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Communicating with Female Philanthropic Donors: How Various Methods of Thanking Women and Informing Them of the Use of Their Gifts Impact Giving

Amber M. Kleopfer
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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Amber M. Kleopfer entitled "Communicating with Female Philanthropic Donors: How Various Methods of Thanking Women and Informing Them of the Use of Their Gifts Impact Giving." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Communication.

Candace White, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Bonnie Riechert, Lisa Fall

Accepted for the Council:
Dixie L. Thompson

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Acceptance for the Council:

Anne Mayhew

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COMMUNICATING WITH FEMALE PHILANTHROPIC DONORS: HOW VARIOUS METHODS OF THANKING WOMEN AND INFORMING THEM OF THE USE OF THEIR GIFTS IMPACT GIVING

A thesis
presented for the
Masters of Science Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Amber M. Kleopfer
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Steven Gale and Teri Marie Kleopfer, who taught me to always put myself in position to be in position and to keep my eye on the ball.

It is to you that I owe my successes.

Thank you.

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to test the impact of two separate variables – (1) thanking philanthropic donors through varying degrees of one-way and two-way interpersonal interaction and (2) informing donors about usage of previous similar gifts – on the philanthropic giving behaviors of two separate populations of female patients who were asked to contribute to a breast cancer research fund via an annual solicitation mailing method.

The first portion of the study examines the thanking variable by comparing the annual giving behaviors of a population of female breast cancer donors before and after the donors are thanked through various methods: via either (1) a standard, computer-generated thank-you letter, (2) a voice mail message, (3) a handwritten, personal thank-you note, (4) a phone conversation or (5) a personal visit. The study shows that the thanking methods that allow for two-way communication between the donor and the development officer – phone conversations and personal visits – result in a statistically significant increase in the number of donors who made repeat annual gifts one year later. None of the various methods of thanking donors appeared, however, to lead to an increase in the amount of the repeat gifts.

The second portion of the study examines the informing variable by comparing the response rates and gift amounts of a group of female breast cancer patients who received a breast cancer research fund solicitation letter with a group who received the same letter as well as an additional clinical trial update sheet highlighting the impact of philanthropic dollars on breast cancer research. The study showed that including the

clinical trial update did not increase the likelihood that a woman would make a gift. In fact, the response rates for the two groups were exactly identical. The inclusion of the research update did, however, appear to impact the gift amount: the average gift increased by more than $50 when the additional information sheet was included. Although this increase was not statistically significant, it does have implications relevant and useful to the practice of fund raising.

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I. INTRODUCTION

As the role of women in Western society has evolved, so too has the role of women in philanthropic giving. In Ostrower's (1995) book *Why the Wealthy Give*, he writes, "…Increased economic independence will lead women to develop new distinctive patterns of giving… The movement of women into traditionally male occupations may have significant consequences for philanthropy that bear watching over the next several years."

Consider the following facts:

- As of 2000, women owned about 60 percent of the wealth in the United States (Marx, 2000); in 1992, women made up 35 percent of the nation's stockholders (Shaw & Taylor, 1995). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, of the 3.4 million Americans classified as "top wealth holders" by the Internal Revenue Service, about 40 percent are women (Kahn, 1997).
- Between 1995 and 2010, women will come to control more and more wealth as an estimated $7 trillion will pass into the hands of baby boomers (Shaw & Taylor, 1995).
- In 1990, *Entrepreneur* magazine reported that more women started new companies than men (Stone & Sublett, 1997). Statistics also show that each year since 1992, more American women than men have earned bachelor's and master's degrees, and education is highly correlated with income (Kaplan & Hayes, 1993).
- In all regions of the world, women on average live four years longer than men. In the United States specifically, life expectancies are about 74 years for men and 79

years for women. Nearly 45 percent of women over the age of 65 are widowed (United States Almanac, 2001).

- As a whole, women have a greater desire to donate their wealth to philanthropic purposes than they do to accumulate wealth to pass on to the next generation (Stone & Sublett, 1992). About 27 percent of women leave bequests to charities in their wills as compared to about 15 percent of men (Kaplan & Hayes, 1993).

These facts alone give a clear indication of the future of fund raising: women will be key donors. As indicated above, each year women are earning and controlling more money, accessing more education and occupying more leadership positions than ever before. As such, women are poised to play a dominant role in the philanthropic activity of the future (Stone & Sublett, 1997). In fact, many researchers predict that during the first decade of this century, women will become more and more influential in determining the beneficiaries of giving (Kahn, 1997; Shaw & Taylor, 1995). Since women will be such important donors, fund raisers must realize the giving potential of females and learn how to most effectively communicate with them in order to create and maintain the best possible long-term relationships with this critical group.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the giving behaviors of female donors based on two donor communication variables that the literature review illuminates as important to women - (1) being thanked appropriately for their gifts and (2) being informed about the usage of their gifts - in order to determine if there are methods development officers can employ when communicating with female donors that will lead to larger and/or more likely to be repeated annual gifts.

The two aforementioned variables are referenced in this study as “the thanking variable” and “the informing variable” and are examined separately with two different samples. The thanking variable was tested by thanking 88 female breast cancer donors for gifts to an annual giving campaign at a major Midwestern cancer research and care institution. The female donors were thanked using four different interpersonal methods of contact: sending a handwritten note, leaving a voice mail message, speaking to the donor in person via phone and visiting the donor at the time of their next appointment. One year later, the same group of 88 donors was solicited again and their responses were examined to determine which of the four methods of thanking are the most effective in generating repeat gifts and, specifically, larger gifts.

