

## Direct Mail Is Alive and Kickin'!

By Karin Kirchoff and Mackie Burr



Kirchoff



Burr

If there was a museum of direct response fundraising history, the launch of the direct mail program for White Coat Waste (WCW) Project would be the exhibit that gets you to buy the upgraded membership!

Starting a direct mail program and growing it to 20,000 donors in less than two years was commonplace in the '80s and '90s, but in 2019? Unheard of.

Almost.

Because that's exactly what WCW Project did.

Its story is part strategy and part perfect storm — and one you won't soon forget!

A little over two years ago, WCW was interested in launching a direct mail program to diversify channels and bring in a different type of donor. With a compelling mission and successful track record of defunding animal testing in government labs, WCW had already built a robust digital program and were confident they could carve out a space in the direct mail world, too.

Let's look at WCW's recipe for success:

**Step 1:** Start with a niche mission that has mass appeal. Perhaps the most fascinating thing about WCW is that it supersedes political party affiliation; it challenges the idea that there isn't common ground in the United States these days and it appeals to the nearly 100 million households that have a pet

“

All of this began with a laser-focused, aggressive email advocacy and fundraising program.

”

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Best of Bridge

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## Small Changes, Big Impact – Acquisition Testing on a Budget

By Barbara Schulman



New donor acquisition is the most expensive area of any fundraising program. But it's a crucial investment if you want to combat natural donor attrition and maintain or grow your donor base —

and your pool of prospects for mid-level giving, planned gifts and major giving.

If you already have an acquisition program in place, you likely have a tried-and-true control package that you can count on for good results. Continuously testing against this control is the best way to ensure your messaging is still relevant and that you are optimizing results.

Don't be concerned if you don't have a big testing budget. Small, impactful creative

changes can still bring in big wins for your organization! I have seen it firsthand — organizations like Conquer Cancer, the ASCO Foundation and TechnoServe were able to achieve response gains of 60% or more with some simple testing that improved existing acquisition packages.

Some key points to consider as you look to improve overall acquisition performance are: What is your budget? How many campaigns do you have? When are you mailing? What is the volume? Is the priority to lift response, average gift, cost per new donor?

Once you have foundational goals set, you can begin to strategize on test options:

• **Explore your list mix:** Has your offer changed over time and have you changed your lists to match your new offer? Are you

Continued on page 12

# President's Perspective

## A BIG Thank You To Our Best of Direct Sponsors ... YOU Are the Best!

By Polly Papsadore



Polly Papsadore  
polly@pmgdirect.net

We had the DMAW Best of Direct Awards Ceremony and Holiday Party on Dec. 1 at the National Housing Center and were thrilled to see you there!

After our October in-person happy hour, the message came through loud and clear that our members wanted to get together in person! So, we moved forward – quickly – on putting together the Best of Direct in just a few weeks! To ensure its success, we made asks of our DMAW partners to sponsor this very popular — and needed — year-end celebration.

And, wow, did they come through with extraordinary support! Their excitement to support this important event inspired us as we planned the event! We couldn't wait to have everyone together!

So, please, support our wonderful partner-sponsors who are truly devoted to our DMAW community, and thank them for helping us reconnect through in-person events again.

## Thanks to our AMAZING DMAW Best of Direct sponsors!

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# Calendar of Events

**Thursday, Nov. 18**

**Webinar**

1 p.m. – 2 p.m.

**Location:** Zoom

**Topic:** Preparing for an Uncertain 2022

## CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS

PREPARING FOR AN UNCERTAIN 2022

## THE BEST of DIRECT

Spotlight on Achievement

HOLIDAY PARTY & AWARDS CEREMONY

**Wednesday, Dec. 1**

**Best of Direct**

**Location:** National Housing  
Center, Washington, D.C.

**Topic:** Spotlight on  
Achievement

Deadline for registration is 24 hours before the event.  
Register at [dmaw.org](https://dmaw.org) or call 703-689-3629.  
Are you a DMAW Corporate or Nonprofit Group Member?  
If yes, don't forget your special benefit that everyone in your  
company or nonprofit can register as a member!



# Quick Takes

Every month DMAW asks people in our industry for their 'quick take' on a topic

## What have you learned this year that you're planning to apply in 2022?



**DAN**

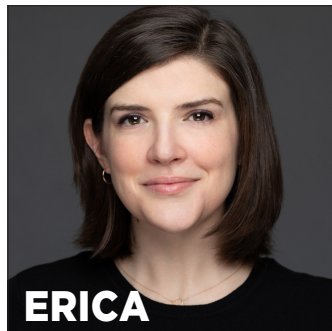
In 2022, it's time to take multichannel fundraising to the next level with knowledge and data acquired over the last two years. Possibilities include:

- Testing targeted welcome and cultivation emails for direct mail donors.
- Closing touch-point gaps by cultivating email addresses among donors from other channels.
- Optimizing digital co-targeting by testing different offers (direct ask, soft offer, content, branding, etc.)
- Test adding additional touch points to existing multichannel campaigns (SMS, display, etc.)
- Finding hidden multi-touch point donors by matching back online donors to postal mail files.

