



PLANNED GIVING MARKETING
FOR STARTING/RESTARTING
A PROGRAM

PG CALC WEBINAR

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I. INTRODUCTION

“Dig your well before you're thirsty.”
~ Seth Godin

A planned giving program as a part of an overall fundraising effort can play a significant role in a charity's success. Organizations large and small have the potential to raise large sums of money through planned giving, and donors receive the satisfaction of both creating a legacy and giving more than they might have dreamt they could. Whether you are beginning a new program or hoping to invigorate an existing one, achievement of your goals will depend on purposeful integration with your current development efforts and communication strategies.

This discussion will focus primarily on marketing as there is no effective planned giving program without the consistent promotion and branding of the program. It is essential to the success of your program to educate donors about the benefits to both your organization and the donor of donating these high-impact gifts.

But where do you start? How much marketing is enough? Are we ready or should we wait to launch? The purpose of this webinar is to answer these questions and send you off with marketing ideas and practical tips to implement in your planned giving launch or reset.

II. KEEP IT SIMPLE

When marketing a planned giving program, the first thing you need to do is become an expert in all the ins and outs of planned gifts, right?

Not necessarily. You can focus on the things you will encounter 90% of the time.

I am not implying that technical training isn't important: it is. But it's just not the first thing to focus on. The most complex situations in planned giving can take months, if not years, to master and if you wait to become a planned giving expert then marketing your program may never get launched. Delay can mean missing multiple gifts. Don't wait until the perfect time because there is no perfect time. Significant yet simple gifts are waiting, but they will not last forever. Jump in now and make the necessary adjustments later on.

It's a theory I call: Ready, FIRE, aim. Let's break down the 3 separate stages:

Stage 1 – “Ready”

This is the phase where we as humans begin researching the ins and outs of what's necessary to reach a goal. We stay here until we are comfortable to move forward. The problem is most marketing programs end here as well. The secret to being successful in the “Ready” phase is to not obsess about understanding all of planned giving 100%. You don't have to be a premier expert to start. You can continue to learn as you go and even hire a consultant for the tough questions if need be.

Getting stuck in the “Ready” phase might be the reason you are reading this now, right?

Stage 2 – “FIRE”

This is where you charge straight in and take immediate action. Even if you don’t fully understand the nitty-gritty technical details of planned giving it’s still permissible to start marketing. You understand what a gift by will is, right? Great... arm yourself with your charity’s bequest language and charge forward. Inaction can be the death of fundraising. There will never be a better time than now to start promoting.

Stage 3 – “Aim”

Now that you’ve taken action, you can gradually fine tune any messaging or mistakes you’ve made in the beginning. But because you’ve already taken action, making micro-adjustments will be easy. You’re already light years ahead of the charities still on the sidelines. Spend more time now on training. Build your understanding as you continue to promote.

So how do you apply this?

Don’t obsess over the complexities of planned giving. Concentrate on learning the simple gifts. Start with bequest giving and gifts made by designating your charity as a beneficiary. You can start to familiarize yourself and your team with these gifts in no time. Thus, moving from “Ready” to “FIRE” will happen in the blink of an eye.

Here are brief descriptions of the planned gifts to promote first when starting a planned giving program.

Gifts by Will (Bequest)

Bequests are still the most popular planned giving method used by donors. They are easy to understand for both the new planned giving officer and the donor. It’s a revocable gift, and it does not require the donor to part with assets during life. This provides the peace of mind that the assets are available for any unforeseen expenses.

Since most individuals should have a will and since bequests can be for any dollar amount, some charities market bequests to their entire list, regardless of age and net worth. If you do nothing else but regularly include sample bequest language in your charity’s communication devices, you will have initiated a planned giving marketing practice that will pay dividends for years to come.

Beneficiary designations

Another gift that is easy to understand and easy to implement is the beneficiary designation. It’s often called one of the simplest ways to make a gift, and it's literally as

easy as filling out a form. Beneficiary designations (sometimes also known as “payable on death” designation) are available when giving the following assets:

1. Retirement Assets

Designating a charity as the beneficiary of retirement assets is simple because the donor can control the transfer of these assets at death without changing their will or living trust. All they need to do is request (and complete) a new beneficiary designation form from the plan administrator. There is no need to modify their will or living trust.

A gift of retirement assets has the added advantage of being among the most tax-wise ways to make an estate gift. This is because retirement assets, if left to individuals (other than a spouse), will be subject to income tax, often at the highest brackets, in addition to any applicable estate tax. This is because retirement assets are considered “income in respect of a decedent” or IRD. It is always better, therefore, for the donor to leave other types of assets – cash, securities, real estate – to heirs and give the more heavily taxed retirement assets to charity.

2. Life Insurance

Life Insurance policies can also be used to make a gift and may be attractive to donors since these policies afford donors the opportunity to make a gift with a sizeable face value for a minimal outlay of cash. It can be an existing policy, either fully paid or partially paid, or a new policy. The donor simply completes and returns to the insurance company a form designating that the charity will receive all or a portion of the death benefit associated with the life insurance policy.

As an alternative to naming the charity as the beneficiary, which is revocable, donors can transfer ownership of the policy to the charity, which is irrevocable. In return for this action, transferring ownership results in income tax savings in the year of the gift and any premiums paid by the donor on this policy will result in additional income tax savings in the year they are paid.

3. Other Assets

Commercial Annuity Contracts - a commercial annuity will sometimes have a remaining value at the end of the annuitant’s lifetime. Donors can name the charity to receive all or part of this amount by designating it as a beneficiary (sole or partial) on the appropriate form from the insurance company.

Bank Accounts - donors can instruct their bank to pay the charity all or a portion of what remains in a checking or savings account. The bank can provide donors with the appropriate beneficiary designation form.

Investment Accounts - donors can instruct their investment company to transfer to the charity some or all investments held in the account at the time of passing. The broker or agent can let the donor know the process for doing this – it may be as simple as adding “T.O.D. to charity” after the name on the account.

