

VOLUME 8

SOLUTION of the MONTH



The Pledgeline team is pleased to present September's Solution of the Month to Carly Witkop and the Northwood University Advancement department. This Thanksgiving stewardship piece joins the exceptional examples in Pledgeline's Solution Library. Our rapidly growing and highly innovative group of clients have helped make the Solution Library a vital resource for Annual Giving at universities and institutions throughout the country. As we near the end of the calendar year, we prepare ourselves and our teams for the busy holiday season. The team here at Pledgeline is excited to help facilitate successful holiday giving and stewardship campaigns for our vast network of clients and collaborators.

Each example included in Pledgeline's Solutions Library is unique, personal, and memorable. Every month, a stand-out

solution will be selected for inclusion in The Solutions Library, as well as be awarded the title of Pledgeline's "Solution of the Month." These innovative and creative examples showcase successful collaboration, cutting edge design and impactful engagement with an institution's intended audience.

September 2016's Solution of the Month is awarded to Carly Witkop, the Donor Relations Assistant for the Northwood University Advancement Department. This new stewardship initiative helped Carly's department build a stronger relationship with the Northwood giving community. Carly also wanted to thank Justin Marshall, Julie Adamczyk, Lisa Moseler, and Robin Yancer of the University Advancement and Alumni Relations team for their creative input and data. We are thankful for your collaboration, Carly!

VOLUME 8 SELECTION NORTHWOOD UNIVERSITY



BIFOLD CARD IN A2

FLAT: 5.5" x 8.5"

Stock:

Card - 80# Cover Smooth
A2 Envelope - Neenah Linen

To view previous selections, please visit www.pledgeline.com/solution-of-the-month

THANKSGIVING STEWARDSHIP CARD

NORTHWOOD UNIVERSITY

Carly Witkop



AN INTERVIEW WITH NORTHWOOD

CARLY WITKOP

Carly graduated from Northwood University in 2010, majoring in Marketing/Advertising and Business Management and has worked for Northwood's University Advancement department since August of 2015. Carly currently holds the role of Donor Relations Assistant which includes processing gifts and tax receipts, updating donor and alumni data, coordinating the stewardship program, and managing the Northwood Phonathon twice per year.

Q Is this a new approach to stewardship than you've used previously?

A Our stewardship cards are a new approach to communicate more frequently with donors and alumni. My department wants to reach out to our constituents on a regular basis, without solicitation, to help build a stronger relationship and connection with the university.

Q Can you share the objectives that you had for this stewardship piece?

A With this particular piece, we were sending to sorority alumni to wish them a 'Happy Thanksgiving', as well as to ask for a donation to Greek Life on the Northwood campus. Our objective for all of our stewardship cards is to send to key groups of donors to keep them involved with the university, while also personalizing our cards as much as possible. This helps us segment our constituents by highlighting key pieces of information that help to optimize our campaigns. These pieces also enable the department to keep our database more current by updating addresses and other personal information.

Q What influenced your decision to use this format? Did you have any constraints or challenges?

A We chose to use this particular format because it's fun! This card was designed with Pledgeline to be "cute," but also informative. We used the back of the card to provide our donors and alumni with links to Northwood's social media pages. The only real constraint or challenge that we faced when mailing this stewardship piece was timing. We had to make sure that we were not interfering with other annual fund initiatives or solicitations. Initially, we looked at this as a potential opportunity for solicitation, but quickly decided to limit it to stewardship.

Q How did this process differ from your previous strategy?

A In the past, we had focused on fundraising through solicitation. This process is more about friend-raising through stewardship. We want our donors to feel connected to the Northwood community, without us having to ask them for anything in return.

“
This process is more about friend-raising through stewardship. We want our donors to feel connected to the Northwood community, without us having to ask them for anything in return.
”

Q Was this approach to stewardship a success? If yes, can you share any pertinent metrics or data? Did you receive any feedback from your recipients?

A This approach to stewardship was, and continues to be, a great success. We ask our donors and alumni to post to one of our social media pages using our hashtag. Some of the "favorites" have been this Thanksgiving card, our Valentine's Day card and our Mother's Day card. We feature these posts on our Alumni & Friends Facebook page, which is another way we strengthen our relationships with our donors.

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

A Not only is this piece a fun way to communicate with our alumni and donors, it also allows us to keep more accurate information. This campaign promotes not only the university as a whole, but different events that are of interest to those receiving the card. In March, we sent a card to all of our football alumni to invite them to our Spring Ball game and to let them know that the annual football "Lift-a-thon" was taking place. It's a great opportunity to cross-promote and keep our data up-to-date while sending a fun and personalized note to our alumni and donors.

Q Any Final Thoughts?

A Pledgeline has been phenomenal to work with. The team has helped walk me through the process from beginning to end of creating the stewardship pieces. The quality of the product has also been wonderful and the turnaround time has exceeded our expectations. There has always been a representative of Pledgeline available when we have had questions or requests. We look forward to many more projects with Pledgeline for our stewardship pieces and our phonathon.