• Test cross-channel gratitude, such as email videos or thank-you calls for direct mail donors.

The industry has come to recognize multichannel communication as the powerful tool that it is, but its value can be amplified with targeted content, strategic testing and unsiloed communication between departments and partners.

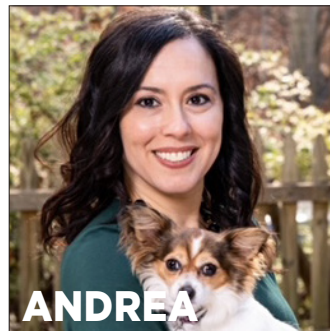
**Dan Sonners**  
Vice President  
Conrad Direct  
dsonners@conraddirect.com



**ERICA**

The transition from a year of rapid response fundraising to a more "normal" fundraising cadence was rough. In 2021, our team emerged from the worst of the pandemic with a larger file, a more complex program, a few new channels, and (luckily) a bigger team. But our systems and processes didn't keep pace with the growth and complexity, nor with our desire to provide the best donor experience possible. In 2022 and beyond, I will be redoubling our focus on meaningful donor journeys and scalability in service of donor experience so that our team is ready for whatever the future holds.

**Erica Best**  
Director of Direct Response  
No Kid Hungry  
ebest@strength.org



**ANDREA**

This year we learned that virtual relationship building was more than simply an adaptation forced by the pandemic — it has deepened connections, expanded our reach and encouraged innovation.

After years of hosting events and cultivating donors in person, we pivoted to entirely virtual fundraising. While 2020 demanded an immediate pivot, 2021 gave us space to experiment. We launched community conversations, virtual tours and volunteer events; all were bolstered by a series of omnichannel campaigns. We also leveraged peer-to-peer fundraising to assist our most dedicated supporters in raising funds on our behalf.

These developments increased engagement, giving and retention. With staff less focused on planning and logistics, we dedicated more time to strengthening relationships. Next year, we will expand on these efforts as we learn more about our donors.

**Andrea Messina**  
Chief Development Officer  
Humane Rescue Alliance  
amessina@humanerescuealliance.org



**MICHELE**

In 2021, I learned how critical transparency and communication are, not only among our specific team but within our entire organization. We are still working remote and cannot just stop by someone's desk for a quick question or bump into whomever we need to speak to in passing. Instead, we needed to learn new tools and methods to clearly communicate our work and needs. We also had to be more proactive and collaborate and coordinate more broadly to ensure our outreach and messaging was cohesive with our colleagues in other departments. In 2022, I plan on carrying these lessons over and building upon them to create concrete systems that will last past the pandemic.

**Michele Brenner**  
Development Operations  
Manager  
Society for Science  
mbrenner@societyforscience.org



# Goal Setting, Staffing and the One-to-Some Relationship: How To Set Up Your Mid-Level Program for Success

By Kurt Worrell



You already know why your organization needs a mid-level donor program. These \$1,000-plus donors account for a third of the annual fund revenues for most programs and bridge

the gap between annual giving and major giving. For your mid-level donor program to be successful, you'll need to set realistic goals, staff appropriately and build one-to-some relationships with your donors.

## GOAL SETTING FOR YOUR MID-LEVEL DONOR PROGRAM

The primary goal of your mid-level donor program should be qualifying and nurturing donors on a path to transformational giving. Our client data shows an average of four years from a donor becoming a mid-level supporter to making a transformational gift.

Mid-level donor programs should have a primary focus on qualifying donors at every level. This qualification includes who should join the mid-level program, stay in the mid-level program or leave the mid-level program to be pursued for a gift-planning or major-gift opportunity.

There are several KPIs you should review to make sure your program is moving toward this overarching goal:

1. Moves into and out of your mid-level program.
2. Revenue of the mid-level segment, including increasing mid-level donor value and the value of mid-level donors who have moved to major/planned gifts.
3. Retention of the segment.
4. Growth of the program from adding new donors, reactivating donors, and additions from overburdened or underperforming gift officer portfolios.

## HOW TO STAFF YOUR MID-LEVEL DONOR PROGRAM

A successful mid-level donor program must be staffed appropriately. To begin building those one-to-some relationships, have dedicated representation to engage those donors in conversations; steward donors; understand



Credit: Getty Images, Luis Alvarez

donor state of consideration; and report impact. Depending on the size of your program, you may have mid-level donor relationship managers on your team or you may rely on strategic partners to help you achieve your goals.

No matter how many staff support your mid-level donor program, you'll want to create organizational alignment across your charity. As a comprehensive fundraising team (from your annual fund to major gifts), you'll want to define:

- What qualifies a donor into the mid-level program.
- The next steps for a donor who moves up to a portfolio assignment and how to coordinate that handoff.
- The rules that move a donor out of a mid-level program to mass marketing.
- The timing parameters to enact movement in, out and through the mid-level donor program (hint: it needs to be more frequently than annually).
- The important role prospect research plays.
- When to move a donor out of portfolio into mid-level.
- Revenue responsibilities in every part of the organization.