Outright Gift of Appreciated Stock

Publicly traded or closely-held stock represents the most common type of non-cash gift. Charities prefer gifts of publicly traded stock because it is highly liquid and it has a readily ascertainable fair market value. Appreciated stock is best given when it has been held “long term” (that is, at least a year and a day) in which case the deduction is computed as the mean market value on the date of the gift. Short-term appreciated property is deductible at its cost basis only.

Closely-held stock, by contrast, may be illiquid and difficult to value. It may be subject to restrictions prohibiting it from being given to charity, or it may be impossible to find a buyer. It also may require a qualified independent appraisal, which could take several weeks to complete.

IRA Charitable Rollover

One other simple gift is the IRA Charitable Rollover. You can solicit an outright gift from a donor’s IRA and this now permanent part of the law allows individuals age 70½ and older to make direct transfers totaling up to \$100,000 per year to charities without having to count the transfers as income for federal income tax purposes. Donors can count this gift towards their annual required minimum distribution. The distribution is not recognized as income on their federal income tax return, nor is it eligible for a federal income tax charitable deduction (it’s a wash).

The bottom line is... you do not need to launch an annuity program, or accept complicated gifts from day one. In fact, your program does not need to accept life income gifts at all. Start promoting as soon as possible by focusing on the simple gifts.

And what if a complicated opportunity comes up that you want to pursue?

Have a back-up plan. Either go to an internal resource like a board member, legal counsel, or financial advisor that is a friend of the charity for help. Or call an outside partner like PG Calc for help. It might be a good idea to have an ongoing relationship with an outside vendor to assist you when something complicated comes up.

Before we continue, I would like to circle back and say a quick word on training. Above I mentioned bypassing in-depth planned giving training and jump straight in... Ready, FIRE, aim.

But that should not diminish the importance of training. Your entire development staff should be aware of the value, benefit, and purpose of your planned giving program. It is not necessary for

everyone to become a planned giving expert, but it would be extremely helpful if each staff member is at least capable of at least two things:

1. The ability to listen for clues when talking with donors that they would like to support your charity after their death. These donors won't use jargon or technical terms, so it's a matter of developing listening skills about long-term support and encouraging colleagues to hand off the donors to you.
2. The ability to handle a donor inquiry about the different planned giving opportunities available. There are a number of vendors that offer planned giving training both virtual, (webinars, GoToMeetings, etc.,) and LIVE on-site training in your office.

The point is not to let you or your colleagues get stuck in training and let a legacy gift pass you by. You can do both things.

III. USE YOUR EXISTING ASSETS

Your charity has an existing marketing infrastructure already in place. Why let that go to waste? Use as much of the existing resources available to get the word out about your planned giving program. The marketing vehicles for planned giving already exist within your charity already. Use them to your advantage. With proper cooperation, these efforts may be tweaked to promote your planned giving program with little or no additional cost.

You can start your planned giving marketing with something as simple as the back of your business card. Use the back to provide bequest language, legal name, and tax ID number.

Annual reports, newsletters, and magazines should all be significant contributors to building awareness of your program. Access can range from a quick note, or advertisement, to the opportunity to publish personalized stories about planned giving donors. A donor story that shows your prospects examples of people "just like them" who were able to make a planned gift is very powerful.

Work with your internal communications team and get what space you can. Any messaging about your new planned giving program will suffice as it is critically important for donors to know the program just exists. That should be your short term goal. Make sure your donors know your planned giving program exists and it can be a big benefit to them and the future of the charity. A planned gift will not only help the charity's mission but will also give the donor the satisfaction of creating a legacy.

Acknowledgement Inserts

Does your organization's fundraising work in "silos," with little integration between annual, major, and planned giving?

If so, don't worry. We see this often. We suggest trying to reduce the internal barriers and work together. And it should all begin with the first gift. Annual donors are traditionally the group with

the highest likelihood of becoming planned gift donors. We want to make certain that this group is familiar with your planned giving program, and the sooner the better. As such, we suggest using an acknowledgement insert buck slip for all annual donors.

Just stuff the two-sided promotional piece that fits into the acknowledgement letter envelope. The message is simple. Something like...

“Thank you... Did you know you can continue, and even expand, your generosity without affecting your current finances?”

The insert lets the donor know how grateful the charity is and that if they wanted to give more here are some ideas how you “could make a gift that you never imagined was possible and help our mission.” There is no ask. It is an educational planned giving thank you, sent at a time when the donor is open to learning how much you appreciate them. However, you cannot do this without working together with your annual giving team.

The Board

There is no better way to launch your planned giving program than by going to your board members for planned gift commitments.

Consider conducting a brief seminar for the board to address the various planned giving options and help them understand how planned giving would be used to complement the charity’s existing development efforts. Don’t hesitate to bring in an outside consultant or vendor who can articulate the more complicated aspects of planned giving clearly and concisely.

Contact each board member individually, rather than making a broad appeal to the entire board. They need to know that by participating in the planned giving program through their own personal commitments, it will send a strong message to your donor list that these types of gifts are important and should be made in addition to participating in the annual fund. Every committed member can serve as a great testimonial and reinforcement during your one-on-one and small group meetings. The help of a board member who has given can be the best way to close future gifts. They can avow to all future donors how important planned giving is to the overall health and success of the charity.

Board members can also be a good source for lead generation by making introductions to those they know who could and would be interested in making a planned gift.

IV. BASIC PROMOTION

At the start of any planned giving program branding is essential. Brand your program as an opportunity for donors to gain the satisfaction of creating a legacy and leaving a lasting impact with their gift. Your initial promotion should include testimonials of current members. Let their words sell the viability of the program. New donors look to see themselves in these current

members of the program. Showcase their judgment and knowledge. Nothing is stronger for your marketing.

Your message should also be more about the huge impact a gift will have on your mission than the technical aspects of planned gifts. Keep the messaging simple. Tax benefits can be important to many donors, but the bottom line is that a planned gift can create a life changing impact like no other.

