



Greetings from Prospero Group President Doris Feinberg

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In this issue, we look at what we really mean when we call our donors “friends.” True friendship is a two-way street, so being a friend to your donors will pay all kinds of dividends.

I hope you enjoy this article... let us know what you think. Don't forget that all of our past newsletters are available on our website [here](#).

Please feel free to send this newsletter along to any colleagues or friends who might be interested, and, of course, contact me at any time at dfeinberg@prosperogroup.com.



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Love Your Donors and They'll Love You Back

by Susanne Shavelson

Why do your donors support your organization? It shouldn't be hard to come up with some answers. They support the cause. They want to make a difference. They value feeling connected to your work and a part of something significant. But what about this one: They love your organization. Does your organization love them back? What would that look like?

Here at The Prospero Group, we tell our clients the same thing, day in and day out: Invest in your relationships with your donors and they will invest in the cause you both hold dear. That never changes, no matter what else may be happening.

One of our clients has a major donor who reliably gave over \$10,000 annually for years. Over the past two years her business has faltered and she has not been able to give anything. Our client was advised to leave her alone, for fear that she would feel embarrassed about her changed situation. But we said, “This is no time to abandon a friend. She deserves your time and attention. Let her know you care about her and acknowledge that she still cares about your cause. When she's able to, she'll start giving again.” Our client went to see her and told her, “I'm not here to ask for money. You've been a loyal friend to us and we will be loyal to you. We know you'll come back when you can; in the meantime we want you to know we care about you.”

Giving is down over the past three years, but by less than one might expect. At the end of the day, if you care about your donors and your friends, they will care back. As the leadership expert John Maxwell says, “People don't care how much you know, unless they know how much you care.”

Make sure your donors know how much you care. Treat them with respect. This means regular communication, and transparency in letting them know how you are using their dollars. It means little things, too: Send a photo, an article, or a birthday card. Invite them in to meet with your CEO, a physician, or a special teacher. Or just call to say hello.

We call our donors “friends” for a reason. Friendship is a mutual relationship. If you never forget that where your donors are concerned, you can feel confident that they’ll stick with you through good times and bad.

Susanne A. Shavelson is a senior consultant with The Prospero Group.

About The Prospero Group

The Prospero Group, LLC, provides fundraising counsel that ensures lasting growth and change for non-profit organizations. We promote effective governance models and principled leadership to empower professionals and boards as the driving forces of philanthropy.

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