

MAKING DONOR THANK YOU CALLS

Goal. To build sincere relationships with people who have supported our work and may be able to help us more in the future.



Why we are calling donors.

Fundraising is fundamentally about relationships. By calling current donors who have given more substantial gifts to thank them, we are deepening their connection to our organization, enhancing the likelihood that they will continue to support us, and creating the possibility that that we will give larger donations in the future.

We are not asking for more money or any donations at all during the call. It is just about expressing gratitude (gratitude inspires more giving), letting them know about the work of our organization, answering any questions they have, and getting to know them better.

The intent is to have a friendly conversation.

It's important to take careful notes during your call.

Here is what you want to capture:

- Their opinions about our organization and why they have support the organization.
- Their answers to any questions you ask.
- Any questions they ask you.
- Information about their pets – names, species, etc.
- The names of any people they mention—husband, wife, children.
- Even if something seems irrelevant, make notes. For example, if they say that they are passionate about kids too or about the environment or education – write that down.

Script if a person answers.

Hi, this is [your name], a [staff member, volunteer, or board member] at [organization name]. I'm calling to speak with [name of the donor]. Are you [donor first name]?

Once you get the right person on the phone:

I'm calling to thank you so much for your support over the past year. Your kind support has enabled us to help [a record number of animals last/this year OR enabled us to ____].

I'm calling to thank you for your past support and to ask for your feedback about our efforts to help animals in need. Would you mind sharing why you donate to help animals as it will help guide us in our future work?

NOTE: Then stay quiet and listen to what they have to say. Take careful notes. The goal is to start a conversation and to get them talking. You want to ask two or three questions – not all of them. You want to have a naturally flowing conversation. You can also ask thoughtful follow up questions – you will need to gauge which questions would be best and most natural for you and the individual person. Possible questions include:

- Have you been a lifelong animal lover?
- Do you have any pets now? OR Can you tell me about your current pets?

- If they mention a pet, ask more about that pet. How long have you had [pet's name]? And other questions about the animal's personality – the goal is to get them talking.
- How did you first learn about [organization name]?
- Do you recall what initially inspired you to give to [organization name]?
- Have you heard about our [special project or program] work? Need to be prepared to share a story OR select some other important activity or new thing your organization did this year.
- Why does this cause matter to you?
- What are the most important results you would like to see us accomplish?
- What are you most passionate about and why?
- Do you have any questions about [organization name] that I could answer for you? (If they ask a question and you are not sure of the answer, just say that you will get back to them and follow up with organization's leadership.)

The call may be brief if the person is not interested in talking – no worries. Try not to take it personally. Some people just are not talkers and they will still appreciate the call.

If the call is approaching 20 minutes, it is time to wrap it up. You can say that you are sorry that you have to go, but you have another commitment. Thank them again for their support and for their time.

Story notes. [Include here a couple of stories that reflect your organization's work that can be shared.]

Script if you get voicemail.

Hi, this is [your name], a [staff member, volunteer, or board member] at [organization name].

I'm calling to thank you so much for your support over the past year. Your kind support has enabled us to [help a record number of animals OR some other predetermined comment about the organization's successful work that their donation enabled].

I'm calling to thank you for your past support and to ask for your feedback about our efforts to help animals.

I will plan to you back on [another day that week]. If you have a preferred day or time, please text me at [your cell number] so we can schedule a call.

Actions after call is completed.

Sign and address a card with personalized note on behalf of the organization and put in the mail to each person. The cards can be provided by your organization.