

# 50 Ways to Love Your Donors



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1. Get their name right. Every time. Ask how they want to be referred to and listed.
2. Acknowledge their gift in a timely and memorable way. Stick to the 48-hour rule.
3. Make an immediate phone call to thank donors for their gifts. Phone calls result in higher donor retention and increases in future giving.
4. Send a thank you email.
5. Share specific stories on how their gift is making an impact. One *specific* story about how funds are used is more powerful than a case statement for giving.
6. After event invitations are mailed, follow up with a personal phone call.
7. Give them a tour of your facility.
8. Introduce them to a Board Member or CEO.
9. Handwrite a note
10. Handwrite your envelope address!
11. Let them be anonymous from public recognition but warmed by private recognition.
12. Thank you phone call from your CEO, Board Member or from someone who benefited from their generosity.
13. Offer to share their story on your website or in your publication.
14. If they have an issue with you or your organization, listen, be empathetic, and tell them what you will do.
15. Ask them what they think about your organization and its mission – they'll appreciate being asked.
16. Share pictures of their gifts in action. Snapfish, Shutterfly, and other online services are great for inexpensive but impactful representations of giving.
17. If they have second homes, keep in touch at their winter/summer addresses.
18. Recognize milestones – first time gifts, recurring giving, major gift achievements.
19. Get to know your donor. Invite them to join you at events that target their interests.
20. Use what you have. No tchotchkes!
21. Ask them to host a gathering of friends so they can help spread the mission of your organization.
22. Connect them with others in your organization who can show them their gifts in action. It shouldn't always be the development officer doing the thanking! Let others speak for you.
23. Give donors inside information on coming changes and developments.
24. Offer to drive a donor to an event if they can no longer drive.
25. Share why *you* give to your organization.
26. Thank-A-Thon phone calling.
27. Behind the scenes look at construction projects.
28. Change your thank you letter text monthly.

29. Don't ask for more gifts until you show them the first gift worked. NO THASKING!
30. Connect their philanthropic goals and generosity to your mission.
31. Thank donors for the gifts they make to other organizations. Show them you appreciate all the ways they are philanthropic.
32. Share articles from other sources that support the needs for your organization's mission.
33. Spend the first 15 minutes each Monday morning phoning donors.
34. Mail cards for live events – retirements, birthdays, anniversaries, deaths of loved ones, etc.
35. Bring event “leftovers” to donors after an event – flower arrangements, etc. Get second life from the event investment by starting a conversation with another donor.
36. After an event, send photographs taken at the event to donors as mementos of the occasion with a personal message.
37. Have your CEO thank them when the pledge is committed.
38. Use first-class stamps on personal mail.
39. Pre-event reception for major donors.
40. Be sure to thank donors when they direct a corporate matching gift to your organization, and let them know when the match arrives!
41. You don't need to know every answer to donor questions – needing to find an answer for them is a great opportunity for another stewardship contact.
42. Feature “Donor of the Month” on your website or in your newsletter – tell the donor's story and ask them for a quote and picture.
43. Instead of a holiday card, send a Thanksgiving card. It'll get noticed more than holiday cards do because it's unexpected.
44. Send a quick video from your cell phone.
45. Client-made gifts. Thank pottery, pictures, poems, even student research papers.
46. Create a thank-you calendar that shares gift impact the whole year through.
47. Credit your donors, not your organization. Instead of writing, “Our organization was able to...” write, “Donors like you were able to...”
48. Celebrate National Philanthropy Day with an email to your donors – let them know they are remembered on that day.
49. Recognize long-time donors for their abiding generosity.
50. Make a PLAN for thanking your donors. Every donor should be thanked. Not every donor should be thanked in the same way. Scale the thanks to the donor and the gift.