Even the use of the term planned giving is troublesome to some donors. It can seem confusing and difficult. Yet once they learn the basics, your donors will begin to comprehend that a planned gift can be simply made and very rewarding. The same logic applies to the marketing of your planned giving program. Planned giving officers can have thoughts of panic and trepidation when they learn that on top of everything else they need to be a marketer, too. Again, this is why it can be important to start with the basics of planned giving rather than creating a comprehensive program offering every available gift. This makes your launch training, administration, and marketing much easier. Many charities start marketing on a piecemeal basis, first introducing a credible and trustworthy online presence.

Online Presence

The first place you should start your promotion of your planned giving program is online with a planned giving website. In today's digital world, if your planned giving program does not exist online it does NOT exist at all. You need an online presence, and your website is proof that your planned giving program exists. It also gives you the opportunity to show your full "bill of fare," reflect your core mission, and establish your program's viability.

Think of it as an 8x10 glossy of your planned giving program. Your chance to introduce yourself to the audience you seek. When you meet a donor for the first time do you dress down? Sweat pants and a T-shirt? Or do you put your best foot forward? It's the same thing with your website. It's your chance to let your donors see you how you want to be seen. As such, customizing the look and feel of your planned giving site is the most important thing you can do. It must reflect your program and mission, not your vendor or communications team.

Your website is a 24/7 insight to your donors that can provide information and leads even when you're on the road. It should give donors an immediate feel for who you are and what you have to offer.

The layout and flow of your website creates an atmosphere and perception of the level of service they will receive from you. If your planned giving site is complex they may think planned giving is too complicated. If it is devoid of useful information they may think your planned giving program is not sophisticated enough to handle planned gifts. A website without serious content does not just leave the donor wanting more, but what's worse, it can leave them with the perception that it's all you know

Remember, we all make snap judgments everyday. It's what we humans do, and it takes only 1/10th of a second to form a first impression. This is no different with a website. The first

impression of your planned giving program will be determined visually and it will be assessed within milliseconds.

So doesn't this sound like something important enough to spend some time making the experience a pleasant one?

There are a combination of factors at play here... structure, spacing, symmetry, amount of text. Even the color and the fonts matter. We believe in a simple visual experience that does not overwhelm the reader while still pointing them towards the information they seek. An easy-to-navigate and pleasing-to-the-eye design gets people to trust you and to stick around. Confusing interface design will lead to rapid rejection and mistrust. And once a visitor does not like some aspect of the design, the whole website can be dismissed as well. Yet, if a donor "instantly" likes your site, they will more than likely cut you some slack for any missteps down the road.

Thus, it is important to invest time, effort, and/or money into your planned giving website design – it's what matters the most for pulling users in. You only have one chance to make a good impression and once that is gone you cannot get it back.

You want to be the planned giving program with the friendly, easy-to-navigate, and easy-to-read website that will lead to more opportunity. That said, here is some quick advice that can help you today with your online presence: make certain that the "above the fold" area of your website makes that good impression.

Although today's web visitors have no problem scrolling, your top of the home page will get the most eyes. This first touch must show your best in only 0.05 seconds. What donors see immediately above the fold must be important to your program and what you think your audience wants to see. With that first blink, the visual will always trump the content. Simplicity will beat the complicated. And the friendly interface will get donors to call you more than will a technical examination of the aspects of giving.

Lastly, your website should be your resource center. It should be the one place where you demonstrate your planned giving know-how for donors. Education and awareness building is the key. If you're only accepting bequests, it's important to clarify this information upfront. Be sure to clearly define each giving option by explaining what the gift means for the donor.

Most importantly, always invite your donors to learn more by allowing them to schedule an in-person meeting or phone call. A donor raising her hand for more information is our conversion point, so make this information easy to find.

Legacy Brochure

When a donor reaches out and asks you to send them more information what do you do?

Or after an in-home visit do you have collateral to give your donor as a leave-behind?

A brochure is an essential piece of marketing collateral that every program needs. A planned giving brochure is the best option to equip a prospective donor with a quick understanding of your organization and provide an overview of any planned giving-related subject matter. It is easy to share and leaves a lasting impression.

For use as a fulfillment piece, a donor visit leave-behind, or event handout, your brochure needs to be customized to the look and feel of your institution and mission. There are a number of companies who offer generic “canned” brochures that can be purchased and imprinted with the charity’s name and logo. These brochures are cheaper to produce, but have less credibility as they do not follow your brand standards.

It is important to produce collateral that extends the good faith of your brand and is presented in context with your mission. But you can accomplish both with outside help and don’t be afraid to consider this assistance in order to keep yourself out there raising money. If time and/or technical expertise is lacking in your program there are vendors that can create a customized piece that will convey well your brand, mission, and the benefits of planned giving to your donors. A planned giving officer’s time is always better spent out of the office developing relationships with donors than behind a desk creating a brochures or uploading web copy.

Here is a list of some of the more popular brochures:

- Legacy Giving
- Bequests
- Beneficiary Designations
- Charitable Gift Annuities
- Charitable Remainder Trusts
- Gifts of Real Estate
- Tax-Wise Giving

We suggest that you start with a general legacy brochure that gives the donor a quick understanding of your program and the impact a gift will have on your mission. Ultimately, you can create a brochure for each type of planned gift you accept. But that may be too costly at launch, so we recommend starting with a general legacy brochure, or perhaps a bequest brochure. And with print-on-demand technology, you no longer have to buy an expensive print package to have these tools available.

A quick aside: when using a general brochure don’t expect your phone to ring off the hook. These brochures seldom elicit an immediate response. This is for awareness and education. The “call to action” will always be to call or email for more information. So if and when the donor is ready to reach out, the contact information will be right at hand.

