

Ten Donor Wall Planning Tips

1. PLAN EARLY

The time to think about a donor wall isn't when you're planning the celebration party. Include wall costs in your total fundraising effort and be sure to integrate the wall design into your architectural and signage program.



2. DON'T MAKE PROMISES YOU CAN'T KEEP

In the throes of raising funds, different promises are often made to different people - some impossible to keep. Begin by setting guidelines on how gifts will be recognized.

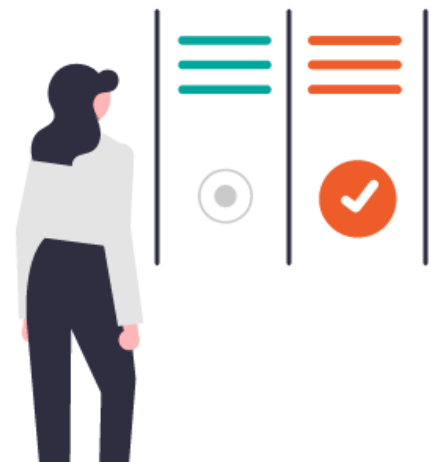


3. HEAD OFF ANOMALIES, BUT DESIGN FOR VARIABLES.

Hospitals, churches and care facilities often receive "in loving memory of" gifts. To control the variability of these listings, provide criteria for how such gifts can be stated. At the same time, plan typography for the longest and shortest naming scenarios.

4. DECIDE TYPE OF CAMPAIGN.

Designers need to know the maximum number of donor names that will likely appear before beginning concept development. If the wall is for a single capital campaign, set a firm deadline for inclusion, so names can be alphabetized and placed into donation categories. Design living walls to remain aesthetically pleasing at any stage and be sure to place them in locations that will allow for growth.





5. ALLOCATE A PERCENTAGE OF THE BUDGET.

Set aside a percentage of the total building budget for the donor wall construction. Avoid the appearance of overspending, but keep in mind that attractive walls make donors feel appreciated and encourage others to give in the future.

On a major campaign, the total of all fundraising costs (consultant, feasibility, campaign management, printing, donor events, donor gifts, donor recognition wall, etc.) total 8%

- 14% of the total goal of the campaign. The lower the campaign goal, the higher the percentage, and vice versa. The cost should be calculated based on the campaign goal, then added to the campaign total to know what the dollar amount raised needs to be.

Of that fundraising percentage, it is really up to you on how and where to allocate the funds. Donor recognition needs to be taken seriously, as the campaign donors are the future annual donors, and the organizations do not want to lose them. Bottom line – you need to spend enough on public recognition to make the donors feel special, cared for, valued, sufficiently recognized. **Donor recognition is NOT a “throw-away” item.**

6. COMPLEMENT THE ARCHITECTURE.

Even when a donor wall is treated as stand-alone art, designers need to work closely with the architect, lighting engineer and signage designers. The finished piece should feel integral to the environment and complement the proportions, materials, finishes and colors of the space.



7. GIVING LEVELS.

Figure out the breakdown of your giving levels early. If you have too many, it will be hard to encourage donors to give more. To denote different levels on your donor wall, there are many ways to show giving levels, the most common is different colored elements.



8. CONSIDER FUTURE FABRICATION.

Make sure that materials and craftsmanship are available and can be matched for years to come. Pick a reputable company to assure quality and safety of the product.



9. CONSIDER DAILY UPKEEP.

How often do you need to change donor lists? If you are updating lists often, digital is an affordable and practical option. With Presentations own Arreya Digital Software Service, you can login from anywhere and instantly upload new donor lists.

Take weather resistance, vandalism and maintenance into account before approving the design and location.

10. PROOFREAD, THEN PROOFREAD AGAIN.

Imagine etching 1000 names on a single sheet of glass and finding a typo that will remain into perpetuity. Check with donors about unusual name spellings, then assign several people to proofread at every stage of the process. Mistakes can be costly.

