

What Your Fundraising Program Could Learn from The Pope

Let's face it... we love Pope Francis. No matter your religious preference, how could you not be inspired and have an affinity towards him?

With his recent visit to the U. S., it was more apparent than ever that he has that "something special" that draws people to him. So, what can we learn from The Pope that will improve our fundraising efforts? Here are a few ideas.

Appeal to the Masses

The older generation loves him. Children love him. People of different races, religions, and socioeconomic backgrounds love him. Why? He has a way of appealing to all.

Does your organization's mission appeal to the masses? Maybe. Maybe not. However, don't assume potential donors won't be interested in donating because they don't fit the "standard" profile of the majority of your donors. Maybe you are not approaching them the right way. Maybe you are not approaching them at all. Communicate with your prospects in the way *they* respond best.

There is no more "Golden Rule", there is now the "Platinum Rule". Rather than treating your donors how you yourself would like to be treated, treat them the way *they* want to be treated. After all, people give for different reasons so why not respond to their individual needs during the cultivation process. How do we determine how they want to be treated? Go out into the masses. Get to know your prospects.

Be Flexible with Traditions

For part of his visit, The Pope traded in the Pope-mobile for a Fiat 500. Tradition is a good thing... if it still makes sense for your fundraising program. But gone are the days of the old-age ways. It is possible to be innovative and still remain true to your mission.

Does your fundraising plan include an event that, frankly, just is not what it used to be? Maybe it has become boring and the attendance has dwindled. Sometimes there is a feeling of obligation to continue a long-standing tradition. Let's rethink this. Maybe you should consider putting those efforts into something that will create a higher rate of return. Do not hold on to a tradition that just is not working. Trade in that clunker for something new.

Take Time to Stop and Kiss the Babies

Pope Francis cares. He is obviously a busy man; however, he also knows the importance of individual care. It takes only minutes to stop his Fiat 500 and acknowledge someone in the crowd. The simple act of kissing a baby leaves an impact on that child and the child's family that will last for generations.

Do we, as busy fundraisers, take the time to adequately cultivate our prospects? It may take only minutes out of our day, but it could leave a positive impression that will greatly affect our fundraising program for generations to come.

Make time in your schedule to get out from behind your desk, greet the masses, and kiss some proverbial babies. Your fundraising program will thank you.