow them to opt-out if desired
 - Respect the strengths and weaknesses of each delivery method (e.g. e-mail will not replace direct mail; it should simply be used differently)

Conclusion

The benchmarks in this report will hopefully make gift planners not feel alone. No one has as large budget as he or she would like, and everyone wants more leads. Certainly everyone also wants more time and staff to follow up on those leads.

But don't despair. Go out and do the good work of your charity, donor by donor. From time to time (but with great consistency), tell the world why you deserve their attention and resources. Put out that message with frequency and variety (of both content and placement). Keep your web site up to date, your office door open, and above all else, make sure a live person always answers your phone.

Appendix: Open Ended Responses to March 2008 Survey

Results Overview: Open Ended Responses

Filter: No filter applied (145 Response(s) Returned)

Display Per Page

Displaying 1-145 of 145 Responses Select Page: [First](#) | [Previous](#) | [Next](#) | [Last](#)

16. Please add any comments you wish about how you would like to improve your planned giving program.	
1	hire more gift officers
2	I think it is difficult/impossible to measure the effectiveness of PG marketing with any accuracy.
3	More advertising and events would benefit our organizations planned giving plan. My seminar on "Exploring Planned Giving" when given is successful.
4	I would like to find a way to measure effectiveness/ineffectiveness.
5	Basically, we do not focus on it enough or devote distinct time to it. I believe there is enormous potential but not enough resources to thoroughly explore.
6	More staff would also help.
7	Would also like a better way to track effectiveness.
8	I am curious how other small, low -budget organizations market their planned giving programs.
9	Provide better in-house gift-planning training to all involved in development.
10	Additional staff would do more to improve my results!
11	hoping to get budget to do mailings to attract prospective donors for selected gift vehicles - mostly mailings and indiv follow -up planned
12	More face-to-face contact with Planned Giving Members and prospects.
13	As a small community foundation with only one employee devoting enough time to development is problematic. I have focused on getting other non-profit agencies that have funds at the foundation to develop their own planned giving programs. To facilitate that concept I am using the current webinar series as a way to educate the development staff of these organizations on the concept of planned giving. I am optimistic that this will pay dividends down the road. Only time will tell.
14	I would be interested in learning more about marketing to advisors
15	Given our modest program, the limited marketing we do is reasonably effective b/c it is integrated across all of our other member communications. Small ads in our member magazine; newsletters; etc. in addition to our primary marketing tool: a targeted newsletter. I wish we had a better system for tracking responses (we keep an anecdotal spreadsheet of response rates, which is highly fallible)and something else to send to our members besides the newsletter (e.g. targeted direct mail pieces). We are moving to do this, but it is a slow process and an extra step to add in an already busy mix

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	of work.
16	Response is down on direct mail including newsletters, but we are a very small shop and that is all we can consistently do. We really need more staff at the director and support levels to maximize planned giving.
17	It is difficult for me to judge our program since I have only been in my position 6 months. The program has ebbed and flowed over the last dozen years.
18	My organization insists on producing marketing activity in-house and as a rule avoids what is referred to as "Caned" materials. There is an active bias against pg vendors and this is a shame. We have such potential, but cash is king and until something changes we will be using less than first rate in pg marketing materials in an organization that otherwise justifiably prides itself on direct mail marketing/philanthropy.
19	Interested in what others do to actively engage high net worth planned gift prospects from prospecting to engagement, rather than relying on response to a newsletter or direct mail piece
20	Getting people used to planned giving program in general.
21	Our web site is too dense, non-colorful & boring, I even hate to look at it, and I work for the organization. Why would a potential planned gift donor want to? Our current vendor, is really not satisfying our needs, but unfortunately is the only one we can currently afford.
22	Everything's in the planning stage, although we have 19 known expectancies and 2 new since October 2007.
23	We have many areas of fundraising improvements to make. In due course, planned giving efforts will get improved.
24	Where is the time? Too much to do already.
25	Marketing includes but is not limited to the methods listed in this survey. The most success we have had is to market through the training, coaching, and encouraging of the constituency development officers. This is successful to the point of having more donors to follow up than time in which to do so. We average between \$35-\$50 million each year in new gifts with a staff of one experienced pg officer and two new staff with the hope that this average will grow to \$75-\$90 million per year.
26	It needs a total overhaul! I want to improve the web site, marketing and the message.
27	We are really just getting started with Planned Giving and are only marketing to our board at this point. In the coming year, we'll be expanding this to the "outside world".
28	I would like to find a proven effective way to use e-mail for those donors who do regularly use e-mail and to be ready to use e-mail as a major marketing tool when younger donors reach the age when they begin their estate planning.
29	We need professional marketing help in Planned Giving. Need to convince some people here about this.
30	the arts are lagging in this area, so I'm grateful to be with an organization that was willing to invest
31	Would like to have a bigger budget to allow for additional mailings & addn staff to contact donors
32	Measuring results tied directly to various forms of marketing is difficult, not very accurate, and time consuming.
33	Program is 9-10 months old. Patience of Board of Trustees and understanding this is intense relationship-building...takes time.
34	While a single event can cost \$250,000 and raise \$500,000 without scrutiny... every year I have to justify my paltry \$50,000 annual PG marketing budget because it's rare that a planned gift results directly from a single marketing effort. I just view marketing as "gill net fishing"...you drag a wide net and hope some fish swim in there every once in a while.