Simple Mail Campaign

A personalized letter is a wonderful way to start reaching out to your donors about planned giving. It is a simple one-page letter discussing the impact of a planned gift on your charity and the benefits to the donor. It should explain the important role bequests have played in your institution

and encourage donors to learn more at your planned giving website, or call your office for more information. Include a postcard-sized reply card and a self-addressed envelope that can be mailed back. Include language on the reply card that says in effect:

- I have included the [name of charity] in our will or trust.
- I am interested in including the [name of charity] in our will or trust.
- Please send me information on leaving a gift in my will or trust to [name of charity]

And then two or three weeks later, follow up with either another letter, a postcard or a phone call from a donor or board member who has made a planned gift. Sending the follow-up from a person who has already made a gift sets a strong example. People see themselves in the actions of others and look to emulate those who they respect.

Seminars

Successful promotion of your program isn't just via collateral and websites, it can also be from presentations and seminars. Planned giving seminars are an efficient vehicle to educate your donors about the different planned giving opportunities within your program. Seminars can be targeted to more than just donors. You can reach a variety of audiences, including volunteers, board members, and professional financial advisors.

Partner with a well-respected financial advisor from your community, or better yet recruit a volunteer board of attorneys, financial planners, and bankers to serve as seminar presenters. These volunteers not only offer expertise but also may provide added incentive for top prospects to attend a seminar. This will lend credibility to the seminars, but make certain they can present the planned giving material in a clear and concise way. Building awareness needs understanding for your seminars to be successful.

Seminars for professional financial advisors should be more technically oriented than donor and volunteer seminars. The presentations should provide a more thorough analysis of the aspects of your gift acceptance policy. Discussion of estate and gift tax benefits should be addressed and applied to each available gift and asset available. The same presentation will not work for your donors. The level of detail and technical planned giving content presented must be tailored to the audience. Donor sessions must be concise and avoid the "legalese" that will cause many donors to become confused or overwhelmed. The goal is to bring them into a planned giving discussion and have them comprehend the benefits planned giving affords and not drive them away scratching their heads.

Some seminar sessions can focus in on the estate planning process. This is a good general introduction to planned giving for donors that concentrates on the key elements of an estate plan, the documents donors should have, and some charitable giving ideas donors might want to incorporate into their own estate plan.

These seminars should share with donors practical tips of how to take an inventory of what they own to the questions to ask when meeting with an attorney to prepare your will. It is also best to give each attendee an Estate Planning Guide and Organizer. This branded guide can be used as

leave-behind collateral that goes home with each donor and will help them take the first step toward making a planned gift.

Advertise the seminar via the existing marketing infrastructure. Use your annual reports, newsletters, and magazines to spread the word about these events. Try offering attendees a free 30-minute consultation with your volunteer board members to induce attendance.

Planned Giving Recognition Society

A planned giving recognition group, often referred to as a heritage or legacy society, can be a useful marketing tool to use in promoting your planned giving program. It also is an effective way to steward planned giving donors.

A legacy society can strengthen the relationship your planned giving donors have to your charity, which subsequently may increase the retention of revocable gifts, and potentially increase the number and size of future gifts. It can also be used to identify donors who have included your charity in their will or estate plan. These intentions that were unknown to the charity often come to light in exchange for membership in the society.

Creating a legacy society and marketing it to your community increases awareness and shows that you are interested in learning about member's future plans to benefit your mission. It also provides a greater opportunity to build relationships with those donors and identify ways to involve them in future activities. A legacy society ensures that planned giving donors are thanked, recognized, and stewarded. No donors will fall between the cracks if there is an active legacy society.

Each organization is free to choose which planned gifts qualify for membership in the society. Many organizations make membership all-inclusive in that any one of the various planned giving methods qualify one for membership, regardless of size and whether the commitment is revocable or contingent. Membership can be limited to deferred gifts, or have other barriers but the most marketable application allows for it to be as inclusive as possible. And hopefully each donor's charitable gift that is recognized in the Society will inspire others in your community to follow their leadership.

V. FINDING DONOR PROSPECTS

We can't talk about planned giving marketing without touching on your charity's donor data and the use of data analytics. Data analytics is a suite of statistical tools and techniques that identify patterns in your data that will allow you to identify your best planned giving prospects. In most cases these are the donors you should be marketing to rather than trying to brand every planned giving opportunity to appeal to every donor. Usually, you will achieve your best results by focusing on a segment of your donor list.

This is not to say you can't market to your entire database with every mailing or branding push. Under the guise of building awareness, you could send all your planned giving messages out to old and young alike since planned giving prospects can come in all ages, levels of wealth, and philanthropic objectives. Yet, I am afraid you would soon learn this is an expensive approach that

produces very little. Most marketers would consider branding your program to donors who have shown little interest or have not shown loyalty to your mission a waste of time and money. Best practices tell us that when you are developing your marketing plan it's ideal to share your messaging with only those prospects most likely to respond, thereby increasing the effectiveness of each mailing. This also allows you to mail less, thereby controlling your planned giving marketing costs.

You do this via list segmentation. This involves breaking your entire pool of prospects into smaller groups, based on demographic or giving similarities, in order to utilize targeted messaging or for testing and statistical analysis purposes.

Data mining involves using data points in your database to limit who is solicited. This can also include using information in your database to go beyond segmentation to create customized queries to find targeted prospects within segments in order to maximize returns. It's also called wealth screening, predictive modeling and donor research. The concept is about using data analytics to help build sophisticated statistical pictures of donors that will allow you to focus your marketing efforts on those most likely to give a planned gift.

Who are the best prospects in your database?

The traditional statistical models look at your donors' lifestyles and giving histories in order to identify your best planned giving prospects. For example:

- Those who already have a planned gift
- Consistent annual fund donors (i.e., 10+ years, 8-10 years, 5+ years, etc.)
- No Children, and/or no heirs
- Over 65
- Engaged board members and volunteers
- Those closest to your organization

You can also characterize it as FLAG, (Frequency of giving, Longevity of giving to the organization, Age, Giving history)

The frequency of giving is seen as the single most important gift indicator for planned giving. It is also important to group and rate your donors based on their age and the number of gifts they have given over specific periods (for example, seven gifts in the past 10 years).