The informing variable was tested on an entirely different sample of female breast cancer patients at the same institution. A solicitation mailing list of 4,146 patients was randomly divided into two groups. One group received the institution’s standard spring breast cancer research solicitation letter along with a one-page research update detailing the activities of the institution’s breast cancer research team and explaining how philanthropic gifts were used. The second group received the solicitation letter only. The responses to these mailings were then analyzed to determine if providing the female donors the research update led more women to give than when such information was not provided. The responses were also analyzed to determine if the average gift for the group of donors who receive the research update was larger than the average gift of the group of donors that did not.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

An Historical Perspective of Women as Philanthropists

The history of women's philanthropy in the 19th century closely combines giving funds and giving time. Unlike the mostly male industrialists, whose philanthropy was made possible due to their business successes, women have often participated in philanthropic causes by volunteering. By working in nonprofit voluntary associations, women found important societal leadership roles outside the home and alongside men in the traditionally male domains of business and government. To gain more authority, philanthropic women often focused their participation on social movements that were extensions of the traditional female roles of caring for dependents. Thus, throughout history women have led organizations that supported widows, orphans, immigrants, soldiers and freed slaves (Kahn, 1997).

Marx (2000) wrote, "Historically, men have made the money, then died and left it to the women to deal with. Now more wealth is being jointly generated or generated by the women themselves." And, as women earn more, they feel more empowered to give (Conover, 1996). In response to this desire to give, several organizations were created in the 1990's to help wealthy women learn to manage their giving. Among these is the Women's Donor Network (Kahn, 1997) and the University of California at Los Angeles' Women's Philanthropy Network (Stone & Sublett, 1992).

In his article, Kahn identified 1997 as the point in time when many development officers began to change their perceptions about men being the primary holders of substantial wealth. This change in perception was largely due to women asserting their economic power in response to various development efforts nationwide. For example, Harvard alumnae drew attention by pledging $500,000 to Harvard's 1997 capital campaign and demanding that their donation be designated to increase the number of tenured women faculty members, which at that time was only 11.5 percent. Kahn believes that such requests are typical of women philanthropists: they want to know exactly how their money is being used, and they often target their donations specifically toward programs benefiting women (1997).

As a result of changes in our society, the first decades of the new century are expected to bring dramatic increases in giving in the United States (Elder, 1997; Hamilton, 1994 as cited in Marx, 2000; Kaplan, 1994; Kaplan & Hayes, 1993; Shaw & Taylor, 1995). This prediction is based on the expected union of three interrelated economic and demographic themes. First, the 1980s saw a significant build-up of wealth among the upper economic strata in America. Second, older Americans, who have enjoyed the prosperity of the past forty years, are expected to make bequests of nearly $10 trillion dollars. Finally, baby boomers are now reaching what has statistically been shown to be American adults' peak giving years (Marx, 2000).

A Look At Female Donors

Female donors are an astonishingly untapped resource. Although 78 percent of women make gifts each year as opposed to 72 percent of men, women donate only about 1.8 percent of their income annually. For men, that percentage is a much higher 3.1 percent (Stone & Sublett, 1992). Further, the results of a 1996 Gallup Organization Independent Sector poll regarding American philanthropy revealed that "non-contributors" are more likely to be men than women. Although about five percent more female-headed households than male-headed households made donations in 1995, women generally made smaller donations than did men: $983 annually for female households versus $1,057 annually for male households. The study also found that women were about seven percent more likely than men to volunteer (Marx, 2000).

Given the extraordinary philanthropic potential of women, fund raisers must rise to the challenge of incorporating women into major donor levels (Stone & Sublett, 1992). One means of doing this is to become sensitive to the differences between the traditionally male donor audience and the new female audience. This, however, is much easier stated than achieved. Understanding the relationship between gender and philanthropy is a complex issue because it involves the concept of power. As members of the economically elite, many women donors are both powerful and powerless. "Although they are members of society's most privileged class, they generally do not hold the positions of economic and social authority occupied by their male counterparts, on whom they generally depend for their resources" (Ostrower, 1995). In all, women's philanthropy is still somewhat complicated by the fact that men frequently make most of the money decisions in their households (Kahn, 1997).

Ostrower's (1995) study of 99 couples in the New York City area revealed that elite philanthropy operates in a manner consistent with old-fashioned gender arrangements. Among the economically privileged, she found that all the men were employed or retired, but nearly 70 percent of the women did not and had not worked. While this lack of financial resources of their own might lead one to believe that wealthy women are unable to make significant philanthropic contributions, Ostrower's findings indicated that although many of the women were financially dependent on their husbands, the vast majority made their own philanthropic decisions for the funds they accessed from their husbands. Furthermore, she found that philanthropy is almost always a value shared by the couple, not just the husband or the wife. The wealthy couples in her study viewed philanthropy as a joint activity and priority for themselves within which each might have separate and/or shared interests. She also found, however, that women more frequently make their largest gifts to the causes supported by the couple rather than the causes the women support separate from their husbands. Apparently, wealthy women's perspectives on and approaches to philanthropy are shaped by their identities as part of a couple (Ostrower, 1995). This interrelationship between the giving desires of the husband and wife was supported by Johnson and Rosenfeld, who found that females were almost twice as likely as males to make bequests to charitable organizations, but that charitable giving often represents the desires of both spouses, even if the man has already died (1991).