## CREATE ONE-TO-SOME RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR MID-LEVEL DONORS

I've written at length about the importance of creating one-to-some relationships with your mid-level donors. In summary, direct-response

programs rely on a one-to-many approach in order to maximize all of the donor touch points of a multichannel fundraising strategy. A common mistake many organizations make is treating a mid-level donor program like an enhanced direct-response program.

On the opposite end, major and planned gift officers create highly customized one-to-one relationships with their prospects. It stands to reason that your mid-level donors need a customized, one-to-some approach.

This type of relationship requires enhanced donor stewardship and a deep understanding of the donor and the specific parts of your mission that appeal to their generosity. Most importantly, the one-to-some approach is critical in identifying and defining a donor's journey. Only a small percentage of donors actually move to transformational giving, but a good mid-level program will help donors achieve their desired impact at every level.

Kurt Worrell leads the donor engagement team as senior vice president at TrueSense Marketing, which makes critical one-to-one connections with donors on its clients' behalf. Kurt joined TrueSense in 2016 with 25 years of fundraising and data experience serving clients in health care, higher education, academic medical centers, human service, zoos and museums. Kurt develops and oversees the personal contact strategies that are the basis of our mid-level solutions, gift planning lead generation, major gift lead generation and identification, sustainer, stewardship and grateful patient programs. Kurt also serves as a director for the Giving Institute and Giving USA Foundation.

# Creating the Bridge to Sustainer Growth

By Erica Waasdorp



The DMAW and the Bridge Conference have embraced sustainer giving very early on. They helped organize a pre-conference sustainer workshop. They held sustainer

days, sustainer world, sustainer week and of course, the conference has a whole track on sustainer giving.

Here are just a few highlights of this year's sustainer sessions at the Bridge conference, "Never Underestimate the Value of Monthly Giving: What to do RIGHT NOW to grow your sustainer program."

Joanne Wilson of the Humane Society of the U.S. (HSUS) shared how it grew its sustainer program in the middle of the pandemic.

Joanne has been a sustainer advocate for many years. Her presentations are inspiring to those fundraisers who are just dipping their



Credit: Getty Images, Natalia Gdovskaia / EyeEm

toes in sustainer giving, and for those who are looking for some new ideas.

Like every single fundraiser, HSUS too had to pivot from its typical successful sustainer-number-driving channels to others. Face-to-face was not possible. "Don't panic" was the name of the game, and Joanne, in her calm

but thorough way, was quickly able to find other ways to grow.

Here are three approaches she took and how she accomplished amazing growth in the number of sustainers.

**Approach 1:** Keep your growth goals in mind. Don't panic. Don't despair. Look at ways to generate new sustainers and reactivate lapsed sustainers in ways you may not have tried or may not have tried in a while. You're creative. You're resilient and sometimes the channels and messaging can be right in front of you, but you may have to look back a few years to what worked in the past.

**Approach 2:** Prevent losing the sustainers you have by putting a save script in place. I've heard amazing stories on this approach and Joanne's was no exception. Donors shared that they wanted to help. They wanted to make sure animals were safe and animals were saved. But if they were worried about their amount, the callers or email responders at HSUS were able to offer the sustainer a lower amount or a pause on their recurring gifts for a few months. And donors responded to that approach very positively.

**Approach 3:** Focus on retention and keep more sustainers, especially if they came from more expensive channels like face-to-face and some digital campaigns.

Nobody knew how long this pandemic was going to last. Nobody knew what the impact was going to be on existing sustainers and which channels were not going to be able to be used for quite a while. So what did HSUS, Joanne and her team do?

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Even without its typical sustainer workhorse of face-to-face, HSUS managed to bring in 9,000 more sustainers and increase revenue to 47% of total revenue, compared to 45% early in 2020. Can you just imagine the growth these sustainers will generate in years to come?

“

They added more digital activities and more emails and, boy, did that pay off nicely. Just like with so many other nonprofits, email became the new workhorse, at least for those organizations that were not afraid to use it.

HSUS also took a good look at its lapsed sustainers as it was a great time to contact them to see if they could be reactivated. HSUS expanded its telemarketing campaign. The nonprofit found matching gift challenges that really helped motivate sustainers to make recurring gifts and if they hadn't given monthly in a while: come back. HSUS also focused on making it easier for sustainers to give by electronic bank transfer.

HSUS took the time to develop a texting program and asked its one-time donors to convert to make a monthly gift right away. The organization added pop-ups on its one-time gift pages.

The combination of these new and old approaches helped drive more new sustainers because donors wanted to help. Animals became even more important for so many of us during the pandemic, so donors wanted to ensure their safety and rescue. HSUS really made the acquisition process work.

