



10 Tips to Awaken The Sleeping Giants in your donor base: Monthly donors

1. Commit.

Building a monthly giving program takes time but it's definitely a long term investment, not fast money! Crucial to do, but make sure everybody understands this. Most programs do break even in the first year but it depends on the media used.

2. Invest Time, Treasure and Talent.

In the beginning, it may take some time and volunteer or staff time to set up the program but it will pay definitely off very soon. Make sure you build money in the budget to develop the program and then stick with it!

3. Make Someone Accountable.

Monthly giving requires someone to take full responsibility for the complete program. It often requires a lot of collaboration with other departments or outside partners, so with one person in charge, communication becomes easy. The donors will benefit.

4. Start with the End in Mind.

Think through the process from start to finish. You'll want to make sure you have special letters in place if a donor's payment does not come in, or if there are issues with the bank or credit card charge. Have a tracking system in place and know when payments come in and when not. Develop phone scripts and email templates to send to monthly donors in addition to letters so you can really be ready when for some reason the donor's payment does not happen.

5. Give Your Program a Name

Give your monthly donors a name. Think of something that fits with your mission, that's not yet used in your organization elsewhere, test it out if you can and move on.

There are many great names out there, but if all else fails: Sustainers, Circle of Friends, Champions, Guardians, Partners are all great names that work with pretty much anything.

6. Find Your Small but Regular Donors in your Donor base .

Don't think you need large gifts. Leave the \$100 donors for your midlevel program. Rather, look at your donor base and identify those donors who have made small gifts, even \$5 or \$10 twice a year. If you only do one annual fund appeal a year, find the one time donors who have given less than \$100 in the past year. Of course, here too goes that Recency Frequency Monetary Value but Recency and Frequency are most important.

7. Put Monthly Giving on Your Home Page.

Believe it or not, if you offer it, they will come. Don't make it too hard for people to search for the option. Put it right on your home page with a direct link to the monthly giving sign up page.

8. Use as Many Media as You Possibly Can

If nothing else, start with the internet and mention monthly giving in your email newsletter. Add a message to donors in their thank you letter. Make sure you think of complaining donors as you can convert them to monthly donors. Reach out to staff and volunteers and offer it as follow ups to events. If you have more money, think of telemarketing, print ads, street fundraising, face-to-face, local TV and radio. They all work, some better than others but you can get started even with a minimal budget.

9. Annualize Your Results.

Because these are small donors, who give often, it's always better to present the results by annualizing them. In reality, they'll stay with you for many years to come but annualizing the results will demonstrate the value of the donor to you in that one year. In other words, it's not just a \$5 a month, but rather \$60 a year. Or \$10 a month is \$120. People will start catching on quick how important this monthly giving program is.

10. Monthly Donors are Important. Treat Them with the Best Donor Service You Have.

While monthly donors may look small at first, they really are not (see 9). That's why it's crucial to treat them like your best donors. If they call with a question, respond. If they write or email with a question, respond. They care about your organization so treat them like your best clients. They are!

Bonus Tip: 11. Make Sure to Thank Your Monthly Donor Right Away.

There's no need for expensive thank you gifts or back-end premiums. A personal thank you and a nice certificate will do wonders! But make sure you send it out right away.

About the Author:

Erica Waasdorp, *President, A Direct Solution*

Erica lives and breathes direct response and fundraising and can be considered a Philanthropyholic.

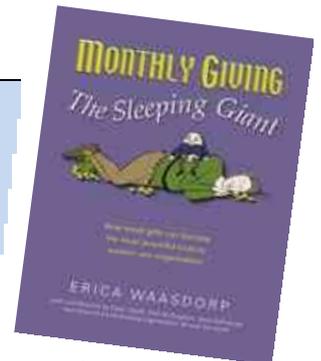
Building partnerships and trying to find the best solution for members and donors and thus clients' needs are what Erica does best. Her multi-lingual skills and multi-cultural experience are of added value to those clients interested in raising money internationally and her experience in monthly giving has given her an edge for those clients who are ready to embark on this way of giving.

Erica Waasdorp started *A Direct Solution* in December of 2003 with more than twenty years of experience in direct marketing, from both sides of the desk, on the client side and the agency side. She has since worked with numerous non-profit clients on and off-Cape. She has helped several organizations with their annual fund campaigns, grant writing, events and public relations.

Erica contributes to various industry publications, both in the US and abroad, and she has spoken at numerous nonprofit conferences, ranging from fundamentals of fundraising, to international fundraising, to monthly giving. She is also the US Ambassador for the International Fundraising Congress (IFC) (www.resource-alliance.org), held in Noordwijk, the Netherlands in October.



Erica Waasdorp published her first book on monthly giving, called *Monthly Giving. The Sleeping Giant* in November of 2012. The e-book was published in January of 2013. For more information, see www.adirectsolution.com or go to www.amazon.com or your preferred e-book download site.



“Thank you for the opportunity to review your book *Monthly Giving*. I liked it very much. I’m a true fan of fundraising technique books that provide the reader with a step-by-step approach to new ideas. I also like the way you’ve introduced into the text so many actual examples of your topic.”

Bill J. Harrison, CFRE, Arizona Fundraising Institute

“... it is so wonderful to have such a solid step-by-step plan for implementation. I so often find that organizations finally get around to launching a monthly giving plan...and then it languishes.”

Pamela Grow, Simple Development Systems