There are several other issues related to married couples to which fund raisers should be sensitive. For example, in light of the fact that women tend to outlive men, fund raisers should communicate with both husbands and wives. Developing such relationships with women will enhance trust and understanding on behalf of the donor and fund raiser in the event the woman is widowed (Shaw & Taylor, 1995). Although Stone and Sublett's research did indicate that many fund raisers are reaching out to both husbands and wives, it also indicated there are problems with the way fund raisers approach couples. Many women in the Stone and Sublett focus groups felt that when fund raisers initially approached them and their husbands, the women were not treated any differently than their spouses. As the cultivation and solicitation process progressed, however, women noted that they felt increasing discrimination in the forms of lack of acknowledgement, lack of identify, approaches to husbands without including wives and underestimation of the wives' giving abilities (Stone & Sublett, 1992). A final issue related to married couples centers on gift recognition methods. Engraving the name "Mr. and Mrs. John Smith" into a donor recognition plaque can become quite confusing if the original couple divorces and the man remarries. Many organizations now prefer to instead credit gifts to "John and Ann Smith," but donors' preferences should always determine the form of their recognition (Shaw & Taylor, 1995).

Although proficiency working with couples is clearly a skill fund raisers must polish in order to have continued success, an opposing trend seems equally important. The proportion of women who have never been married – and therefore are the sole controllers of their financial wealth – has dramatically increased in the last 30 years. In 1970, the percentage of women up to age 39 who had never married was about 5.4 percent. In 1998, that number had climbed to 14.3 percent (United States Almanac, 2001).

As with most all aspects of their gendered worldviews, women and men have widely different perceptions of philanthropy. Previous studies in fundraising have established that women give differently than men and are motivated to give by different factors. Recognizing that understanding women's experiences as philanthropists is critical to understanding women's giving, Shaw and Taylor conducted a study beginning in 1991 interviewing 150 women philanthropists and nearly 100 development professionals to discuss women and philanthropy (Shaw & Taylor, 1995). They found many interesting trends. For example, they learned that upon inheriting money, men are more likely to invest in business endeavors while women are more likely to set up charitable funds and foundations they administer themselves (Shaw & Taylor, 1995). Other researchers have found additional variations in the way in which the genders approach giving. For example, men often give as a means to achieving power and influence, while women give to "make a difference" and tend to give to influence social causes. Men also look at giving more factually and quantitatively while women are more comfortable with the soft, more complex side of giving (Conover, 1996).

Through their interviews and focus groups with female givers, Shaw and Taylor (1995) also found that women's motivations for giving are different from those of men. For instance, they found that women are influenced to give based on "a desire for social change and self-empowerment, a wish to create philanthropic institutions, a need to feel connected to an organization or larger community, a commitment to volunteerism and a desire for collaboration and new friendships" (Marx, 2000). They also found that female giving varies in type and amount according to specific variables of the donor including age and life stage, marital status, ethnicity, religious background, values and philanthropic interest. For instance, a woman's life stage might impact her giving if she is beginning to recognize the need for financial planning for retirement and is receptive to learning more about planned giving (Shaw & Taylor, 1995).

Many of Shaw and Taylor's findings complemented those of Stone and Sublett, whose 1992 focus group research provides much insight into the giving behavior of women. Stone and Sublett's research, which was sponsored by UCLA's Women in Philanthropy program, involved talking with female UCLA donors at the major gift level, which was operationalized as having made a single gift or cumulative gifts of $25,000 or more. They conducted six focus groups with a total of 76 women involved with their university as alumnae, donors or volunteers. The results of their qualitative analysis revealed several factors that motivated women, including "personal commitment to an organization or issue, a family tradition of social responsibility to the community, personal involvement in giving, a desire for social change, a wish to teach philanthropic values to their children and recognition as individual women for their contributions" (Marx, 2000). Stone and Sublett also learned that women ultimately make philanthropic decisions based on intuitive or personal reasons.

As previously mentioned, two common characteristic of female donors are (1) the desire to give to programs that benefit other women and girls and (2) the desire to designate their gifts for specific purposes they choose. In her 2000 study analyzing the evolution of the Women's Funding Network (WFN), Brilliant (2000) states that women are embracing the opportunity to control fund allocation as a means of empowering themselves and achieving social change. She believes that women's advances in philanthropy are closely related to the global women's rights. Based on female philanthropists' concerns for empowerment and well-being, a new progressive movement for women's issues may gain strength in the next twenty years (Marx, 2000).

As women philanthropists increase in both number and giving potential in the new century, the trend of giving large portions of their donations to programs that benefit women is expected to continue and intensify (Marx, 2000; Shaw & Taylor, 1995). One indicator of the strength of this trend is the growing number of self-described "women's funds," which are typically controlled by women and target at least 75 percent of their grants to women's and girls' programs. These organizations are believed to have evolved in response to the insulting five percent of funding from mainstream foundations directed at services targeting females. The donors to such female-oriented services may be benefiting from them as much as the recipients are as many women philanthropists are finding fulfilling leadership roles in social service organizations targeting women and girls (Marx, 2000).

