



Retaining Your Major Donors: Keep Them Inspired, Engaged, and Giving!

Gail Perry CFRE MBA

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Gail Perry, MBA CFRE

President, Gail Perry Group

- Philanthropy expert, speaker, author, consultant, coach
- 30+ years experience in major gift fundraising
- LinkedIn Top Voice in Philanthropy
- Coached 60+ capital campaigns
- Top 10 America's Fundraising Experts

Helping you achieve extraordinary fundraising results.

- Capital campaigns, fundraising strategy, major gifts programs.
- Fire Up Your Board for Fundraising workshop
- Social services, arts and culture, universities and independent schools, medical, environmental, science and research.
- Major Gifts Intensive: Build out a structured, systematic major gift program that will deliver mega gifts year over year. Registration closes in 2 weeks.

Major Donors Are Giving Larger Amounts

- Trend: dollars growing, but the number of donors is dropping.
- Trend: major donors are contributing a larger and larger share of overall donations.
- 90% of the money comes from less than 10% of donors.
- 59% of nonprofits do not have a major gift



Today's Agenda

- Why Focus on Renewing Major Donors?
- Major Donor Segments Most Likely to “Lapse?”
- What Major Funders Really Want
- Uncovering Their Reasons for Giving
- 5 Ways to Foster Lasting Relationships



**Which Major Donors are
Likely to "Lapse?"**



Which Donors Are Most Likely to Lapse?

- Former board members
- Former capital campaign donors
- Former donors who gave major gifts
- Former corporate sponsors

Why Do Major Donors Lapse?

- Lack of attention!
- Staff turnover
- Changing internal priorities
- Poor impact reports
- Poor relationship development





What Do Major Funders Really Want?

(expectations and how to exceed them)

Expectations of **Individual** High Net Worth Donors

- They want to feel like **insiders**
- They want to **trust** and like your leaders
- Above all they want to feel like their money made an **impact**, and that it was used wisely

Expectations of **Foundation** Funders (Large and Small)

- Want to spend money wisely and make an impact
- So - make friends with the funding team
- Ask them for input, advice and feedback; ask them to review proposal drafts
- Stage site visits full of stories that “wow” them!

Expectations of **Corporate** Donors: Fill Their Marketing Objectives

- Find out what their marketing objectives are!
- Promote the demographics of your audience/stakeholders
- Circle back with a report: # views, people, impressions etc. that their sponsorship received.
- Make friends with the corporate funding team



How to Uncover Your Funders' Deepest Motivations

Find Out Their Donor Story



Why, truly, do they support your organization?

They have a story to tell about WHY they care about this particular mission and impact.

“May I ask how you came to be a donor?”

Ask Permission!

Every single step retaining any donor starts with asking permission.

“Would you like to know . . .

“If I may, may I ask if xxxx

“Is this a good time?

“Would you like to chat about . . .



Values

Discover your donor's personal, deeply held values

What do they believe in and why?

What is it that most speaks to them about your work?

And . . . hold the space for them to talk with you.



**5 Proven Strategies to Foster
Lasting Relationships**

It's up to you. Take initiative.

- Make it a real project. Create a specific initiative/program with goals.
- Assign staff to nurture particular segments of donors.
- What gets measured, gets done.

Create diverse engagement opportunities.

- Find non-monetary ways to engage them.
- Invite them to volunteer or act as hosts.
- Give them advisory roles, or put them on honorary committees/boards.



Personalized communications.

- Design personalized communications for specific segments or individuals.
- Use pictures of the donors themselves.
- Make it about the donor, not about your organization.

Recognize and celebrate them.

- Acknowledge them via events honoring these donors.
- Put their names on the invitation.
- Give them the mic? Ask them to share why they believe in your work.

Offer them exclusive events.

- Behind the scenes tours.
- Hold VIP appreciation events.
- Introduce them to other major donors.
- Help them get to know – and TRUST leadership.

Our AI Thank You Letter Template with Prompts

As an experienced nonprofit fundraising expert, write a short thank you letter to [donor's name]. Begin with an innovative or creative sentence that charms the donor and conveys gratitude.

Use a tone that is warm, positive and upbeat. Include how the gift will be used [xxx], the name of your organization [xxx] and sign it by a high-ranking person [name/role] including their phone number [xxx].

Requirements:

- Use the first person: “I” and “we.”
- Use the second person: “you,” “you” and “you” again.
- Say things like “I can’t begin to thank you enough for...” We are absolutely thrilled to have your support again this year.” or “Because of your gift, a family will . . .”
- Use contractions such as “We’ll” rather than “We will.”
- Use exclamation marks if appropriate, but don’t use too many of them.
- Show emotion.
- Talk about the impact of the gift: what is the donor achieving by giving?
- Be concise. Don’t be formal or lofty.
- Don’t use thank you letter jargon such as “we are deeply grateful for your continued support.”

Results with the AI Thank You Letter Template

Dear Barney Rubble,
I'm not sure if you've heard the barking and excited tail wags lately, but the word is definitely out at our SPCA! Thanks to your incredible generosity, we're expanding our kennels.

We are absolutely thrilled to have your support again this year. Because of your gift, more furry friends will find safe, loving shelter while they await their forever families. It's a beautiful thing, and you made it happen.

I can't begin to thank you enough for your kindness. Your compassion is making a real difference in the lives of animals and the families who love them.

With warmest gratitude,

Fred Flintstone, Executive Director
123-456-7890



Key
Takeaways

Your Takeaways?

- Why Is Renewing Major Donors So Important?
- Which Donors Are Most Likely to “Lapse?”
- What Major Funders Really Want
- The Power of Motivation – Uncovering Their Reasons for Giving
- 5 Proven Strategies to Foster Lasting Relationships

2025 Major Gifts Intensive Closes Feb 20!

“It’s been a **game-changer** for me. The sessions are so good because they **help me close gifts** at the major gift and principal gift level.”

The **curriculum is so comprehensive**, I learned something from every module and especially loved the permission-based approach.

Barbara Mari

Senior Philanthropic Advisor, Principal Gifts
St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital

We have exceeded our goals and are aiming even higher for next year! “Their advice, clear examples and key concepts made all the difference with our major donor program.

Helen Taylor

Executive Director

WhidbeyHealth Foundation

“We closed a **\$700,000 gift because of Gail’s coaching** for a major gift ask.”

Twyla Wells

Executive Director

Johnson Community
College Foundation

How Can We Help You?

Capital Campaigns? Major Gifts Programs?

Gail Perry

✉ Gail.p@gailperry.com

🐦 @gailperrync

www.gailperrygroup.com

Thank you

