



OREGON  
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## 11 ways to lose your donors

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1. **Not acknowledging every gift.** If you don't care about them, why should they care about you?
2. **Delaying the thank-you.** Timeliness matters. Promptly thank your donors. If you're forced to prioritise, the larger gifts and gifts with heavy emotional weight such as memorial gifts come first. Preferably a 24 hour turnaround.
3. **Misspelling the donor's name.** Sloppy work reflects poorly on your organisation.
4. **Failing to personalise the salutation or address they donor as they have requested.** "Mr & Mrs", "Dr", etc. Details matter.
5. **Overused, tired language.** Avoid worn out phrases. Keep it fresh, tell a recent story and how they're gift may have helped.
6. **Not mentioning an instruction that came with the gift.** For example "remain anonymous", or " earmark this gift for special purpose", or "send pledge reminders". Donors want to know that you listen.
7. **Neglecting to tell them about the impact the gift is making.** Donors want to know their gift is making a difference.
8. **Overlooking the opportunity to provide something of value.** Philanthropy is all about the value-for value exchange. Good donor stewardship requires a give and take. Give your donor something of value to continue the circle. What gifts can you give? A way they can volunteer...a thankyou from a supporter...a means to get involved as an advocate...a list of tips they can use?
9. **Not including staff contact information.** What if the donor has a question? What if you made a mistake in their letter? What if they want to do more for you? How are they going to reach the right person if you don't give them a name, phone number and email?
10. **Sounding like you are asking for more.** You'll notice I didn't say simply "asking" for more. Sometimes even when you don't ask, you sound like you're asking. A thank you should be pure. Take a good look at your thank you letters. Are you moaning about the need in the community; bragging about all the people you help and adding that you couldn't do it without donor support? Too often thank you letters sound exactly like fundraising letters.
11. **Thanking only some of your donors.** I've seen this happen too often. Non-profits act as if donors in certain categories (e.g. donors under a certain amount or online donors etc.) are not worth the time/expense of a mailed acknowledgement. These folks will maybe get a simple receipt or automated response, but nothing personal. What a huge missed opportunity to remind your donor of the impact of their giving, and reassure them that they made a good decision. If you want to retain your donors and build stronger relationships over time, don't forget your manners.