

ANIMAL CHARITIES

Building Your Monthly File by Phoning Your Donor

“With the help of Strategic Communications we’ve continued to grow our monthly donor program year after year well beyond industry standards. Their well informed and passionate phone room does a tremendous job as our ambassadors for the animals.”

Shoni Field

Direct Response Guardian

BCSPCA

The Context

Calling your donors gives you the opportunity to personally thank them for their support, update them on recent projects, inform them of what is coming next and ask them to increase their support. And it’s a two-way conversation! So, it allows your donors to speak about why they care, why they give, and ask questions about your campaigns.

This is your chance to connect with your supporters—to improve your relations, raise their awareness, and increase immediate and future revenues. It is also a particularly effective way to increase the value of your monthly file.

Monthly donors are the most loyal donors a charity has. Usually, a monthly donor file has a retention rate of 90% or more. Monthly donors are candidates to become major donors and to leave bequests. In addition, monthly donors are typically very responsive to requests to increase their level of monthly giving.

Donors who are already part of an organization’s annual file are among the best prospects to become monthly donors. While the case for becoming a monthly donor is a persuasive one, it is relatively complex and is best developed in a conversation with the donor. For this reason, the most cost-effective way of recruiting monthly donors from an organization’s annual file is through a phone conversation.

Supporters of charities concerned with animal welfare are among the most generous and loyal in the non-profit world. Conversion of single donors to monthly donors is particularly effective with animal charities. In some cases, with consistent presentation of the case for monthly giving, organizations have developed monthly donor files which make up 50% of their annual donor file.

The Winnipeg Humane Society

In 2012 Stratcom began working with the Winnipeg Humane Society (WHS). The WHS had only engaged in telephone fundraising on a very limited basis and their donors had not been approached by phone to become monthly donors.

In the first year Stratcom conducted a telephone monthly conversion program with WHS's current annual donors and a telephone monthly upgrade program with their existing monthly donors. Both programs were successful beyond our most optimistic projections.

Results

- ▶ 5.6% of single-gift donors converted to monthly giving
- ▶ Average monthly gift was **\$10** per month
- ▶ 39% of monthly donors upgraded their donation (vs. target of 25%)
- ▶ Average monthly donation increase was **\$6** per month
- ▶ 60% of donations were made by credit card or direct bank deposit
- ▶ Over 64% pledges fulfilled by mail

BCSPCA

Stratcom began working with the BCSPCA in 2001. Since then, we have recruited over 8,000 monthly donors and we estimate that close to 5,800 are still with the organization. Donors recruited by phone make up close to 50% of the BCSPCA's monthly donor file.

Results (Since 2001)

- ▶ Estimated total value of conversions and upgrades: **\$6.8 million**
- ▶ More than **8,000** PAW Plan monthly donors recruited
- ▶ Over **14,000** PAW Plan monthly donors upgraded
- ▶ Monthly upgrade conversion rate of **26%**
- ▶ Average monthly gift of **\$11.49** per new PAW Plan donor recruited
- ▶ Average monthly upgrade gift of **\$5.84**



"The Winnipeg Humane Society conducted its first telephone fundraising campaign with Stratcom last year (2012). Donors from our annual file converted to monthly donations at a higher rate than we had projected and our monthly donors also upgraded their donations at a higher than expected rate. We were very pleased with the results and Stratcom was very responsive to our requests and questions. We will be confidently renewing our contract with Stratcom this year."

Christine Boulton
Director of Development
Winnipeg Humane Society

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