Top Ten Ways to Appreciate Foundations

Steward gifts according to what is legal, then what is ethical, and finally, what is nice.
—Jennifer D.B. McEnery

There are many creative ways of showing your foundation donors just how much you appreciate their partnership with your grant funded projects or programs. Suggestions below are activities beyond standard acknowledgement procedures, such as required reporting. Do remember that individuals comprising a foundation’s leadership, staff, and board are passionate people who often appreciate the same special treatment extended to other donors. However, always keep in mind that, due to their tax status, there are certain legal restrictions associated with acknowledging foundations.

10. If appropriate, ensure they are included in your donor recognition lists.

9. Nominate your foundation funders for local or national philanthropy awards.

8. Unless they request otherwise or prohibit it, add them to your newsletter and annual report mailing lists; just make sure they will not receive solicitations.

7. Publicize the award. Generate a press release announcing the gift and send them copies of any resulting media attention with a note. Include an article about the foundation in your unit’s communications—the specific award or their contributions to your unit, the University, and the community. Sometimes funders require that you discuss public recognitions in advance, so be clear on their preferences before you act.

6. When possible, send pictures, art work, videos, or similar tangible media that expresses project progress or results.

5. Arrange a phone call, meeting, or more formal presentation between the foundation and the program’s beneficiaries or the principal investigator.

4. Get them involved. When appropriate, extend volunteer and/or board opportunities for foundation staff and board, or request their expert advice. Involve them in leveraging other program support. Find ways to enrich their relationship with your unit and the funded program.

3. Stay up-to-date with news and information about your foundation funders, such as staff and leadership changes, and offer regards or congratulations when suitable.
2. Invite your foundation funders for a campus/program visit, or to unit and University activities such as special events and program presentations, particularly events associated with their gift.

1. Find opportunities to communicate with funders outside of the proposal process: lunch, an informal phone call, meeting, or a handwritten note about client stories, project developments, and milestones.

   Lastly, an item that is not ranked, numbered, or considered a suggestion—
   
   **timely and honest reporting!**