

The Donor-Centric Pledge

We, [fill in the name of your nonprofit organization here], believe that...

1. Donors are essential to the success of our mission.
2. Gifts are not “cash transactions.” Donors are not merely a bunch of interchangeable, easily replaceable credit cards, checkbooks and wallets.
3. No one “owes” us a gift just because our mission is worthy.
4. Any person who chooses to become our donor has enormous potential to assist the mission.
5. Having a program for developing a relationship with that donor is how organizations tap that enormous potential.
6. We waste that potential when donors are not promptly thanked.
7. “Lifetime value of a donor” is the best (though often overlooked) way to evaluate “return on investment” in fundraising.
8. Donors are more important than donations. Those who currently make small gifts are just as interesting to us as those who currently make large gifts.
9. Acquiring first-time donors is easy, but keeping those donors is hard.
10. Many first-time gifts are no more than “impulse purchases” or “first dates.”
11. We’ll have to work harder for the second gift than we did for the first.
12. A prerequisite for above-average donor retention is a well-planned donor-centric communications program that begins with a welcome.
13. Donors want to have faith in us, and it’s our fault if they don’t.
14. Donors want to make a difference in the world—and our mission is one of many means to that end.
15. Donors are investors. They invest in doing good. They expect their investment to prosper, or they’ll invest somewhere else.
16. We earn the donor’s trust by reporting on our accomplishments and efficiency.
17. Individual donors respond to our appeals for personal reasons we can only guess at.
18. Asking a donor why she or he gave a first gift to us will likely lead to an amazingly revealing conversation.
19. Fundraising serves the donors’ emotional needs as much as it serves the organization’s financial needs.
20. We are in the “feel good” business. Donors feel good when they help make the world a better place.
21. A prime goal of fundraising communications is to satisfy basic human needs, such as the donor’s need to feel important and worthwhile.
22. The donor’s perspective defines what is a “major gift.” (For example, a repeat donor of \$25 annual gifts who suddenly increases her gift ten-fold to \$250 is making a major commitment that deserves special acknowledgement.)
23. Every first gift can open a door to an entirely new world for the donor through participation in our cause.



SIMONE SAYS:

Engage your staff, fund development committee, and board by asking questions about this donor-centric pledge. Consider the following questions:

- Do you (and all the you’s in the conversation) understand what the statement means? And can you sell the statement to others?
- How well does your organization perform against the statement/ the standard?
- What do you have to improve?

The DCP (donor-centric pledge) was written and first published in *Keep Your Donors: The Guide to Better Communications and Stronger Relationships* by Simone P. Joyaux, ACFRE and Tom Ahern.