In addition to an organization's purpose, a woman's primary motivator for choosing an organization to support is the perceived personal impact she may be able to have. Stone and Sublett's (1992) subjects repeatedly expressed their need to "make a difference." Since women are frequent givers of their time, they are much more likely than men to have direct personal experiences as providers of the services sponsored by the organizations to which women are givers of their money.

In his secondary analysis of the Gallup Organization's 1996 study conducted for the Independent Sector using face-to-face interviews with a national sample of 2,719 American adults, Marx (2000) concluded that women were twice as likely to give specifically to human services than were men. Female givers to human services were most frequently white, high-income human-services volunteers. He believes that his study provides evidence that women are more committed to the role of charitable organizations in American society and believe they have the power to improve the welfare of others. Other researchers believe that women's life roles as family nurturers carries over into their giving as they are more sympathetic to needy causes such as health and human services (Conover, 1996; Shaw & Taylor, 1995). Women are also likely to give to women's education and sports; aid for rape and domestic violence victims and the arts (Conover, 1996).

Ostrower agrees with Marx's conclusions regarding women and social services giving as she found that twice as many women as men give to social services. Although social services is a less prestigious "cause" than many others available to the economically privileged, women indicated they give to social services because the services they provide appeal to them as women, not as members of the wealthiest economic sector. Ostrower also found that men and women both give donations to educational institutions and cultural causes (1995). According to the analysis of Johnson and Rosenfeld, about 40 percent of the bequests made by female donors go to educational organizations, followed by religious organizations and foundations. In contrast, about 42 percent of gifts made by men go to private foundations (1991). Women are also much more likely than men to donate to animal or environmental causes. Ostrower hypothesizes that this is due to the perception that animal and environmental causes are antithetical to business practices important to the males in her sample (1995).

Several other aspects of giving behavior unique to women as a group were addressed in the literature and warrant inclusion in this discussion. First, women are more likely than men to give in total anonymity. For example, in 1995, an anonymous woman gave $2 million to Pine Manor College to underwrite a new campus computer network. Many women dislike the "Lady Bountiful" image and give in anonymity to avoid drawing unwanted attention to themselves (Kahn, 1997). Conversely, in the UCLA study, many women shared that they had discontinued giving to an organization when an error occurred in gift recognition. Women said they stopped donating to organizations who failed to send thank-you notes or sent them improperly. Notes addressing the women as

“Mr.” were mentioned as frequently occurring and particularly inflammatory (Stone & Sublett, 1992).

When deciding to make a gift, an organizational characteristic women specifically examine is the composition of its guiding board. Stone and Sublett found that balanced gender representation and activity on governing boards was highly valued by women. Gender imbalances among board members are problems for many organizations: although a survey of the number of women on numerous nonprofit boards from 1972 to 1992 showed that the number of female board members generally doubled, women still comprise a very low percentage of the total number of board members (Ostrower, 1995).

Women also have unique financial planning needs. Fund raisers must understand that women may need to be advised about taking financial risks. As more women get into business, more will understand risk and investment, but until then, fund raisers must close that gap (Conover, 1996). In Stone and Sublett’s (1992) study, the women indicated that providing access to reliable financial and estate planning assistance is absolutely necessary when working with them as donors. The women believed that “men have a longer tradition of giving, are less interested in giving their time, and understand the need to reciprocate. [Men] are better at leveraging their gifts to their advantage.” The women felt that their male counterparts knew more about the tax advantages of giving than they did. Female donors would likely utilize and appreciate financial consulting services that might narrow the perceived information gap between male and female donors.

The Fund-Raising Process Understood In a Public Relations Context

Before discussing communicating with specifically female donors, it is necessary to understand that fund raising is a function of public relations and is therefore a communication-based, relationship-building process. In 1988, the Public Relations Society of America added fund raising to a list of six existing areas of the professional practice of public relations including media, community, investor, internal, government and consumer relations (Body of Knowledge Task Force of the PRSA Research Committee, 1998). Although many public relations practitioners falsely believe the practice of public relations is simply the production and dissemination of strategic messages, theories of relationship management have recently moved to the forefront of modern public relations. As a result, public relations initiatives are increasingly being evaluated on the basis of success in creating behavioral or relational outcomes. Relationship management in itself is not an actual theory that can be applied to public relations; it is rather a perspective that encompasses interpersonal and organizational communication theories as well as social and psychological theories applied to the practice of public relations. Cutlip, Center and Broom's (2000) famous definition for public relations encompasses the relationship management perspective: they define public relations as "a management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends."

The emergence of the relationship management paradigm for public relations impacts the very essence of the practice. It calls into question where and how public relations should function within the overall organizational framework as well as the effects of public relations on the publics who are affected by its messages. As Ehling noted, this shift in the public relations paradigm has moved the focus of public relations from the manipulation of public opinion to the building and maintaining of relationships key to the organization's success (Ledingham & Bruning, 2000). A similar interesting observation was made by Thomlison (2000) when he noted that "when publics are treated as ends rather than as means, remarkably exciting things happen in organizations."

The work of Kathleen S. Kelly, Ph.D., the nation's leading expert in the scholarship of fund-raising management, supports the application of the relationship management paradigm to fund-raising practices. She (1995) defines fund raising as a specialization of public relations: fund raising is "the management of communication between a charitable organization and its donor publics." As a result, she purports that the academic home of fund raising should be in public relations (Kelly, 1998). Although there are more than 150,000 charitable organizations in the United States collecting billions of dollars in gifts each year, there is relatively little scholarship in the area of fund raising. Professional fund raising is a growing field, but little original fund-raising theory has been developed.

