

SEPT 2019



ISSUE 63

THE PARTNERSHIP CONNECTION

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The #1 PD Myth: It's My Money!

by Jeff Townsend, DFD



When you have worked hard at PD and seen the Lord bless your efforts with increased donor income, it is natural to view that money as yours. This is perhaps the biggest PD myth. Here's why.... When we join ISI as a Min Rep or staff, by IRS rule, we become deputized fund-raisers. What that means is that our PD efforts are really on behalf of ISI, not ourselves. The monies that we raise are solely for the ministry of ISI and must come completely under the control of the ISI Board. Only as

our Board approves, are any monies set aside for the funding of our salary, benefits, and expenses. Any surplus funds in the ISI account assigned to us are ISI funds and should in no way be considered as belonging to individual staff members or Min Reps.

Practically speaking, how should our role as deputized fund-raisers influence our approach to PD? We may need to re-tool our thinking and the way we present our ministry with ISI to donors and potential donors. We want donors to feel a genuine connection to us and our support needs. Many potential donors will become regular givers to ISI because they know you, love you, and want to help meet your needs. This is all well and good. Others will be attracted to the strategic nature of the ISI ministry model and want to support that strategy by means of your ministry with ISI. Again, this is all well and good. But we must train ourselves to avoid using expressions such as: *my need, my support, my account, my funds*. Instead, it is better and more accurate to ask that funds be given to ISI and *designated* to cover the amount the ISI Board has approved for our ministry with ISI. What may seem like a small difference in wording actually keeps you and ISI within the IRS regulations that allow ISI to remain a non-profit corporation and to provide donors with a tax-deductible receipt.

Insights on Giving Trends in the U.S.

Overall giving in the U.S. for 2018 was down 1.7%.

Overall religious giving in the U.S. for 2018 was down 1.5%.

This follows steady years of growth since the 2007-2008 recession.

Reasons for the downward trend in 2018:

- The “Tax Cuts and Jobs Act” of 2017; Americans anticipating this change in tax law gave more in 2017 and less in 2018.
- Although the change in tax law in 2018 also increased maximum charitable giving to 60%, it appears that the effect of the increased standard deduction was more influential in lowering giving than any effect coming from the increase in maximum charitable giving.
- Volatility in the U.S. stock market in the last quarter of 2018.



Given these facts, how should we focus our appeal to donors?

- Focus on the “donor journey.” Donor retention is key. The easiest gift is the first one. The hardest gift is the second. Only after three gifts should a prospect be considered a confirmed donor. Thus, donor retention efforts should be focused right after the first gift. Contacts with a new donor should be immediate, focused on outcome of your work with ISI, and multi-formatted (e.g. direct mail, email, media, phone).
- There is a shift, even among older donors, to online giving (17% to 40% in the last five years). Thus, attention must be given to making online giving super simple and convenient to do. Mobile giving is growing the most; the smartphone is increasingly where giving is happening.
- Direct mail is not dead. Evidence suggests that direct mail motivates giving better than email. Millennials want direct mail the most, although all ages desire it. BUT, donor response will be online, not via mail or email.

Keeping PD in Focus when Fall Ministry Hits



When the flood of international student orientations, welcome events, and personal ministry opportunities hits us each fall (and spring), PD often falls completely off our radar screen. But we have to keep in mind that none of this ministry can happen without our support team. So, it is vitally important that we not lose track of one of the most important things that makes our ministry to international students possible.

Here are practical suggestions for keeping PD in focus all during the school year:

- Make a PD prayer list and keep it current, then include PD as a regular part of your daily prayer life.

- Action Plans aren't just for the initial 18 months of PD! You plan your semester of ministry to international students. Take the time to prepare a PD Action Plan for your fall/spring semester. The more specific you can be with times, places, and people, the more your plan will help you stay on track.
 - Include a personal PD appointment (i.e. a time you will work exclusively on PD) in your calendar each week and keep it.
 - Read a book full of good PD ideas like Steve Shadach's *The God Ask* or Scott Morton's *Blind Spots* (both available on Amazon).
 - Form a PD mutual accountability partnership with another ISI staff member or Min Rep, preferably in your area and "meet" at least once a month for encouragement and prayer.
 - Review the ministry account ISI has assigned to you on Salesforce at least once a week, noting items for follow-up during your next personal PD appointment time.
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A Formula for Support Maintenance

How to manage personal contact with 60 donors per month in 15 minutes a day

by Pat Kershaw, ISI Director of Field Development, Retired

Set aside 15 minutes a day and commit to being as faithful to that as you are to your devotions. Make it an add-on to your quiet time; same place, same time. It will take less than five minutes to think about the calls, mail, and e-mail from yesterday. Who is having a birthday, graduation, surgery, facing a financial crisis, or other significant event in their life? Who sent in a gift and needs a call or card from you? Right there by your Bible and devotional materials, keep your Donor Activity Report, stamps, and a box of blank cards. (Blanks can cover any of the above situations.) Address and write cards to three donors every day before you leave your quiet place. *And pray for them.*



Fifteen minutes a day for five days equals just over an hour each week. In 75 minutes, you have personally connected with at least 15 people. In a month, you will have been in touch with about **60 people**. And you did it all before breakfast!

If you do this, in addition to putting out a monthly update, you will reap huge benefits in your relationships with donors, and very likely see your monthly income stabilize and even grow. (We estimate that it takes a minimum of 12-16 hours per month to stay close to those who invest in your ministry.)



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