

# **GLOBAL CONNECTIONS, IT'S ONLY MONEY! CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 2005**

## ***DONOR DEVELOPMENT***

(Notes from Workshop B4)

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Although this session was the shortest, it could easily have been the longest. There was much need to discuss the ethics and integrity of how we relate to our supporters. The secret of successful donor development is a functional relational database, managed by someone who knows how use it properly.

Only about half of those present had dedicated supporter relations staff. In one case it was the accounts department that handled supporter queries. Discussion developed on telephone-answering protocol, and how queries and complaints were handled.

The classic donor pyramid was discussed, together with its shortcomings. Delegates were encouraged to think in terms of moving supporters along a railway track, instead of up a pyramid. The railway track appeared to be converging in the distance, but in reality it was always parallel.

Most agencies sent gift acknowledgment letters, but some allowed supporters to opt out. Who signs these letters? High value gifts were often signed by the CEO, but in this case, he or she ought to see the original cheque (or photocopy) and personally sign (not scanned) and be willing to accept 'phone call or other queries from the recipient. Many long-term supporters know far more about what is happening overseas than our newer home staff.

We looked at the characteristics of friends and family, and what caused breakdown in friendships. These same criteria ought to be applied to how we treat our supporters. They are our friends, they are family, they are stakeholders, they are partners. The ultimate goal of the donor pyramid is to secure a legacy. It is family members who most benefit from legacies!

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