We always suggest you start with those who already have a current planned gift commitment in place. Don't ever stop marketing to this group. Revocable gifts can be changed at anytime. Use your recognition societies to keep these donors informed about your program. This includes thanking them for their commitments and establishing a personal relationship if one does not exist already. There is no reason why you shouldn't attempt to convert revocable arrangements, like bequests, into irrevocable commitments as your relationships evolve. Or show them the opportunities offered by life income gifts in addition to a bequest.

Also, don't overlook donors who, although loyal through the years, fall below certain annual giving amounts. Some donors will never make high dollar gifts during their lifetime because they are conservative or need security that assets will be available for future unforeseen circumstances. These donors may be willing to make a significant gift at death.

Lastly, working with professional financial advisors can sometimes lead an organization to new prospects. This group can include attorneys, accountants, financial planners, and trust officers. Many financial advisors actively promote planned gifts to their clients and would be interested in learning more about your charity's mission and your planned giving program. Help them sell your program. A good relationship with a key advisor can be a win-win.

I have only touched the surface of this issue. It's a webinar on its own. If you are interested in using a data-analysis package or a scoring service to do an analysis of your database you can contact consulting companies such as BWF Insight, formerly Donorcast (bwfinsight.net), Blackbaud Analytics (blackbaud-analytics.com), or Marts & Lundy (martsandlundy.com).

VI. PLAN FOR PROCESSING

As you begin the marketing of your planned giving program nothing could be worse than having a donor contact you and having that lead drop through the cracks and not be responded to. This can result in the donor going elsewhere with their charitable dollars. Donors want to support your charity not just for its mission but also for your ability to effectively use their gift. If you can't return a call, how will you manage their gift? And remember, it can be more than just a gift to them. It's their life savings. Their legacy.

Leads being dropped happens in for-profits and non-profits alike. It is caused by gift officers being overwhelmed and not having a proper plan in place to handle not just donor leads and the administration of the gift, but the entire marketing process. Don't let this happen to you. Determine who is going to do what ahead of time. Plan it out and include a procedure that outlines the process from receiving a lead, to closing the gift, and the continuing administration and stewardship of the donor. This is often where a vendor can be an enormous help.

A marketing vendor can help you keep promoting your program throughout the year and give you the time to stay on the road continuing to build relationships via in-person meetings. This is why choice of vendor is very important. Not all vendors will save you time, and not all will help you strategically continue to market to donors throughout the year as you travel.

There is also planned giving software available to help you with your time management. Programs that focus on bequest giving can purchase software that will ensure you are maximizing your organization's ability to steward donors and realize distributions. It allows you to manage legacy gifts from intention to realization, successfully manage the probate process, and receive sophisticated reporting and in-depth analysis of your program.

The bottom line is you must ensure that once a donor responds to a mailing, or reaches out for more information after reading through your website, that someone is ready to respond with a personal call to answer questions, provide additional information, or schedule a personal visit.

VII. ADVANCED PLANNING

As soon as your program has established its planned giving website and at least one legacy giving brochure, you may want to start thinking about a long-term marketing strategy that will promote and stimulate growth. A website and brochure are essential for launch, but if you want the program to grow you must develop a strategic marketing plan.

Your marketing plan is your guide to successfully promoting and growing your planned giving program. Executing it will help ensure that you're using your resources most effectively and will align your activities and goals, providing you the best chance for success.

A marketing plan that works for one charity will not work for all. Your plan must be tailored to your charity and its mission. Here are the basic component parts:

1. Establish and Articulate Objectives
2. Define the Strategy
3. Execute the Tactics
4. Report, Analyze and Revise

These four areas are sequential and must be addressed in the order listed. A strategy cannot be formulated before objectives are established, tactics can only be determined once a strategy is in place, and reporting and analysis can only take place once the program has been executed.

Objectives are the goals you set for your program. They identify what you want to accomplish. Establishing and publicizing your marketing objectives is important to your success for several reasons. It will allow you to proceed with the confidence knowing your efforts are aligned with your charity's plans. It also allows you to share your strategic marketing vision with senior management with the hope that doing so will ensure your program is allocated the resources needed to get the job done.

Typical goals include increasing planned giving revenue and the number of planned gift commitments. You may also want to measure success by increasing the membership of your legacy society, or increasing additional gifts from existing members. Other common goals include increasing bequest and beneficiary designation intentions and establishing new charitable gift annuities.

Your goals can also include non-revenue targets such as making X visits to potential prospects or delivering Y planned gift proposals during the year, or having Z stewardship calls. All goals must be quantified and prioritized. Be specific.

Your messaging must also be tailored to your goals. Make sure your marketing message and collateral are consistent and that your marketing tactics are focused to achieve your goals.

Common tactics include:

1. Newsletters
2. Brochures, mailers and postcards
3. Email newsletters
4. Planned giving ads and articles in publications
5. Social Media

A more detailed explanation of marketing tactics is discussed later in Section VIII.

An effective marketing plan will give you clear goals, strategies, and tactics to reach those targets. You'll also need to choose the appropriate metrics to help you track your progress, so you can revise your efforts if need be.

An effective marketing plan is based on the 4Ps of Marketing. This is a for-profit concept that helps organize a product's marketing. It's sometimes called your "marketing mix." It defines marketing options in terms of price, product, promotion, and place so that an offering meets a specific customer need or demand. This is done to put the right product in the right place, at the right price, at the right time. The same is true for your planned giving program. When your donors find out about your program and its benefits at the right time, they are more likely to make a planned gift in addition to their other giving.

How do the 4Ps work?

Your charity's mission and the opportunity to make a planned gift, (with the benefit from tax benefits and/or income to your donor), is your product. The price is the amount and type of gift... stock, real estate, cash, etc. The place is your website, or the donor's home with direct mail or email offers coming in regularly via your tactical promotion.