Consistent with the relationship management paradigm, it is widely agreed that the purpose of fund raising cannot be simply to raise money. Kelly (1998) writes that true purpose of the function is "to help charitable organizations manage their interdependencies with donor publics who share mutual goals and objectives." Friend raising, she writes, is just as important as fund raising. Friend raising is best accomplished through building of relationships based on communication, which helps both parties make predictions about the other, reduces uncertainties in the relationship and builds a trust base for future exchanges and a continued relationship (Kelly, 1998).

In one seminal study, Kelly (1995) examined the application of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four theoretical models of public relations – press agentry, public information, two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical – to fund raising. She found that the public relations models translate to the practice of fund raising as it as undergone natural metamorphosis since 1902. Just as Grunig found that the model of public relations most pleasing and effective for both parties to be the two-way symmetrical model, Kelly's (1995) intensive analysis of fund-raising literature reveals that the two-way symmetrical model is also the ideal model for fund raising. Donor communication is most successfully conducted using this model, which seeks to create mutual understanding through balanced, two-way interaction and the use of formative research to shape communication (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The model allows each party to identify, maintain and build an appropriate relationship and to make each party more successful in its mission, whatever that might be.

Fund raisers should function to raise money by cultivating friends for their organization and enabling those donors to make informed financial, emotional and time commitments. Marilyn Fischer, fund-raising ethicist, stated, "The money is freely given by persons who share a sense of commitment to the organization." There is a difference between fund raising based on relationships and what K.S. Grace called "tin-cup fund raising." In her 1991 article, she wrote that tin cup donors are those who have no relationship to the organization to which they make a donation and so give impulsively. Tin cup donors are unlikely to return to the same cup to give additional funding, so these types of impulsive gifts provide little financial stability to the recipient organization (Kelly, 1998).

Since it is a subspecialty of public relations, the fund-raising process involves a great deal of interpersonal communication. In her book, Kelly (1998) presented a ladder portraying the effectiveness of various methods used to solicit gifts. Since a common fund-raising principle is, "the larger the gift, the more personal the communication," interpersonal, face-to-face techniques are recommended for major gifts programs, while less personalized means of relating are described as appropriate for annual giving programs. Of course, the two-way models of fund-raising rely more heavily on interpersonal communication than do the one-way models (Kelly, 1998).

Fund raising further exists in a public relations context due to its use of the ROPES process, which mirrors the RACE process for public relations. The ROPES process allows for scientific integrated relationship management of the fund raising process. Just as the public relations process is encapsulated in the RACE acronym for research, action, communication and evaluation (Marston ,1963), the fund-raising process is explained through the ROPES acronym: research, objectives, programming, evaluation and stewardship. Although consideration of women's needs is absolutely necessary during every step of ROPES' scientific relationship management process, the literature indicates that the relationship-building programming and stewardship steps provide the most opportunity to successfully communicate with women (Kelly, 1998).

During the programming stage, the development officer writes a detailed fund-raising plan. When developing plans targeted at women donors, a few simple initial steps should be conducted in order to determine if any "damage control" is necessary. For example, a simple content analysis of fund-raising materials may reveal to development officers that women are underrepresented in communication tools utilized by their organization. Such omissions could be communicating the wrong messages to female prospects. Further, development officers may even be faced with situations where women were once discriminated against by their institutions. In such cases, fund raisers should highlight progress that their organization has been made in valuing women (Shaw & Taylor, 1995).

The planning process also identifies the means by which prospective donor will be cultivated. The cultivation process is critical to raising gifts, and as such fund raisers must continually seek to inform and involve prospects about their organization's work. In fact, the two essential factors in the cultivation process are information and involvement (Kelly, 1998). And, the literature does show that women have unique informational needs. For example, women more than men desire frequent information on programs they support. As previously stated, women also desire greater involvement than men in organizations to which they donate. Providing avenues for that involvement can be crucial, as women are more likely to make a major gift when they are already involved with a program and then asked to support it more substantially (Stone & Sublett, 1992).

The solicitation process is also part of the programming stage. Regardless of their gender, donors do not give unless asked. Although Kelly writes that prospects can be solicited by mail, by telephone or in person, the literature seems to support that solicitations of female donors will be most successful when the woman is asked in person. For example, research shows that women donors appreciate good listening skills and a high-level of eye contact from the fund raiser. Development officers in Shaw and

Taylor's (1995) study also identified several other communication strategies crucial to soliciting gifts from women. Collectively, the professionals noted that women appreciate the building of rapport and interpersonal connections prior to discussing prospective philanthropic endeavors. At the time of solicitation, women enjoy discussion of their specific connection to the organization and how their donation will directly impact its purposes. Women were much more likely to respond to solicitation requests highlighting how they can join others in affecting the organization. Unlike men, women were not motivated when fund raisers pitted them against other women in giving challenges (Shaw & Taylor, 1995). Overall, when making gifts, women value limited bureaucracy and responsiveness to the donor's desires (Stone & Sublett, 1992).

