



Keeping the Connection – a key to Young Alumni Giving

Ask for what young alumni can actually give. Young alumni may have little to give financially – so set giving levels that are appropriate, yet would still be a stretch. This encourages recent alumni to think about considering the school a priority in their charitable giving. Involve them as a community of both askers and givers – so their friends are doing the asking. Engaging students to participate as fundraising volunteers helps to build a team of alumni fundraising volunteers. Ask for time, talent, enthusiasm, and attendance when there is not yet treasure.

You can't ask them if you can't find them. Do you have valid contact information for your young alumni? Young alumni are far more mobile than older alumni – **hence, the importance of an email address and a cell phone number.** The one address that doesn't change when young people change apartments (or zip codes) is their email address. (Their parents will forward hard copy letters for only so long.) Develop and implement a strategy for obtaining email contact info and cell phone numbers.

Give alumni (and students) email addresses for life.

Hold "free" real-world events, where admission requires an email address.

Raffle off the latest technology item and collect email addresses on entry forms (notify winner via email!)

Breaking through the spam and clutter. Most email is spam: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Email_spam. Much snail-mail is junk (www.nytimes.com/2012/09/20/business/seeking-revenue-postal-service-plans-to-deliver-more-junk-mail.html?_r=0). Your solicitation can get lost. The issue is not just getting one email read, but losing a contact.

For email - an eye-catching graphic, a snappy subject line, or short text that's brief and to the point. 47% of all emails are opened on a smart-phone, 19% on a tablet: marketingland.com/34-percent-email-opens-now-happen-pc-83277. 64% of people say they open an email message because of the subject line (Chadwick Martin Bailey: www.cmbinfo.com). Some suggest that the entire email should fit, plain text, on an iPhone screen with no scrolling.

Handwritten "thank you" notes still work. Young people may be tech-savvy, but they appreciate the time that handwriting a note takes.

Build a virtual community – if you can't get your message to them, let them come to you. Try to connect with young alumni where they're spending time. Phones are primary. On average, people check their phones 110 times a day (www.npr.org/blogs/alltechconsidered/2013/10/09/230867952/new-numbers-back-up-our-obsession-with-phones). YouTube sees a spike in activity during primetime shows – this is a multitasking generation. Email, LinkedIn and Facebook may be a minimum requirement. Instagram is encouraged (news.yale.edu/2013/12/10/yale-makes-mark-instagram). E-newsletters can keep your alumnae/i up-to-date on current university affairs: www.nytimes.com/2014/06/30/business/media/for-email-a-death-greatly-exaggerated.html (see the bi-weekly e-newsletters of Yale President Salovey in [Notes from Woodbridge Hall](#)). The ask is in the *context* of community.

Use social media to create online communities for students that will last a lifetime. New students are more likely to join than alumni (alumni opt-in 20% to 35%, incoming first years up to 95%). But the community may disappear if email addresses are not for life. Using school email addresses outsources authentication. Social media is about relationship building. Keep your institution relevant by constantly updating your social media presence with new information. Do something with the information you gather from social media. Are people contributing to your School's group discussion on Facebook for whom you don't have valid contact information? Have they given to the School in the past 5 years? If not, reach out. Your goal is to turn 'followers' into 'givers'. Do not rely on social media as the primary vehicle for making your solicitation.

Use social media as a vehicle to inspire real-world action or attendance at real-world events. This includes attending reunions! Design marketing and fundraising campaigns to go viral, but realize that one cannot predict what will go viral. When soliciting online – couple giving with actions (but see vimeo.com/52150696 from SSE-Riga).

The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge raised \$94.3 million between July 29 and August 27, 2014. (People post videos of being drenched with ice water online to raise awareness.) Compare with \$2.7 million raised during the same period the previous year: www.alsa.org/news/media/press-releases/ice-bucket-challenge-082714.html. The Barack Obama 2012 re-election campaign had 45 million Facebook fans and raised over a half Billion dollars on-line: <http://swampland.time.com/2012/11/15/exclusive-obamas-2012-digital-fundraising-outperformed-2008>.