

Nonprofit Technology News

March 14, 2016

A Personal Touch on Telephone Tech

The telephone rings and instead of an automated voice, customers are surprised to be greeted by a friendly operator. Whether calling to check on cable bills or to change a credit card, everyone wants to be treated like a valued individual. At the same time, offering personalized treatment benefits organizations by making it possible to form relationships and influence callers' decisions. Is your nonprofit taking full advantage of its inbound call center?

A call center might not be the first tool that comes to mind when nonprofits think of "tech," but it is a form of technology that organizations can use to make a real connection.

The hidden value of a call or contact center lies in the ability to build relationships with donors, while hearing and understanding the motivation behind their requests. Furthermore, by using tailored scripting to turn inbound donor calls into fundraising opportunities, contact center staff can have a significant impact on your overall fundraising goals.

Here are three conversations a contact center can turn into donations and opportunities to build relationships through a personal touch.

I'd like to be removed from your mailing list. When a donor calls to ask to be removed from a mailing list, a personalized script allows call center professionals to respond to feedback from the unhappy donor. Hearing their concerns addressed and taken seriously can inspire donors to continue their relationship with the nonprofit and keep the potential for them to continue giving to the organization. One way this can be achieved is by presenting them with an example of how they are impacting the cause and providing options that address their frustrations. Often reducing the frequency with which a nonprofit contacts a donor can make a significant difference. Some donors believe it's all or nothing, but contact centers can help convey the multiple options for staying in touch with an organization. Nonprofits who take this approach are 15 to 20 percent more successful in retaining clients than those who immediately remove donor contacts upon request without listening to their true concerns.

I ran out of address labels. When donors reach out for information about ongoing campaigns or to request an item like mailing labels, instead of simply answering the question, tailored scripting provides operators with the tools necessary to also capture a donation. By appealing to callers' emotions and being responsive to their request, nonprofits can generate additional donations over the phone. When an appropriate ask is worked into the conversation before ending the call, inbound contact centers can be an extremely effective fundraising function and not just an overhead cost.

Thank you for your gift! A donor doesn't have to do the dialing to start a conversation. Nonprofits can also use call centers to make outbound thank you calls, which can help build stronger relationships and increase donations in the long run. This solution uses strategic scripting, a selective caller-assignment process and other best practices to help nonprofits strengthen relationships over the phone. Many donors expect a call to be a solicitation, so calling without an 'ask' is a great way for a nonprofit to stand out and inspire donors. By implementing this strategy, nonprofits have seen a 53 percent higher than average gift amount in subsequent donations. Regardless of the types of calls your nonprofit typically receives, every organization can benefit from contact centers that deliver personalized and serve a strategic role in your overall fundraising efforts. To learn more, including how a personal connection can improve fundraising for your nonprofit, check out Merkle RMG's January [blog post](#).