HSUS also evaluated its processes. What else was the nonprofit doing for lapsing sustainers? It ensured the organization's credit card recycler was in place and optimized. The nonprofit ensured that its check statement reminders were going

out consistently and it prevented all delays internally, especially with so many employees and volunteers moving to remote work.

The approaches here are important for sustainers all the time but it certainly paid off

during the pandemic. Even without its typical sustainer workhorse of face-to-face, HSUS managed to bring in 9,000 more sustainers and increase revenue to 47% of total revenue, compared to 45% early in 2020. Can you just imagine the growth these sustainers will generate in years to come?

So, don't wait. Look at your processes. Look at results from some of the old channels and messaging and see if you can reactivate some of them or add them to your current mix. This focus on sustainers will continue to pay off, I can guarantee you that. Thank you, Joanne, for sharing the HSUS case study. We're always learning, and we certainly learned a lot from your pivot during the pandemic. Remember, donors want to help in ways that are easy for them, and sustainers do exactly that!

Erica Waasdorp is one of the leading experts on monthly giving. She is the author of the books "Monthly Giving. The Sleeping Giant" and "Monthly Giving Made Easy." She is the president of A Direct Solution, a company serving nonprofit organizations with fundraising and direct marketing needs, with a focus on monthly giving and appeals. She can be reached at [erica@adirectsolution.com](mailto:erica@adirectsolution.com).

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## Direct Mail Is Alive and Kickin'!

Continued from page 1

in the U.S. By focusing on taxpayer-funded, baseless animal testing, there are few in this country who would challenge WCW's core values.

**Step 2:** Add a proven track record of success. In its short history, WCW defunded all the dog labs at the CDC and the FDA, ended all tests at the EPA and closed the largest federal cat labs (aka "kitten slaughterhouses") ending all USDA tests. All of this began with a laser-focused, aggressive email advocacy and fundraising program that grew by using political campaigns as a template.

**Step 3:** Package the mission in a clear, easy-to-understand formula with a catchy acronym. WCW's process can be summed up in fewer than 10 words:

**F:** Find the waste.

**E:** Expose the waste.

**D:** Defund the waste.

It's that simple. Using Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) documentation, WCW uncovered evidence of these horrible acts of cruelty, then created captivating public awareness campaigns designed to

get the attention of citizens and lawmakers to defund the heinous experiments.

There is no other organization singularly focused on this mission and there's no other organization having as much success in shutting down these labs.

**Step 4:**

Offer a compelling call to action. During a divisive time of upheaval and dissonance — particularly in terms of government and politics — WCW offered donors a way to help put an end to some of the madness that was 2020.

**Step 5:** Timing. While not quite everything,

timing was a key part of WCW's success. It launched two small acquisition campaigns in fall 2019. Employing strong calls to action, WCW petition and survey packages attained response rates of more than 1.5% and gave WCW two winning controls upon which to continue building.

WHITE COAT  
WASTE PROJECT

Dear Taxpayer,

It was supposed to be a summer job. Nothing more.

*I was just a young man, and had no idea what I was walking into ... But 25 years later, the experiments I saw performed on innocent animals still haunt me in my sleep.*

*Cut apart. Poisoned. Burned alive.* I can still hear their yowls and yelps of pain and heartache screaming from their metal cages and echoing off the windowless cinderblock walls.

You would have been horrified to witness it. And what I'm going to tell you now may horrify you even more.

This was a laboratory funded by our U.S. government ... by YOUR taxpayer dollars!

Every day, in labs across this country, Uncle Sam tortures animals in the name of "research" — suffering you wouldn't wish on your worst enemy!

In fact, most people don't know it, but our federal government — not cosmetic or pharmaceutical companies — is the largest funder of animal testing in the world!

No anesthesia. No pain relief. They perform cruel, painful, and unnecessary experiments on dogs and cats just as sweet and loving as the ones you've ever known.

And it has to stop now.



## These Aren't The Only Things That Work



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dandersen@hublabels.com

**NOT IN MY NAME! NOT WITH MY TAX DOLLARS!**

☐ **NO!** I don't want any more animals tortured or killed in my name or with my tax dollars. I've signed my petition, and I'm joining White Coat Waste Project today to end this abuse of innocent animals once and for all!

☐ \$20 ☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

XXProspect NameXX  
XXStreet AddressLINE1XX  
XXStreet AddressLINE2XX  
XX City, State, ZipXX  
XX Barcode XX



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#### URGENT PETITION: END THE VA'S DOG LABS

To: Mr. Robert Wilkie  
Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs

Dear Secretary Wilkie,

I was extremely disheartened to learn about the very painful experiments on dogs that are going on in VA labs. I don't want to see my tax dollars funding these horrors anymore! I'm calling on an immediate end to any new funding for painful dog experiments, and I want to make sure 100% of the survivors who have been subject to experiments in labs are adopted into good and loving forever homes ... where they belong!