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35	Question 8 was confusing to me. We judge marketing based on the number of inquiries and the number of gifts we receive from these mailings.
36	We don't have email addresses for most of our planned giving target market. Need to obtain/update and then figure out how to market using this resource.
37	More internal understanding and support of planned giving from higher-up administrators and from major gifts officers
38	I'm in a 1 person shop but expected to close pg gifts as if i were a larger shop.
39	We are just beginning to market our program, using a dedicated part-time staff person
40	Need more resources, could use more outside input
41	I'd like to know what medium will make the greatest impact. Most of our marketing is done with direct calls/visits to prospects.
42	Just getting off the ground.
43	More time and face-to-face contacts
44	Capturing email addresses is the major issue. Did to no this before implementing regular email communications with prospects and current planned giving donors
45	raise some money
46	We prefer planned giving marketing content that is developed internally and tailored to our mission. While this is very time and labor intensive, we believe it produces better results. I could definitely use more internal resources to accomplish this.
47	We tend to focus our marketing on bequest intentions and gift annuities
48	As we are just beginning to expand our PG efforts, we need to coordinate and track all aspects of marketing, personal contacts, stewardship. Any help in this area will be appreciated.
49	it is currently volunteer driven. i believe we need more staff/professional leadership.
50	More budget resources to increase reach and frequency. Advertising was very effective in previous place of employment with much broader constituency.
51	I wish your question #3 had asked how many total gift transactions your institution records in a year. I would be interest in knowing what % of total gifts are planned gifts.
52	We market because we believe it makes a difference. Our faith in this belief is constantly tested.
53	We work with our Board Members and two outside consultants to keep us on track. Some of the questions I answered did not allow enough responses to adequately answer what we are doing.
54	need more direct mail with follow up by development office field staff
55	Advertising would be to our members and close friends.
56	Planned giving done as a cold solicitation through direct mail almost never works for us. Curious about anyone who has had luck with this. We have luck with the quarterly newsletter, coupled with seminar invites, on-air spots and inserts in our regular gift acknowledgments.
57	Need more ways for interested potential donors to self-indentify.

