

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT: POST-EVENT FOLLOW-UP

One of the first things to figure out when you plan any cultivation, stewardship, or fundraising event is how you are going to manage the follow-up. Without timely, systematic follow-up after each event, the impact and the connections you made with those who attended are lost.

Capturing Names with Permission

How will you identify and record the names of the people who would like to stay in contact with you? How will they let you know that you have permission to contact them?

Have some sort of reply card that the guests can fill out, indicating that they would like more information about your program.

Also, don't forget the guests who said they planned to attend but did not. How could you genuinely follow up with them? If a personal phone call seems like too much, consider a letter with a "we missed you" note from their friend?

What Kind of Follow-Up and When?

Timing is critical to your follow-up. The week or two after each event is, by far, the most fertile time for additional fundraising and cultivation. Now is the time when they are curious and eager to learn more.

In terms of the type of follow-up, your first choice should be the telephone. Although some of your donors may prefer e-mail, for the majority, nothing yet substitutes for a phone call or a voicemail message left within three days of the event. This call or message thanks the person for coming but it's not just a "thank you" call. It's a dialogue. You want their feedback and thoughts about the event.

You can ask things like:

- What did you think of the event?
- What interests you most about our organization?
- How would you like to be involved?
- How would you like us to keep in touch with you?
- Would you like to _____ (have lunch, come for a tour of our facility, etc)?

It is fine to leave a voicemail or send an e-mail. Let them know how to reach you and be prepared to try to reach them two more times. One final message can be sent by e-mail.

If the event was well done, the guests left inspired and educated. And, since many gave you their names to be called, they will be looking forward to hearing from you.