*Our brave veterans deserve better than to have dogs tortured in their name. Thank you for acting immediately to cut this senseless government waste and abuse.*

Sincerely,

XXProspect NameXX  
XX Prospect City, StateXX  
U.S. Taxpayer & Supporter, White Coat Waste Project

(Additional comments on back)



WHITE COAT  
WASTE  
PROJECT  
PO Box 26186  
Washington, DC 20001  
[www.WhiteCoatWaste.org](http://www.WhiteCoatWaste.org)

You can imagine what happened next. Like most mailers, WCW reaped the rewards of the historic 2020 giving season and the file experienced explosive growth.

Gradually, the direct mail responsive donors outnumbered the digital-only donors, and response rates climbed to nearly 10% on some appeals!

And the icing on the cake?

In its first year of appeals, WCW mined the top segments of the digital file and unearthed super high value multichannel donors, which now account for 10% of its direct mail file!

This rapid growth meant reworking its five- and 10-year forecasts, fast-tracking caging operations, and building out a mid-level giving program 18 months earlier than expected. Working in lockstep with organizational partners all the way, WCW was able to quickly pivot as the program evolved.

WCW's success has continued in 2021. Its supporters are superfans — actively engaging in petitions, surveys and match campaigns.

What's next for WCW?

Year three will include the development of a dedicated renewal series, mapping for additional online and offline integration, and

exploring text messaging to further engage this enthusiastic donor file.

We've harnessed the power of advocacy and smart fundraising to do the reverse of what we've all been doing for 20 years. Building a direct mail program from a digital program has been nothing short of amazing — almost like something you'd see in a museum.

Karin Kirchoff, founder and president of K2D Strategies, has dedicated her career to working for causes that make the world a better place. By implementing dynamic and forward-thinking, multichannel marketing programs, she has helped to generate tens of millions for animal welfare and environmental causes; advocacy programs focused on women's rights, LGBTQ equality and children; and social service causes that help people and communities most in need. Karin is active in the nonprofit community, currently serving on the board of the DMAW.

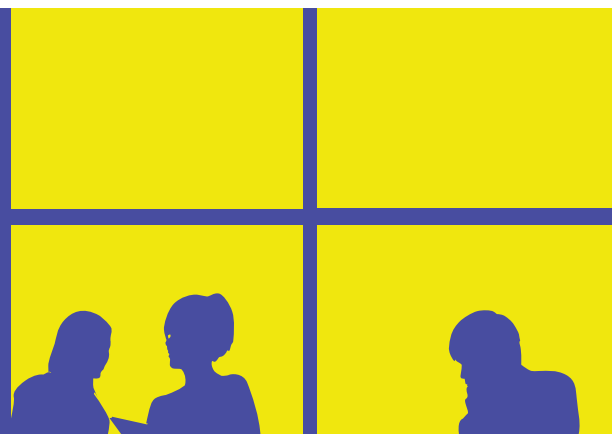
Mackie Burr, digital and grassroots development director for White Coat Waste Project, is a specialist in online fundraising. At the age of 24, she led a team to raise more than \$6.5 million for the top-targeted 2018 U.S. Senate campaign for Martha McSally, R-Ariz.

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**MEET H.**  
**JUST BEYOND POSSIBLE**

Out of the Trenches: Your direct marketing colleagues take a big-picture look at things

# Reducing Donor Churn with Best-in-Class Stewardship

By Shelley Cochrane, Jillian Jenkins Mangin and Jennifer Wojcikowski



Cochrane



Mangin



Wojcikowski

In talking with not-for-profit leaders, we hear their repeated frustration of working hard to acquire donors only to find out that the donors didn't keep giving and the acquisition investment seemed wasted. Now they are facing another acquisition season but they're not sure it will turn out any better this time. This constant cycle of acquiring and losing donors is what we're calling donor churn.

Donor churn happens when a new donor never makes a second gift, an active donor drifts away or a lapsed donor doesn't come back — and it's a direct threat to your fundraising success.

Consider this example:

A Douglas Shaw & Associates client acquired 60,000 new donors who gave \$860,000 in 2020. Well-stewarded, these donors will give a projected revenue of \$47 million over the next eight years. Poorly stewarded, donors will drop off, putting these millions in jeopardy.

What does it mean to steward donors well? Implementing strategies that produce successful results in new donor activation, donor retention, lapsed donor reactivation, and growing your pool of multi-year donors.

Consider these three examples from the Greater Chicago Food Depository, one of the nation's largest food banks.

## 1. START WITH A GOAL FOR EACH OF YOUR DONOR COMMUNICATION PIECES

Look at internal and external goals for individual communication pieces. Be specific. Identify what success looks like and how you



Credit: Getty Images, Martin Barraud

will measure it.

An internal goal may ask the question: What are you looking for this newsletter to do? Retain donors? Upgrade donors? Which donors? Which metric will show whether you succeeded?

An external goal may ask the question: How do we want donors to interact with this newsletter? Do we need it to demonstrate the impact of their gift in someone's life? Do we need it to show how their funds were used? Which metrics will show the changes in donor behavior so you can make adjustments along the way?