58	Time and resources have been directed away due to lack of staffing and priority---this must change to make program effective.
59	We're just starting out and know so little about the planned giving options. More knowledge is needed on my part to effectively sell this.
60	Would like to conduct marketing research (focus groups and surveys) to gain better perspective on my organization's donors'/potential donors' desired methods of communication about gift planning.
61	We are adding a twice/yearly newsletter this year. The bulk of the content will come from Stelter, but we will use supplemental testimonials from our donors.
62	I would like to see a "best practices" in planned giving.
63	Better understanding of planned giving among development colleagues
64	Web site updates and advertising
65	There are so, so many opportunities! It's hard to know where to start.
66	Need to zero in on how to best identify and cultivate our constituencies through our web site
67	Reduce the time needed to secure gifts to demonstrate value. Redefine metrics for determining success of gift planning effort
68	We need to plan for life after the campaign that we are currently nearing the end of.
69	The administration has not set a budget for this department. If I had something to work with I could improve it to a great degree. They seem to see no need.
70	we need more bright, talented, motivated, planned gift officers. We are, by far, the smallest unit in Development and annually account for (in cash totals) several times what other units produce -- in complex outright gifts, life income gifts and other irrevocable and realized bequests. In addition, we booked millions of dollars in new revocable deferred gift commitments each year. As a profession, planned giving / gift planning still faces the challenge of being taken for granted in many organizations and charitable organizations often do not invest in qualified professionals for these positions... and wonder why they do not see returns on their investment.
71	More collaboration with major gifts officers; more board support of planned giving
72	We are planning to focus on it beginning this summer.
73	Nothing beats shoe leather, and it is important to focus on the personal visits with donors.
74	This is a continuing care retirement community where all prospects live in the facility so personal cultivation has been primary tool- otherwise I would rate web site information as extremely important but in this scenario we are not using
75	Teach those who do major giving the basics of planned giving gift vehicles.
76	Face to face visits are the most effective for us. We just need to be able to do more of them -- and then follow up with good stewardship.
77	Get a much bigger budget.
78	Am interested in finding out what is a reasonable response rate to direct marketing and newsletters. Postcards were not included above unless you consider that advertising. In my mind advertising relates to ads in magazines and other publications.

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79	Farm all of it out to a vendor
80	Need firm measures and indicators of best combination of marketing tactics to compliment work of 4 PG staff in the field.
81	As we market and issue CGA's we are considering a separate planned giving mailing to a select group of donors. This will be the initial approach
82	Expand to include a legacy society.
83	I would like to better understand the nature and source for planned gift donors for my market, which is a large, well recognized hospice organization. I find the most challenging aspect as pg marketing is knowing who to target and how. In general loyalty to a hospice organization is strong for a brief period of time and then quickly diminishes. I would like to hear more about pg marketing programs from organizations with similar target audiences.
84	Our organization has about 40 development directors in the field. We have an integrated approach to Planned Giving. I'd like to see every development director close at least one irrevocable and one revocable planned gift each year.
85	We just have to get serious about it. The fear from our VP is that, if we are effective in marketing PG, our small staff won't be able to follow up effectively. So we don't market it.
86	As with most people I would like more dollars allocated to marketing the planned giving program
87	It is difficult to track the effectiveness of some of our PG marketing efforts when we receive so little response per initiative. Unfortunately senior management compares the response rate to our direct mail campaign - I realize this is an issue of education within our organization, however, having benchmarks from similar organizations would go a long way to substantiating our PG marketing budget.
88	we have new staff and emphasis from top management to invest in PG.Challenge of effective marketing to many and face to face opps. All help graciously accepted!
89	need to formalize efforts
90	We would like to increase our responses to our direct mail efforts and increase traffic on the Web site.
91	Better coordination with annual fund. Some donors receive 10+ mailings from the Development Office. I would like to work with other units to be sure that we are not inundating our donors. We just completed an age overlay. I would like to do some segmented marketing now.
92	My background it not in marketing and so it's daunting to take on marketing at all. I started here recently and my perception is that we touch on each area we should be doing but we could do a lot more in terms of informal events. Any ideas on gathering the recognition society for planned giving together would be appreciated.
93	Personally, I would like my role to be exclusively PG Administration. The "front end" aspect (development) has 2 individuals exclusively focused on PG (difference in the level function), and the PG administration that I do is nominal (at best) and is considered only a portion of my responsibilities. We need to tighten up! :-)
94	I think PG Calc is excellent. Better marketing information would be helpful.
95	I think our newsletter is great as a tool to share donor stories and teach people about the gift vehicles, but I'd like to include more about what the planned gifts are accomplishing.
96	More development staff would always be nice!
97	We are just getting started on our e-newsletter and planned giving web site. For that reason, I really don't have