The 4Ps are basic in concept but executing them is not easy. To create the right marketing plan, every charity and non-profit should ask themselves these questions to create the proper "marketing mix."

- Product: What does your donor want when giving to your institution? Tax benefits? Retirement Income? Self satisfaction of giving? All of the above?
- Place: Where do your donors look for information when giving to your institution? Your website? Postal Mail? Email? All of the above?
- Price: What is the gift value your donors look for when giving to your institution? Bequests? Income producing gifts? Gifts of real estate? All of the above?
- Promotion: What is the best time and place to reach your donors about giving to your institution? Quarterly email newsletters? Bi-annual print newsletters? Seasonal postcards? All of the above?

The answers are your marketing mix. This is what your strategic marketing plan will determine. Other things to consider:

- **Budget.** How much can you afford to spend each fiscal year? Does the time savings of using a vendor outweigh the overall cost to your budget? Is print on demand a better option than the cost of pre-printed collateral and marketing material? Is digital marketing effective enough to allow less direct mail if the justification is cost savings?
- **Your target donors.** Use predictive modeling to analyze the distinct characteristics of your donors. If you have not used a data-analysis package or a scoring service now is the time. Indicators such as donor loyalty can be huge factors in identifying your top planned giving prospects.
- **Marketing schedule.** Create and follow a marketing schedule. Schedule all planned giving mailings with all other internal communications in mind. Overlapping mailings can be a waste of money and over-mailing of email can cause spam complaints and unsubscribes.

Lastly, marketing must be consistent. One mailing every five years is not a plan. You need constant cultivation with your marketing mix. Sometimes your best donors might see your direct mail several times before reaching out to you. They save it and discuss it later with a spouse or advisor. And when the time is right they call you.

Creating a marketing plan by itself will not make you a better marketer or bring in more gifts. It is your execution of the marketing plan that will. Following your plan will result in more organized and efficient marketing. If you are a small program with little staff and little time to waste, the more prepared and methodical you can be the better.

For example, your plan not only guides your activities but it also helps you track which marketing approaches achieve the greatest rewards. If you don't have a plan in place, or if you don't follow your existing one, you won't have a formal system for assessing where your prospects and donors come from. This means you won't know which of your marketing approaches works. You could be wasting money on marketing that doesn't work while underutilizing effective marketing channels at the same time.

Don't just engage in random acts of marketing. Work strategically. Follow your plan, or set one up for the first time. It can be done at no cost in-house, or you can outsource and find a vendor to help you create one.

VIII. PLANNED GIVING MARKETING TACTICS

Websites

Your website is the first tactic you need to think about as it is often the first point of contact with your donors and your planned giving program. It must educate, create trust, and build the

credibility of your program. And most importantly, it must be tailored to your mission. Your planned giving website should be a resource center that provides your donors with exactly the information they seek and leave them with a lasting impression about your mission.

The most effective websites today eliminate the visual clutter and navigation mazes of your online presence, allowing your donors to focus on your planned giving message without being overwhelmed.

Again, this is where a vendor can be very useful. Website vendors today can provide you with full planned giving content, match the look and feel of your main site thereby giving your donors a seamless experience, and make the site completely customizable to your mission. The best vendors give you the option to edit anything on the site, but are still responsible for all updates, changes, edits, and additions you don't have time to make yourself.

Direct Mail

Constant cultivation is a key to success in fundraising, and it's no different with planned giving. Building awareness with custom direct mail that includes your organizations mission and branding is essential. Your older donors will respond to messaging directed to them on an emotional level. Younger donors will respond similarly, however, most of your younger audience will respond because a direct mail message is different from the constant barrage of email, spam and social media noise they receive. This makes direct mail stand out as something different.

Either way, it's the personal nature of the message that is the key. The content of the mailing must be tailored to your donors and your mission. There are many vendors available to help you with your direct mail campaigns. Make sure they create a custom product that includes your mission and imagery. Also consider a print-on-demand relationship which may help in the budgeting process.

Newsletters

A planned giving print newsletter should have a distinct theme focused around a donor story. This giving story should be paired with relevant planned giving articles. This focus allows for increased donor understanding and comprehension. Your newsletter should be customized to the look and feel of your charity and design best practices are applied to achieve all your objectives. Images of donors, and infographics that help explain difficult concepts should be included. Explaining to your audience the impact a planned gift can have on your mission can be very powerful.

Postcards & Self-Mailers

Postcards are your most cost-effective form of direct mail and they work very well to build awareness. They must contain each charity's style, brand, and imagery, and then mix in specific planned giving messaging and mission copy. Remember to include a custom call to action for each charity. This includes a link to a relevant landing page on your website. Do not just stick a logo on a canned piece of direct mail, and do your best to stay away from stock photos. These will not

produce the desired results; in fact, they may have a detrimental effect on the credibility of your program.

Be it a postcard or a self-mailer with a reply card, all direct mail should promote your program in the most positive way: educating with planned giving content, reassuring with mission, and triggering emotion via images.

Email

Email can be the quickest and most cost-effective way of conveying your planned giving message. But that does not always mean it is the most effective. Remember, the best email campaigns only receive a 50% open rate, with even fewer reading. So at best only half of the email you send has the chance of being read.

Your digital messaging must be relevant to your donors to elicit a response. Sending a weekly email just to send email, or sending a syndicated pre-written message will not build awareness. That's the quickest way to the "delete and/or unsubscribe" file. Effective email needs to be customized to your donor's needs, and generate engagement. If your email is well-written, personal, and a benefit to your donors then your email channel will build relationships faster and cheaper than anything else.

Email marketing campaigns can take many forms, and thankfully, there are many vendors available to help you with email as well. As with direct mail, make sure your vendor creates a custom product that includes your mission and imagery. Ask yourself, "Will working with this vendor save me time, and thus, allow me to be on the road more to meet with donors?" If not, the vendor cost may not be worth it, or it might be worth finding one who can give you more time.

