

**John Haydon Blog**  
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## **Improving Donor Relations Through Better Donation Processing**

As kids head back to school, nonprofits are emerging from the summer fundraising lull. In preparing for the busy end of year giving season, it is important to make sure your nonprofit is making the grade in gift processing and donor relations. Four lessons from your school days can put your organization at the head of the class and avoid a trip to detention.

### **Lesson #1: Know when and how to speak up in class**

Acknowledging donor gifts through sincere and personalized thank you notes is essential to make the grade and retain donors who are key to the success of every nonprofit. A top reason that donors stop supporting an organization is the way they were treated by the organization, making it critical to show appreciation for their support.

Thank you calls give donors an opportunity to share stories and sentiments about the cause or giving process, a win-win scenario for improving donor relationships while also providing valuable feedback and insights to the nonprofit. Additionally, personalized thank you letters based on specific aspects of the donors' gifts can foster goodwill and increase a donor's inclination to contribute in the future.

Regardless of your thank you method, be sure you acknowledge donors quickly, while including relevant information regarding how the donation will be used.

### **Lesson #2: Set aside time to get big projects done**

Nonprofit leaders and fundraisers are responsible for accomplishing a variety of tasks, which often limit resources available for larger initiatives.

For many nonprofits, outsourcing non-core functions creates time for new projects and initiatives that allow them to directly address their missions and show donors the good their contributions are making. A recent survey conducted by [Market Connections](#) supports this, finding that 63 percent of nonprofits feel using an outsourced donation processor freed time to dedicate to their core mission. Donors are looking to support organizations that truly make an impact on the world – make sure your nonprofit has the right partner resources it needs to help make this a reality.

### **Lesson #3: Bring technology into the classroom**

Laptops, tablets and other technologies can enhance learning opportunities in the classroom.

Is your nonprofit regularly working to strengthen donor relationships by implementing the latest technology and best practices to serve its donors?

The newest scanning software and hardware, automated mail opening equipment and robust fulfillment management systems help ensure timely and accurate processing of gifts while also reducing overhead costs. Further, physical and data security best practices ensure nonprofits retain donor trust by properly protecting their donations and personal information.

#### **Lesson #4: Know when to get homework help**

Even the valedictorian needs a support system and outside help. For nonprofits, this may mean working with an outsourced partner for activities like donation processing.

However, just as students conduct research to write papers or prepare presentations, research is important to selecting an outsourced partner.

Nonprofits need to find a partner they can trust to carry out important functions and help support their mission. [Market Connections](#)' recent survey found that quick processing and acknowledgment of donors' gifts, securely handling data and funds and accurately capturing data from donations are among the top priorities for nonprofits selecting a donation processing vendor.

A donation processor meeting these requirements can help take your organization to the top of the class. Take [Merkle Response Management Group's assessment](#) to determine what it takes to earn an "A" in donor retention.

The nonprofit world requires constant learning in all aspects of donor relations, but if you properly prepare, you can ace the class in every fundraising season.

To read the full survey report, [click here](#).