

# ARE YOU MARKETING PLANNED GIVING EFFECTIVELY OR AT ALL?

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- Do you have a plan for your organization to benefit from the \$10 Trillion in wealth transfer held by Americans over age 55?
- Do your donors know how to leave a bequest to your organization without having to ask?
- Are you consistently providing your donors with the information they need to include you in their estate plans?

To get your donors to think about planned giving, you have to get the message out there, but what message and how, who, and where do we promote or market planned gifts?

First, we need to realize that according to the National Committee on Planned Giving (NCPG), 80% of all planned gifts are bequests. Also, did you know, that since 1990 bequests have accounted for more than \$40 billion in planned gifts income to charitable organizations?

Second, an NCPG survey in 2000 indicates that 34% of donors heard about planned giving from charities via direct mail, up from 5% in a similar survey in 1992.

Third, the same NCPG survey in 2000, found that 21% of donors heard about planned giving from their advisors, (i.e., attorneys, financial planners, insurance agents, and their accountants).

Fourth, 11% of donors surveyed indicated that they had learned about planned giving options from a charities representative.

Now, the message is clear, you need to market bequests at least 75% of the time to your donors.

Good programs attribute the success of their marketing efforts to the number of bequest expectancies they receive. A good program is all about building expectancies over time so that people include your organization in their estate. Good programs generate 10% to 30% of their annual revenue from planned gifts. What would your budget look like with that kind of additional income?

Here are some distinct ways you can effectively market:

- Include brochures on estate planning in your thank you letters along with a card offering another brochure and reply envelope to start a dialogue through the mail.
- Use saturation-marketing techniques with your entire file by offering specific brochures through your direct mail program and your in-house newsletters.
- Write articles with donor testimonials.
- Place advertisements with a coupon response in your newsletters.
- Write articles that provide information that educate and cultivate interest in bequest and planned giving opportunities in your house newsletter.
- Promote and market your website after you upgrade it with an interactive site that allows your donors to

find additional information and contact a specific member of the staff.

- Conduct wills and estate planning seminars for donors.
- Create a Legacy or Heritage Society to recognize donors that have made a planned gift.
- Write and work with professional advisors in your area, about your organization's need for bequests.

Finally, you don't have to have a sophisticated planned giving program or even a planned giving officer to market bequests. You can retain a planned giving consultant who can get you started in any or all of these areas, or who can work with your staff to build on the program you already have in place. The key is to get started so that your organization can get your share of the \$10 Trillion in wealth that is going to be transferred in the next 25 years.

## *About the Author*

*Ted Meyers has over thirty years in marketing planned giving programs for small to large organizations. One organization he represented had over 1.8 million donors on file, and he increased their annual planned gifts revenue from \$17 to \$28 million in just 36 months. Ted is President of Integrated Development Solutions, a Planned Giving Consulting Firm located in the Washington, DC area. He can be reached at 301-233-3527 or via e-mail at ted@idsfund.com.*