The Food Depository team saw an opportunity to step-up stewardship communications and added a quarterly donor report that shows donors the impact of their giving. While it is a net revenue generator, it's primary goal is to build trust and deepen donor engagement to increase reactivation and retention.

## 2. BE TIMELY AND NIMBLE IN ADJUSTING YOUR DONOR COMMUNICATION

Demonstrate that you continue to be on mission even in an ever-changing environment. Adjust your plan to reflect new

realities. Provide relevant updates.

One step the Greater Chicago Food Depository took was to deploy a new COVID-centric welcome series to activate new donors whose first gift was prompted by the severity of the COVID-19 crisis. Standard welcome pieces, without a nod to the pandemic, would have seemed disjointed. That principle applied to new email sign-ups as well. Messages sent to those new individuals acknowledged the way the COVID-19 crisis was relevant to what people were personally experiencing. Revisit and adjust your development plan frequently to stay in sync with your donors.

## 3. WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER AS A DEVELOPMENT TEAM

When COVID-19 struck, the unprecedented need for emergency fundraising and the sudden shift to working remotely introduced significant challenges. At the Greater Chicago Food Depository, the development staff identified ways to streamline processes and communications. For example, the team repurposed content created by other departments, such as programmatic reports and media alerts — reshaping them to



show the donors the impact of their gifts and educate new donors about the Greater Chicago Food Depository's mission and programming. Look for efficiencies you haven't utilized previously.

Another example from the Greater Chicago Food Depository reflects the development team's attitude toward expressing gratitude. With the need to provide a thank you to so many new donors all at once, they had to be creative. One step they took was to use an email template but with personalization and a message like, "This is Jennifer Wojcikowski from the Greater Chicago Food Depository. I saw your gift come through this afternoon and I just had to reach out and say, 'Thank you.' ..." The email may reference other relevant details, contain a specific call to action and include a link to a story. This approach accomplished the goal of expressing an authentic thank you, but the template helped to speed the process.

At a time in history when donor churn might be expected to be at an all-time high, many not-for-profits, like the Greater

Chicago Food Depository, are seeing solid rates of activation, retention, reactivation, and an increase in multi-year donors. This is a result of its efforts to apply best-in-class stewardship, like measuring specific goals, being nimble and working smarter.

The best part about reducing churn is that it means you are engaging donors better and longer. And engaging donors better and longer means they are strengthening your organization's long-term impact. After all that you've been through, that's something to feel good about.

Shelley Cochrane is vice president of strategic partnerships at Douglas Shaw & Associates. She has demonstrated an ability to assess complex situations and apply innovative strategies that lead to long-term organizational growth. Able to pinpoint the critical factors that will make the biggest impact for improvement, she uses her insights to produce clear, streamlined solutions. Shelley has collaborated with national and international leaders to cut through organizational clutter, identify challenges and leverage solutions to dramatically increase revenue, donor engagement and staff performance.

Jillian Jenkins Mangin is the senior consultant of client services at Douglas Shaw & Associates. She has an extraordinary ability to help nonprofit organizations translate their fundraising goals into donor-centric messaging and design that resonates with donors at a deep level, motivating a response. As an experienced data analyst, she identifies patterns in donor behavior that provide insights for shaping effective donor engagement strategies. Jillian's priority of focusing on the donor while developing data-driven strategies allows her to create integrated, multichannel communications plans unique to each organization and community of donors — for maximum results.

Jennifer Wojcikowski, CFRE, has built her development and communications career on the belief that authentic relationships and mission-driven partnerships can transform the world. As a fundraising and marketing consultant, Jennifer has partnered with nonprofits of all sizes, leading internal teams and external stakeholders to align in purpose and achieve extraordinary results. She currently serves as the director of annual giving at the Greater Chicago Food Depository, where she drives the direct response, annual major gifts, and cultivation and stewardship programs.

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## Small Changes, Big Impact — Acquisition Testing on a Budget

Continued from page 1

managing your rental versus exchanges? Are you in the right co-ops and are you updating data often enough?

• **Test seasonality:** The best times for acquisition are generally during the fall season and first quarter of the calendar year. But there could be strong pockets during other times of the year for your organization.

• **Test gift string:** You can change up the number of asks, the order, add odd amounts specific to your organization, model for higher dollar donors, change the high or low ask, and change the steps between asks.

• **Highlight alternate ways to give:** The way people give is evolving. Test asks around DAFs, monthly giving, QCDs and more. Experiment with QR codes and online giving options.

• **Use creative enhancements:** By looking carefully at each component, you can consider low-cost or no-cost treatments that make a big impact, including testing your postage treatment, testing envelope teasers, using a faux handwriting font, changing up colors on inserts, and more.

• **Find cost-cutting methods:** There are also ways to test that could help lower costs. Ideas include changing formats, such as close-faced versus window envelopes, testing two-color versus four-color art, etc.

