Day of Giving, or a Day of Pain?
John H. Taylor, Partner, Alexander Haas
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In the interest of full disclosure, I "grew up" in the world of Advancement Services. You know, the "back office." The "support staff." The "We'll dump more admin stuff on them because they have the time since they aren't out there raising money." Ya, right. You should remember that if it weren't for us you would not be able to mail/email prospects. You wouldn't have a clue how much money has been given and by whom. You couldn't issue a legal tax receipt, and you certainly could not follow-up on 3,000 outstanding pledges. Read the 3rd edition of my Advancement Services book series: Enhancing Fundraising Success to learn more. But I digress.

What is it with these day of giving campaigns? Aren't we supposed to be building a culture of philanthropy with our donor base such that when they have some loose change and think about charity they think about us? Do we really want to encourage them to WAIT and hold onto those precious dollars and not give them until they "count" in a day of giving campaign? What happens if that that campaign isn't for a month and another worthy cause approaches the same donor with a compelling story and they say, "We'll happily take your donation today"? Excuse me. This sometimes absurd reliance on a single day of giving makes no sense in that context. Combined, however, with an overall strategy to develop frequent donations to specific causes throughout the year – this I get. But I digress.

Here's the operational issue with day of giving campaigns. Institutions often forget the "little people." Let's pretend that your annual gift volume is 5,000 transactions – and that is what your organization is staffed at (probably 1 person). Just what the heck is the Advancement Services Office supposed to do when a quarter of those transactions come in ON ONE DAY? Are you *really* willing to wait 2-3 months for those gifts to be entered onto donor records – and you **promise** not to ask the Director of Gift Entry to keep a daily log of how many gifts have been processed and how many remain? Ya, right.

While I believe (or maybe hope) day of giving campaigns are a "fad," and certainly are not a "get rich quick" solution, they can serve a purpose in cultivating new donors (as long as we don't punish old donors by not recognizing them appropriately). But these new donors deserve the same immediate recognition that old donors receive. Immediate electronic tax receipts notwithstanding, they deserve another thankyou letter – on paper – within a week of the gift. And very likely another within 30 days depending on the dollar amount. Not 3 months later.

We must consider these day of giving campaigns holistically. Not just whether we can get more gifts than the other school down the street (oh, the fear I have seen in the eyes of staff at two local schools "competing" against each other). 6, 9, 12 months before launching the campaign, let's all come to the table and think about the infrastructure issues and staffing demands doing this *right* – from a DONOR perspective – will require. That means building seamless interfaces between your online giving platform and your database of record – BEFORE the first gift comes in. You want to **import** both the gift and biographic information directly from one system to the other rather than having to rekey anything.

Okay, nothing is foolproof and suspected duplicate records will need to be triaged. But you get the picture. Fortunately, CommunityFunded will build that interface for you at no cost – although they have already built many and may already have your solution. But the point is, that interface MUST exist no matter the platforms. Please stop killing off Advancement Services professionals!