

VOLUME 18

SOLUTION of the MONTH



“Summertime ... and the living is easy!” The opening lines of this Gershwin classic go on to say that “fish are jumpin’ and the cotton is high”. The July Solution of the Month appropriately goes “south”, to Jaclyn Day, Director of Annual Giving at Guilford College in North Carolina. Jaclyn provides a timely reminder that *potential* donors abound and that even campaigns that “move the needle ever so slightly” can have a major impact over time.

Utilizing an advanced segmentation strategy made simple by Pledgimine, Guilford mailed 32 versions of a traditional appeal letter. Each potential donor received a “version of the letter that

corresponded with their graduating degree”. The acquisition appeal netted 52 gifts from SYBUNT/Lapsed/Non-Donor populations, including 19 first time gifts ... way to go, Jaclyn!

The Pledgimine Solution of the Month program continues to highlight innovative concepts and solutions. Thanks to a rapidly growing and highly innovative community of clients, the Solutions Library has become an indispensable resource for fundraising ideas at more than 350 institutions across the country. In combination with the existing portfolio of exceptional samples, this latest addition to the Solutions Library is being shared to inspire future projects and continued innovation.

VOLUME 18 SELECTION

GUILFORD COLLEGE



Letter in 6x9 Envelope
FLAT: 8.5” x 11”
Stock: White 70# Text Smooth
BRE: Check Size

SPRING MAJORS APPEAL

GUILFORD COLLEGE



AN INTERVIEW WITH GUILFORD

JACLYN M. DAY
DIRECTOR OF ANNUAL GIVING

I've been in annual giving for 10 years ranging from student caller to my current position as the Director of Annual Giving at Guilford College since January of 2016. The new vice president and I have been focused on expanding our direct mail efforts to include more of our constituents than ever before. We've also emphasized creating direct mail pieces that are tailored to their individual experiences at Guilford College.

Q Is this a new design/concept/format or have you used it before?

A We've favored the 8.5x11 letter template and the design was similar to others we have done in the past. The biggest difference in this mailing is that we did 32 versions of the letter to represent each academic major and we gave the faculty more room for custom language to talk about their departments.

Q Can you share the specific objectives that you had for this campaign?

A This mailing focused almost solely on acquisition (LYBUNTs were being sent a completely different letter around the same time). Here's the detailed breakdown of the recipient list:

- 2% of individuals made a gift in the current fiscal year;
- 26% of individuals made their last gift in the past 15 years;
- 13% of individuals made one gift ever;
- 59% of individuals had never made a gift.

Given the makeup of the list, our goal was a 1% response rate. This was pretty aggressive as similar mailings we've done with the same makeup have had a .1% response rate.

Q What factors influenced your decision to use this format? Any constraints or challenges?

A We wanted to go with the more traditional letter format so the departments had a chance to explain their priorities. Editing was incredibly tricky to make sure all of the I's were dotted and the T's were crossed. As you can imagine, some departments were more eager to assist than others.

Q What was the size of your intended audience? What % is this of your entire database?

A We sent this to just shy of 13,000 individuals representing 51% of our solicitation database.

Q Was segmentation an important part of your strategy? How?

A Segmentation was vital to this mailing. Each individual received one version of the letter that corresponded with their graduating degree. To make things more complicated, we had a fair amount of alumni with dual degrees, and we had others who were donors to departments that were not their graduating major. We set up our segmentation so that anyone with giving history always received a letter corresponding to the department they gave to (regardless of degree) and those with dual majors received the letter corresponding to the first degree listed.

“ Segmentation was vital to this mailing. Each individual received one version of the letter that corresponded with their graduating degree. ”

Q Did you achieve your objectives for this mailing? Can you share results to date?

A We received 54 gifts, which is a response rate of 0.4%. No, we did not hit our goal but did move the needle ever so slightly. 52 of the 54 of the gifts came from our SYBUNT/Lapsed/Non-Donor populations, and 19 of those gifts were first time gifts.

Q Do you have any other noteworthy insights or conclusions that relate to this campaign?

A The most successful department was the Accounting Department. They focused their letter on a beloved professor who passed away this past January. Their message really resonated with their alumni and accounted for 9 of the 19 first time gifts and 25% of the gifts over all.

Next year I will be looking at the self-mailer format instead of the traditional letter format to help with response rates. Our faculty members will just have to learn to be more concise.