E-Newsletters

Like a print newsletter, each e-newsletter should have a distinct theme focused around a donor story, and then paired with relevant planned giving articles. Your e-newsletter can be a digital version of your print newsletter for maximum exposure to your targeted list, or it can be written as a separate marketing piece.

Each e-newsletter should be customized to the look and feel of your charity, and include a responsive design for mobile viewing. Your goal should be to make every e-newsletter a benefit to your donors. Sending consistent emails because you think you need to send something will only lead to unsubscribes and spam complaints. Make certain that your e-newsletter is interesting, educational and entertaining. In other words, "a good read."

Single Issue and Follow-up Emails

Several times per year you may want to send your donors email on a particular topic such as the IRA Charitable Rollover, charitable remainder unitrust, etc., This type of campaign can be used for awareness building or updating donors on changes in the law. A well-crafted email strategy allows your donors to not only begin to see planned giving as a viable option to support your mission, but

also to see you as a trusted friend. The substance of this email must be created to assist and benefit your donors.

Many planned giving marketers are using an integrated approach by using email to support all direct mail campaigns. Email can reference the direct mail piece, provide additional follow-up information, and include a link to a website landing page. Sending a consistent message using two different mediums to touch your donors can have a dramatic effect on the success of the overall campaign. Once again, this must be a customized effort to see success. A non-tailored canned message will fall terribly short.

What's Popular?

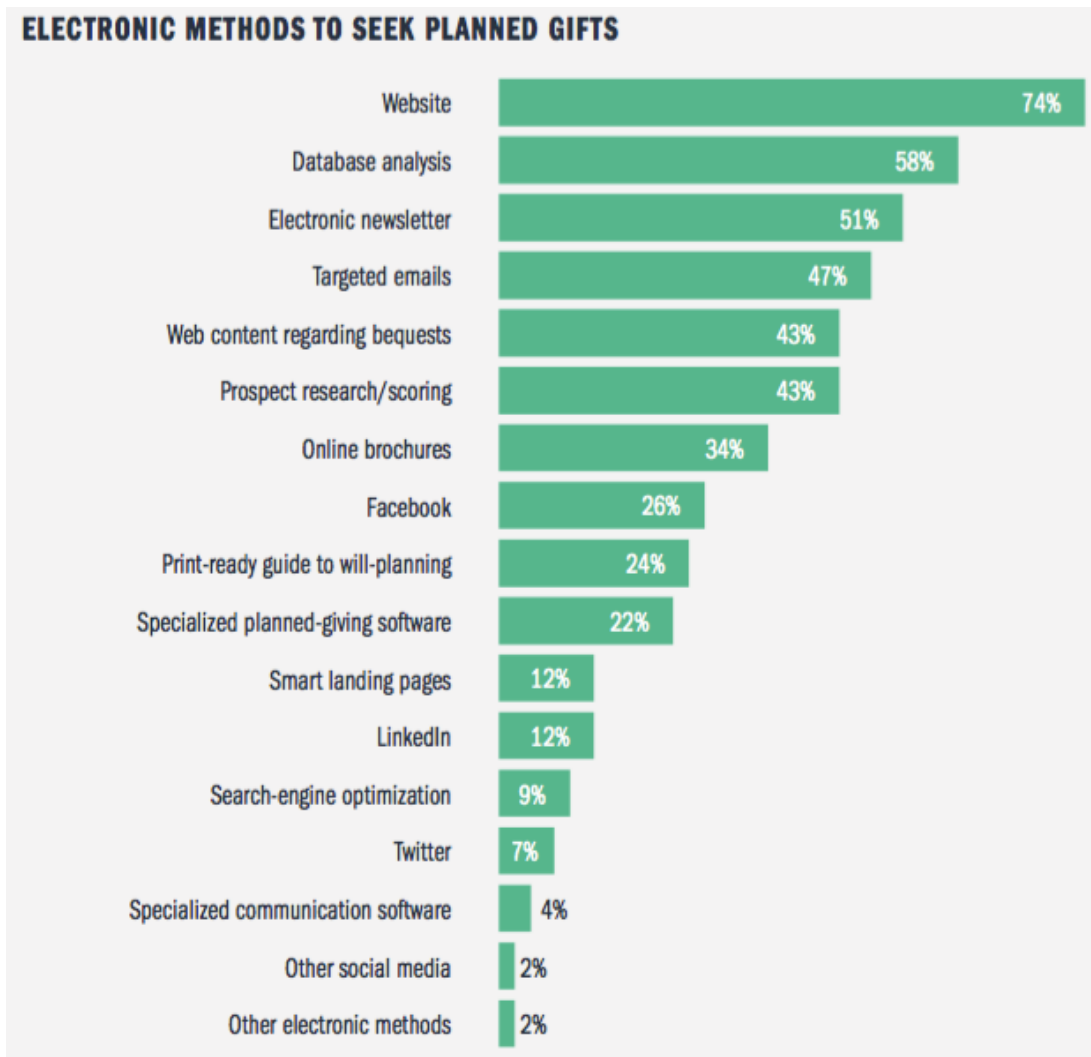
A recent Chronicle of Philanthropy survey (March 2017) on planned giving marketing tactics found that direct mail is still the most popular medium for building planned giving awareness. Given the age at which most donors make a planned gift — mostly in their 60s and 70s and older — this should be no surprise.



More than three-fourths of survey participants use direct mail to reach out to donors. And when asked how they divided up their planned-giving budgets, survey participants said they spent the most on direct mail and special events.

Although most planned giving programs today are still relying on traditional means of connecting with donors, they are also incorporating digital tactics such as email and social media. However, not every charity has sufficient email addresses and not all donors are using social media.

Surprisingly only 74% stated they use their website for marketing. What do the remaining 26% do? Do they not expect anyone to check them out online? Yikes! That's a missed opportunity.