According to the literature, the stewardship process, which is also commonly referred to as the donor relations process, is the one that seems to be the most varied for men and women. In short, women desire more stewardship that do men. Greenfield (1991, as cited in Kelly, 1998) writes that "the purpose of donor relations is to thank those who have made gifts and establish the means for continued communication that will help to preserve their interest and attention to the organization." Cultivating women through continued communication over time is essential because although women will give initially based on their perception of an organization and its effectiveness, trust and confidence must be cultivated for additional gifts to be made (Stone & Sublett, 1992).

The stewardship step, then, consists of the four progressive elements of reciprocity, responsible gift use, reporting and relationship nurturing. Reciprocity means that when a donation is made to an organization, the organization must reciprocate that gift. Simply, the organization must show gratitude, which can be achieved through either acts of appreciation or of recognition. Showing appreciation can be as simple as sending a timely, sincere thank-you message. The literature shows that women place a high value on thank-you messages and will even terminate relationships with organizations if they are not appropriately thanked for their donations (Stone & Sublett, 1992). Although there are many ways to recognize donors, such as publishing donors' names in annual reports or awarding donors gift club memberships (Kelly, 1998), a unique way to recognize women is through their volunteering efforts. Since women are statistically more likely to volunteer than are men, women can effectively be cultivated by recognizing the vital work they do as volunteers (Shaw & Taylor, 1995).

The next two steps of stewardship, responsible gift use and reporting, go hand-in-hand. It is not only important to use gifts explicitly for the purposes for which they were given, it is also important to keep donors aware of how their gifts are impacting the organization. Failure to use women's gifts as they designate them or failure to communicate with women regarding the use of their gifts could lead to a premature end of a woman's interest in an organization.

The final step of stewardship is relationship nurturing. Grace (1991, as cited in Kelly, 1998) wrote that relationship nurturing "… lets people know on a regular basis that you care about them, respect their support, appreciate their gifts and want their interest and involvement." Interviews with gift solicitation experts indicate that in exchange for giving, men want recognition and status, while women want opportunities to stay informed about and involved with organizations to which they contribute. Women want close relationships with the organizations and opportunities to help shape their programs (Kaplan & Hayes, 1993). Shaw and Taylor's (1995) research also found that post-giving stewardship is crucial with women donors. Thanking and recognizing women properly, as well as keeping them aware of the ways their gifts are being used, created a level of accountability appreciated by most female donors.

According to the literature, asking questions can be an important aspect of relationship nurturing. In order to communicate with the quickly evolving female audience, fund raisers must be willing to reach out to their own donors and ask important questions to determine if their organization's program's offer women choices and positions of influence in areas that will allow women to make a difference. Development officers should also seek feedback from female donors regarding the clarity with which the organization's values are being communicated (Shaw & Taylor, 1995). Development officers should also continually reassess their programs and messages to be sure they are addressing issues their audiences find important (Shaw, 1993). One means of ensuring this is happening is to ask frequent questions. Shaw (1993) recommends fund raisers ask: "How do you see this organization? How do you see yourself relating to this project? Do you have any questions you would like to ask me? Is there any further information I can provide you?" Also, since the literature frequently mentions female donors' interests in education about the philanthropic process (Stone & Sublett, 1992), development officers might well nurture relationships with women by making educational opportunities available to them.

It is evident, then, that academic literature surrounding various aspects of donor relations with women supports this paradigm: proper stewardship of women should exemplify the building and maintaining of relationships prescribed by the relationship management paradigm. Generally, fund raisers utilize more time-consuming interpersonal relationship management techniques for raising major gifts and rely on increasingly less interpersonal techniques for increasingly smaller gifts. Raising major gifts from donors requires continual, finely tailored interpersonal relationship management including personal visits and phone calls, small group meetings and personalized proposals. Such interpersonal relationship management techniques should be heavily utilized in raising major gifts from the organization's small group of key prospects who, on average, donate about 60 percent of an organization's funds. However, efforts to generate masses of smaller annual gifts have been shown to be greatly enhanced by the implementation of interpersonal strategies, such as personalized direct mail, individual invitations to special events and phone-a-thons managed by members of the charitable organization's key constituencies. For example, donation solicitation calls made to a university's alumni by current students are often very effective.

A major contribution the application of the relationship management paradigm could make to improve donor relations would be to alter the means by which relational outcomes are measured. There is a great tendency among fund raisers to measure the success of donor relations by dollars raised. Relationship management diametrically opposes such evaluation and focuses instead on measuring success by examining four relational outcomes: trust, relational satisfaction, relational commitment and control mutuality, which is defined as the degree to which both parties agree about which of them should decide relational goals and behavioral routines. Achieving success in these four areas results in many more long-term benefits to organizations than simply securing a large gift (Grunig & Huang, 2000).

The Social Exchange Theory Applied to Donor Relationships

The social exchange theory (see figure 1) is based on the simple assumption that people tend to develop and maintain relationships in which profits are maximized. Relationships are maintained as long as rewards exceed costs but are terminated when costs are greater than rewards. To illustrate the traditional economic theory, a model has been developed and is illustrated on the next page. There are several terms used in conjunction with the social exchange theory when it is applied to interpersonal communication. The terms comparison level and comparison level for alternatives help explain how a person makes a relationship decision. A person enters a new relationship with a comparison level: a certain standard of behavior he or she expects from the other party and a general expectation of the types of rewards and costs the person expects to incur to maintain the relationship. The comparison level for alternatives is the level at which the person will stop tolerating costs higher than rewards. The CL-alt is often lessened, meaning the person will tolerate fewer costs over rewards, if the person has several equally attractive or more attractive options available to him or her. According to this model, relationship participants constantly compare their current relationship's costs and rewards to the imagined costs and rewards of other available relationships. This has many implications for donor relationships: donors must be happy and satisfied with all relational dimensions lest they seek out alternate recipients for their gifts. Fund raisers must monitor the CL of each individual donor and realize that an individual's CL can easily be altered if a more attractive offer is made to him or her (Thomlison, 2000).