• **Take advantage of combo printing:** Printing multiple small jobs together or printing control packages ahead of time for the full year can reduce the cost of each job.

Both TechnoServe and Conquer Cancer had strong acquisition packages, but were looking to further improve results on limited budgets. Here are some test results:

• **Cut down on the number of inserts**

Objective: Save money without hurting response

Result: 17% lift in response

• **Test blank/unbranded outer envelope**

Objective: Increase response rate with some mystery

Result: 9% lift in response

• **Stamps with pre-cancel on the outer envelope (still mails at nonprofit rate)**

Objective: Increase response rate — looks like first-class mail

Result: 29% lift in response

• **Two times matching gift offer**

Objective: Use matching gift offer to lift response

Result: 24% lift in response

• **New letter format with photos and callouts**

Objective: Lift response rate

Result: 11% lift in response for one group no change for another

• **Highlight existing matching gift offer on outer envelope**

Objective: Increase open rate with mention of the match

Result: 24% lift in response

• **Test a new teaser**

Objective: Refresh the teaser to improve open rates

Result: 8% lift in response

While some tests will be big winners, there will be some duds in the bunch as well as some that don't really move the needle. The important thing is to keep testing — each campaign will give you new insight into your audience.

Keep these in mind as you build your testing strategy:

• Test all aspects of your program, such as creative, lists, offer, gift strings, messaging, etc.

• Test cost-saving methods early in the year to analyze results and implement quickly.

• Print as much as you can in advance to minimize extra expense when doing seasonality tests.

• Keep track of your testing and results, and then start combining winners to multiply your success.

• Plan for the full year to maximize a limited budget, report to senior management on your progress, and when you take advantage of combo printing, it saves time later in the year.

By implementing low-cost test elements, you can add value to your control package and acquisition program and bring in those much-needed new donors.

Barbra Schulman is the vice president of integrated marketing at Faircom New York. She is a marketing professional with over 20 years of experience in multichannel campaign strategy and management. She has a successful track record of increasing revenues through the introduction of new program opportunities and improved data interpretation. Her other work experience includes time at companies in both the nonprofit and for-profit sector, including March of Dimes, Citibank and MasterCard. She currently works with Human Rights Watch, TechnoServe, Conquer Cancer and The Lustgarten Foundation, among others.



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## News Notes

**Moore Announces Acquisition of Thompson Habib Denison**

Moore, a constituent experience management company, announced the acquisition of Thompson Habib Denison (THD), Lincoln, Massachusetts, on Oct. 14. THD, a social impact agency committed to building loyal relationships between donors and nonprofit brands through data-driven marketing strategies, will continue to serve midsize and large nonprofits under the brand, THD, a Moore company.

Jay Denison will continue to lead THD as president and will report to Gretchen Littlefield, CEO of Moore. There will be no changes to THD leadership, employee positions or operations.

"The THD culture and strive for excellence matches our own, so it was the right fit for both of us," Littlefield said. "The investment THD has made in their team of talented strategists

and subject matter experts, coupled with their investments in data-driven analytic solutions, is reflected in the results they deliver to their long-term client partners. Now with the expanded Moore analytic, data and media products available to them, they will further expand their service offerings and deliver even greater growth for their clients."

"With Moore, we have found an ideal partner that will build on our successful past and help us get to the next level of our development," Denison added. "THD is grounded in best-in-class analytics, sophisticated modeling and comprehensive strategies for growing revenue, and we are thrilled to expand these services as part of Moore, who is creating the next generation of products and services for the nonprofit industry. THD is excited about our future and what is next for our clients and our employees."

**Avalon Consulting Group Acquires Tripi Consulting**

Avalon Consulting Group announced its acquisition of Tripi Consulting, effective Oct. 1. Avalon will take over management of Tripi's 11 nonprofit clients and provide additional services in analytics and digital fundraising. Since 1997, Avalon has helped its clients raise millions of dollars to achieve their visions for a better world — while building relationships with people who share their passion and support their vital causes.

"Tripi Consulting and its clients align closely with Avalon's values, so it is a natural fit," Allison Porter, Avalon president and owner, said. "We are excited to welcome Tripi staff and clients to the Avalon family."

Veteran direct marketing fundraiser Amy Tripi will join the Avalon staff as chief strategy officer and oversee the transition. Within the next year, Tripi plans to retire to devote her time to her energy healing practice, which she has run concurrently with her consulting business for the past eight years.

"It's time for me to move on to my next adventure, and I can't think of a better home for Tripi Consulting than Avalon," Tripi said. "Avalon's leadership in the industry is unmatched, and their similar fundraising philosophy and welcoming company culture will make the transition for Tripi's clients and staff seamless."

*Is something exciting  
happening in your company  
or organization?*

**Tell us about it!**

Email the editor, Amanda Cole,  
at dmawadvents@dmaw.org





# DMAW Educational Foundation

## The Importance of the DMAW/EF

As direct marketing professionals, we understand the importance of continuing to learn and grow in all aspects of our careers and in our lives. We attend the Bridge Conference and other educational events year after year because there is always more to learn.