Hope for Social Media

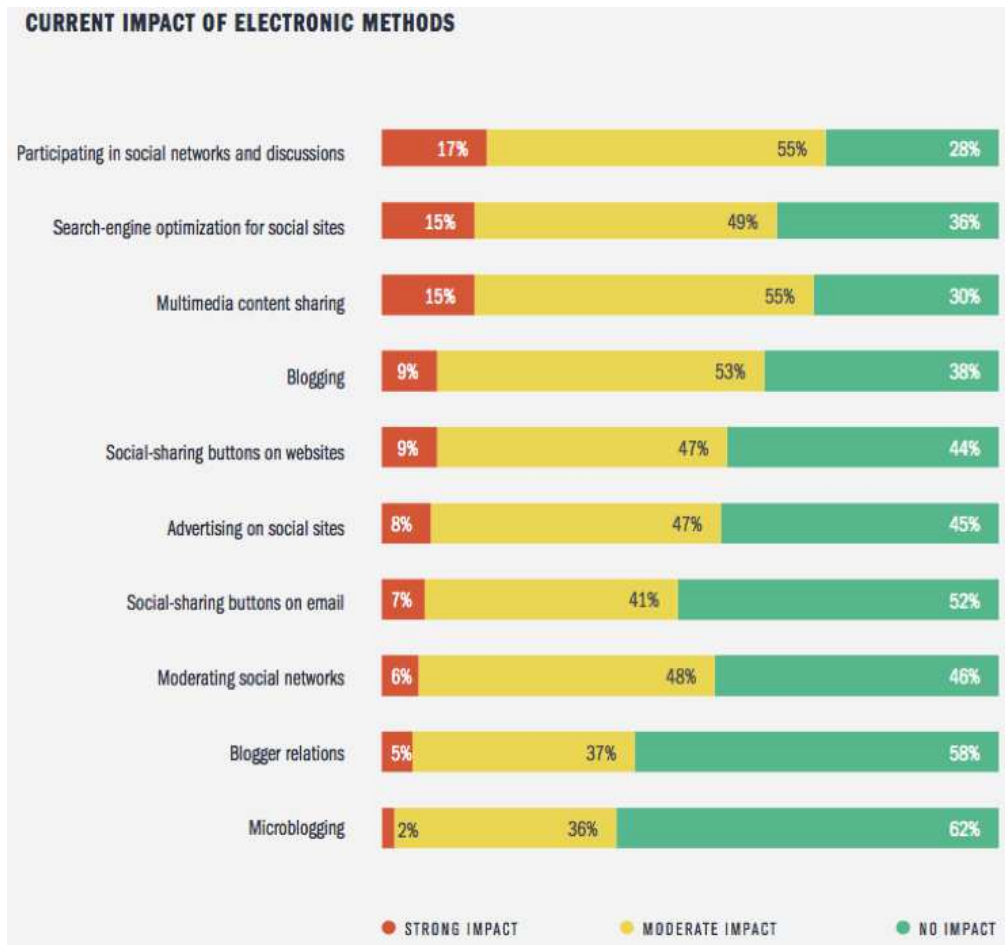
The growth of social media and the mobile web has allowed us all to connect with anyone, anywhere. Today’s social networks are the crossroads of the country – the modern day Times Square where anyone and everyone can get their message out. So every planned giving program should be there too, right?

Not necessarily.

It’s easy to be seduced by Facebook, with its audience of billions worldwide, but according to Blackbaud research, only about 1% of all online fundraising can be attributed to social media.

No social media platform is focused on connecting with donors and getting them to pull out a credit card. Facebook for one, is not the place where people want to be educated on life income gifts, and Twitter may be the President’s channel of choice, but planned-giving professionals say

that social media has yet to earn a place among their most valuable tools. Only 17% say it can have a strong impact on their program.



Perhaps when the next generation enters their 60s social media will start to have a significant impact on planned giving marketing.

This does not mean social media is something you should not test. But it does mean that most of the industry is not relying on it for planned giving marketing. That said, the “social” nature of social media makes it very enticing to aid in stewardship and build a community of volunteers. Its essence is community-building with like-minded people who have the same interests and shared experiences. This is why social media may not work to build planned giving awareness but does work well with alumni groups and legacy societies for stewardship: not to solicit, but to support events, fundraisers and other volunteer activities.

Although the survey tells us the planned giving marketers still rely on the traditional tactics, marketers are also inching toward greater use of digital media - email much more than social media.

IX. VISITING DONORS

The face-to-face personal cultivation between you and your donor is the most effective marketing you can do. It's relationship-building and although it may start through direct mail or your website, it's the personal meeting that gives direct insight into the interests of the donor. And it's the personal sharing that will help you connect the donor with the gift vehicle that best suits their needs and wants. Never underestimate the marketing power of looking a donor in the eyes, talking about the impact of a planned gift, answering any questions, and making a genuine connection with the donor.

Everything we have discussed leads to this.

And when the time comes ... don't be afraid to ask:

"Would you consider making a gift to [Charity] in your will?"

"Many of our donors [strong supporters like you] have made a gift to [Charity] in their will. Is that something you might be interested in doing?"

Personal donor contact and visits need to be a priority for your program. And for those that have too many administrative duties... either delegate or hire a vendor. But don't let the time visiting donors suffer. Again, hiring a marketing vendor is a wonderful option but if the vendor you choose does not save you the time needed to be on the road, then maybe you have the wrong vendor.

X. CONCLUSION

"Our job is to connect to people, to interact with them in a way that leaves them better than we found them, more able to get where they'd like to go."

~ Seth Godin

In today's multi-channel world new trends in marketing pop up every few weeks. New technologies in video, social media, and mobile together can spread messages farther than they have ever been spread before.

Ignore that noise.

Build awareness of your planned giving program with a good online presence and some old-fashioned direct mail.

If you take just one thing from this discussion I hope that it is, "Ready, FIRE, Aim!" Don't wait for the perfect time to launch or re-launch a marketing program. There is no perfect time. Waiting only lets opportunity and donors' funds pass through to some other charity.

The time is now.