Contemporary scholarship approaches philanthropy as a social exchange in that the act of making a gift benefits both parties, not just the recipient. Since foundations are

X *(Above CL: will remain, relationship exceeds expectations)*

CL ………………………………………X *(At CL: will remain, relationship meets expectations)*

X *(Below CL: will remain, but relationship not totally satisfying)*

CL alt ………………………………………………………………………………

X *(Below CL alt: will leave relationship)*

CL = Comparison Level
CL alt = Comparison Level for Alternatives
X = status of relationship at different times

FIGURE 1: SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY MODEL

Taken from p. 185 of Thomlison, T.D. (2000). An Interpersonal Primer with Implications for Public Relations. In J.A. Ledingham & S. D. Bruning (Eds.), *Public Relations as Relationship Management* (pp. 177-201). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

required by law to give away a certain percent of their net worth each year in order to retain their Internal Revenue Service 501c3 status, making a gift often benefits the donor as well as the receiver. Individual donors also benefit from making their gifts in that they derive a sense of personal satisfaction from making a donation and promoting a cause in which they believe. Lord advised fund raising practitioners to remember the implications of the social exchange theory in negotiating gifts. He warned that people "give in order to get" and that no one wants to feel that they are simply "giving away" money. Instead, donors want to feel they have invested wisely and as a result are connected to the organization (Kelly, 1998). Social exchange theory also prescribes that charitable organizations are accountable to both prospective and current donors, whose needs, wishes and ideas must be considered for fund raising to be effective over the long term.

Examining the Thanking and Informing Variables

Based on the preceding evaluation of existing knowledge about women as donors and on the application of the relationship management paradigm and the social exchange theory to the practice of donor relations, two variables have been identified as being worthy of further research: thanking and informing. Although several researchers have consistently touched upon these two variables, most drew conclusions from interviewing donors or development professionals. There do not appear to be quantitative studies addressing the implications of these variables with female donors. Therefore, this study has two purposes. The first purpose is to determine if female donors are more likely to make a repeat gift to an annual giving campaign when they are thanked interpersonally via a voice mail message, a handwritten letter, a phone call or a personal visit. This study also seeks to identify which of the aforementioned four methods of thanking donors are the most effective in generating repeat gifts and, specifically, larger gifts. The second purpose of this study is to determine if providing female donors very specific information regarding how philanthropic gifts are being used by the organization leads donors to give more frequently than when such information is not provided. Further, this study seeks to determine if the average gift for the group of donors who receive the additional information is larger than the average gift of the group of donors that did not.

The research questions examined by this study are then as follows:

The Thanking Variable

RQ 1: Were donors more likely to make a repeat annual gift in 2002 when an interpersonal contact was made to thank them for their 2001 gift?

RQ 2: Did the type of interpersonal contact made with the donors increase the likelihood of repeat gifts?

RQ 3: For donors who gave a repeat gift in fall 2002, did the amount of that gift increase, decrease or stay the same as compared to their fall 2001 gifts?

The Informing Variable

RQ 4: Was the overall response rate higher for the donors who received the research update along with their solicitation letter than for the donors who did not?

RQ 5: Was the average gift more for donors in the group that received the research update along with their solicitation letter than for the donors in the group that did not?

III. METHODOLOGY

Two separate samples were used by the researcher to conduct the two parts of this study: one examining the thanking variable and one examining the informing variable.

Examining the Thanking Variable

The quasi-experimental research method was employed to find answers to research questions 1-3. According to Babbie (2001), quasi-experiments differ from true experiments because of the lack of random assignment of subjects to the experimental and control groups. Subjects in this sample randomly fell into "method of thanking" categories based simply on their availability by phone; therefore, the researcher was unable to randomly assign them to various, same-sized groups. Consistent with Babbie's assertion that it is sometimes possible to find control groups that exist and appear to be similar to the experimental group, such a group existed for this sample. Donors who were not thanked in any way except with the standard thank-you letter that all donors received constitute the "control" group in this instance. Babbie acknowledges that although the quasi-experimental design is not without its flaws, the presence of a pseudo-control group allows the researcher to better compare the experimental group(s) performance.

Several types of statistical analysis were used to interpret the data and answer the first three research questions. For the first research question, a chi-square test of the cross-tabulation was used in order to determine if there was a statistically significant increase in the likelihood of a repeat gift in fall 2002 if donors were thanked interpersonally following their fall 2001 gift. A chi-square test was also run for the second research question to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the likelihood of a repeat gift in fall 2002 based on the type of interpersonal thanking method used in fall 2001. For the third research question, both an ANOVA analysis and a paired t-test were used to determine if there was a statistically significant increase in the amount of donors' fall 2002 gifts based on the type of interpersonal thanking method used in fall 2001.