The Educational Foundation, at the core, aims to educate students and professors about direct marketing — from what direct marketing is, to career possibilities! Through the various student and professor educational programs, many students have been introduced to a field they find that they are interested in. Serving as the connection between the direct marketing industry and the collegiate classrooms, students learn, and we learn how to best connect to the next generation of direct marketers.

In November, we held the semi-annual

Collegiate MAXI Competition, where student teams from several regional universities will present an integrated direct marketing plan to answer a case presented to them by a nonprofit. Check back in early 2022 for a recap of the competition!

We recently asked the DMAW/EF Board of Directors, what their perspective was on the importance of the DMAW/EF and how they see the role and educational aspect of the DMAW/EF. You can see some of their responses shared here, along with a former student who participated in our Mentor for a Day program and is now working in digital fundraising! That is the ultimate DMAW/EF success — a student inspired to pursue a career in fundraising!

If you are interested in learning more about the DMAW/EF and the programs, please visit [www.dmawef.org](http://www.dmawef.org).



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"The DMAW/EF handles an important task that is outside the purview of the DMAW, since the purpose of the association is to serve its members directly. The DMAW/EF serves DMAW members (and the whole direct marketing industry) indirectly by creating a pipeline of well-educated, entry-level talent ready to work in DM-oriented organizations without a great deal of additional on-the-job training."

— Scott Huch, DMAW/EF Board of Directors and President, Direct Creative Inc.

"The DMAW/EF is an avenue for students and professors to explore (often overlooked) aspects of marketing. Through real-world applications and examples, many students discover career opportunities helping others and making a difference in our world."

— Paula Morris, Salisbury University Professor Emeritus

"I participated in the Mentor for a Day program at PMG in November 2019. Throughout the day, I was able to get a complete view of nonprofit fundraising from start to finish. From direct mail production to mail logistics to data hygiene and processing to digital, I was able to get a comprehensive view into every facet of the nonprofit world, which helped me be able to identify [what] my interests were when starting my career. Looking back, the Mentor for a Day program was a key experience that helped inspire and kick-start my career in digital fundraising."

— Shelby Steere, Media Manager, Further

# Member Spotlight



**COURTNEY LEWIS**  
Senior Vice President,  
Fundraising Strategies  
Fuse Fundraising  
courtneyl@fusefundraising.com

What started as a paid internship at a full-service direct marketing agency in college turned into a lifelong career for Courtney Lewis.

"I was offered a job right after graduation at that same agency and here I am, still in direct marketing 16 years later," she said. "What a happy, happy accident."

Lewis explained that she has always loved "digging into client data and identifying what dials need to turn to make a big impact long term." Over the past 16 years, she has worked with nonprofit organizations of all sizes and currently serves as president of the Direct Marketing Association of Washington Education Foundation (DMAW/EF). She loves introducing the industry to the next great innovators who will continue the work that's being done in the industry. In fact, what she loves most about the nonprofit industry is the people who are part of it.

"The people in this industry are truly incredible," she said. "To work alongside those who will do whatever it takes to get the work done and raise money to change the world really can't be beat."

**Location:** Leesburg, Virginia

**Education:** University of Mary Washington with a degree in political science

**DMAW Member Since:** 2007

## Who do you consider your mentor?

Oh man, there are honestly too many to name. I have been lucky in this area and have worked/volunteered with some truly amazing people who have been more than generous in the knowledge that they impart to others. One of the amazing things about this industry is how these mentors come from all sides — co-workers, clients and other industry partners.

## What advice would you offer a novice who wants to move up in direct marketing?

Always ask why. Get the context behind the tasks you're performing and understand how it fits into the bigger picture. Sure, approving setups or test emails at 5p.m. on a Friday might be a real buzz kill, but when those campaigns end up making money for programs and causes you care about — it's worth it. Use that drive to keep pushing forward, and always try to focus on the big picture and how what you're doing really makes a difference. Look for mentors who will build you up and remind you of that difference you're making.

## What is the most helpful step you took to advance your direct marketing career?

Giving myself the freedom to make mistakes and understand that sometimes you learn just as much from those as you do from the things you got right.

## Tell us about your volunteer experiences with DMAW.

Throughout my tenure as a member of the DMAW I have volunteered at the Bridge Conference, written articles for AdVents and attended lots of happy hours (not sure that counts though). I am also the president of the DMAW/EF.

## Describe yourself in three words.

Curious. Resourceful. Happy.

## Describe your life in six words.

Curious. Resourceful. Happy. Loyal. Motivated. Caring.

## Courtney's Favorites



**Film:** "Dazed and Confused"



**Book:** Anything Emily Giffin (I love a rom-com)



**Music:** Country music (don't judge me)



**Leisure Interests:** Family time, reality TV, reading and anything in the sunshine.



**Quote:** "In this world, a good time to laugh is anytime you can." - Linda Ellerbee





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