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	any input on how well it will work.
98	Our planned giving program is truly in its infancy. We need to improve all aspects of it but have a very small staff of 3.
99	We are just getting started and trying to do marketing for all of development and also focus on planned gifts
100	Not enough time to work as I'd like due to other duties
101	You have overlooked the most important marketing tool for planned gifts - personal contact.
102	FY 2008 was the beginning of a new major emphasis on our Planned giving program and thus a consistent marketing program has just been put in place and the measured results are very limited. We will have a better idea of our results on 18-24 months.
103	We need to hire another Major Gift officer to work on the leads we will produce from an "Invitation to Join" our Heritage Society.
104	Need to spend more time developing specific plans and implementing through specific persons
105	Since we are just getting started, we still need to find ways of measuring the success of the different ways we market and we will modify our program accordingly.
106	This is a half-time commitment (or less) for me and that's not enough time for this purpose and the quality of prospects we have.
107	I feel grateful to have PGCalc always ready to help! I'd like to know more about email marketing, but would hate to get the reputation of harassing our alumnae.
108	With direct mail, I'd like to see us create at least one or two new pieces that we could use more than once (something that is more on-going). I'd also like to see us improve our web site significantly; making it more user-friendly.
109	Increasing our prospects for planned giving. We have the resources and we need time for more face to face meetings.
110	We have a small base of older alumni and I am focused on contacting them directly by phone mail and visits. We are producing a new brochure in house and this will complement my efforts.
111	We expect to improve visibility of our planned giving program by increasing the number of events we have (both in the cultivation of new prospects and stewardship of donors). We also plan to add more promotional items and introduce a more robust set of marketing materials for our recognition society.
112	It might be nice to have an archive built up of publicly-generated articles on planned giving and effective estate planning in today's environment, upon which we could draw (without copyright infringement) in a manner that we might make available to prospects on an "FYI" or "food for thought" basis.
113	Our Planned Giving marketing is done centrally. We don't participate - only reap the benefits.
114	This is a new program with no budget save for salary and shoe leather. A tall order, indeed. But our constituency values frugality. We anticipate greater success as the program builds out into direct mail, a newsletter and an expanded web site. (I am a bit disappointed in your survey. It appears to be more heavily weighted in favor of planning your marketing effort. I will look forward to seeing the results.
115	We need to improve our bequest marketing, both to advisors and to prospective donors.
116	I would like to close more Charitable Gift Annuities but interest in this program is not as strong as it was 5 years ago.

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117	Currently working on web site improvement
118	From 1997 to 2004 I worked with a group of development officers from Catholic colleges in MN & Iowa. We provided seminars in various states for our donors. This was cost effective for each college and the results were great. I wish we could do this again.
119	Look forward to seeing your results.
120	We're just getting started, so we'll get to many of these areas as time goes on, starting with newsletters and direct mail.
121	So many things to do, but need to start simple.
122	I'd like to have better measures for effectiveness over time.
123	We have veered away from "canned" web site materials. Out of 21 sites I viewed, 11 of them used canned. We like to remain original.
124	Because of the positive response with our marketing efforts, I am drowning in paperwork and administrative duties. Making it hard to follow up on leads and generate new gifts.
125	Marketing is essential!
126	Finding the time to dedicate to it is a real issue for us.
127	we do a very, very small amount of "fund raising" the bulk of our work is providing resources for churches and church related organizations.
128	More "Feet on the Street"
129	Motivate all major gift officers to promote wills/bequests while negotiating a current gift with a donor.
130	Other than benchmarking similar programs, it's hard to know if the marketing is effective.
131	Wish that we received more responses from our newsletter and other direct mail pieces
132	I am part time. We will be hiring a full time PG Director within the next six months.
133	Also would like to be able to effectively and efficiently plan donor receptions.
134	We use an outside vendor to meet with our Planned Giving Prospects. The consultant is in our community two days per month and it is up to our development staff to fill the appointments. We have had this program since June 2007.
135	We are just in the very preliminary stages of our planned giving program.
136	We are really in the early stages with a 2 year plan in place, thus it is difficult for me to say I can improve the program, at this point I feel I am starting the program.
137	I'm new so I am still feeling my way.
138	We would like to complete target mailings to individuals with specific needs or in specific age groups.
139	our strengths are stewarding donors and focusing on our best prospects through presentations at almost every trustee meeting.
140	Change tax laws that now favor the rich.

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141	we are just getting started, and still with a one person shop, finishing up 9 million \$campaign
142	Internal support with web site minimal.
143	Measurements of what we do are primitive; everything is done in house by non marketing experts. This needs to change!
144	Our gift planning program has been dormant for several years and we've made efforts to do more, but it's been limited to electronic resources such as our web site and email blasts.
145	Marketing PG seems to be stagnant because of my increasing responsibilities for leadership gifts.

Display Per Page
Displaying 1-145 of 145 Responses