The sample for the thanking variable consisted of 88 female breast cancer patients. In the fall of 2001, a solicitation letter requesting contributions to fund breast cancer research (see Appendix A) was mailed to each of 4,416 breast cancer patients who were treated at a major Midwestern medical and research institution. Several caveats standard to the institution's policies for developing solicitation mailing lists were observed in the development of this mailing list:

- Letters were mailed to all breast cancer patients seen at the institution for the preceding two calendar years with the exception of any patients seen for the first time in the immediately preceding six-month period.
- Letters were also mailed to all former patients – regardless of if they had been seen in the two-year period – who had made a gift to the institution's breast cancer research fund during that period. However, donors who had made or were in the process of making major gifts of $10,000 or more were excluded from the mailing as major gift officers were already working with them personally.
- Medicaid patients, deceased patients and patients who had in the past asked to be removed from fund-raising mailing lists were not mailed letters.

The letters bore the electronically scanned signature of the lead physician in the institution's Breast Cancer Care and Research Center. All solicitation letters were addressed to “The *Last Name of Patient* Family” and were mailed to home mailing addresses in an envelope bearing the name of the institution and the words “Office of Gift Development.” Each letter included the institution’s self-addressed, pre-paid giving envelope (see Appendix B) that was specially coded so that, when returned, the researcher would know that the gift was a result of the fall 2001 mailing.

The sample for research questions 1-3 is comprised of the 88 donors who responded to the mailing with gifts of $100 - $499. This range was selected because the experienced professionals in the development office believe that donors who gave in the $100 - $499 range are good prospects for repeat annual giving. Donors who gave $500 or more in response to the mailing were thanked personally by a major gift officer, and donors who gave less than $100 received the institution’s standard thank-you letter.

Each time a gift in the $100 - $499 range was received by the researcher in a coded envelope, donors automatically received a standard thank-you letter (see Appendix C) in the mail that included their mail-merged name, address and salutation and bore the electronically scanned signature of the author of the solicitation letter. Each of the 88 donors in this sample received that letter.

The researcher then began “interpersonally thanking” these 88 donors in an random fashion. Copies of all 88 gifts and the gift envelopes in which they were returned were placed in a pile and the researcher began attempting to call each donor on the phone. If no phone number was provided on the check or on the giving envelope, the researcher moved that name to the bottom of the pile. Two attempts were made to phone donors who provided their numbers before voice mail messages were left, thanking donors for their gifts and asking that they call the researcher, who was a development officer for the institution, if they had any questions. If a donor answered the phone call, all of which were placed during 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. business hours, the development officer simply thanked the donor for his or her gift and asked about the donor's experience at the institution. The development officer did not make any additional solicitations during the thank-you calls. If the donor was still having treatment at the institution and had an upcoming appointment, the development officer offered to meet the donor for a brief personal visit at that time. Handwritten notes were sent to a random sample of donors who did not have voice mail. The number of notes written was limited only by the time allocated to the officer to complete the thanking tasks.

Each time the researcher thanked a donor, a notation of the method of thanking was made on the copy of the gift envelope and check from that donor. For the purposes of coding contacts with donors, this rule was applied universally: when more than one contact was made with a donor, the most interactive one was counted on a scale that ranked voice mail messages, handwritten notes, phone conversations and visits in order of ascending interactivity. For example, if a phone call preceded a visit, the donor was coded for a visit. The donors who received the standard thank-you letter only become the control group for this study; all other donors became part of the four experimental groups based on the means by which they were thanked.

One year later, in the fall of 2002, a new annual appeal letter (see Appendix D) was mailed to each of the 88 donors in the sample above. Again, each letter included the institution's self-addressed, pre-paid giving envelope (see Appendix B). The responses from the 88 members of the sample to this mailing were then analyzed to determine the answers to the following research questions:

RQ 1: Were donors more likely to make a repeat annual gift in 2002 when an interpersonal contact was made to thank them for their 2001 gift?

The second research question breaks down this overarching question to allow the researcher to identify the methods of thanking donors that were the most effective in eliciting repeat giving.

RQ 2: Did the type of interpersonal contact made with the donors increase the likelihood of repeat gifts?

RQ 3: For donors who gave a repeat gift in fall 2002, did the amount of that gift increase, decrease or stay the same as compared to their fall 2001 gifts?

Examining the Informing Variable

The second variable examined by this study sought to determine how providing female prospects with specific information about how philanthropic gifts are utilized by the organization impacts female donors' desire to give as well as the size of their gifts. This portion of this study was completed using the traditional field experiment method. The random placement of subjects into the control versus experimental groups was carefully controlled by the researcher to avoid introducing bias into the study and to allow the two groups to be accurately compared and contrasted based on the variables introduced by the researcher (Babbie, 2001.) It is important to note that a new sample was used to test the informing variable and that samples used to test the informing variable and the thanking variable were entirely independent of one another.

For research question 4, simple mathematical operations were used such as determining the mean amount of the gifts given by the two groups (the group that received the research update and the group that did not) and the percentage of respondents. For research question 5, a t-test was utilized in order to determine if there was a significant difference between the average gift of the group who received the research update versus the average gift of the group that did not receive the research update.

In the spring of 2002, 4,146 breast cancer patients who were treated at a major Midwestern medical and research institution were mailed an annual appeal letter (see Appendix E) asking that they make a gift to the institution's breast cancer research fund. The sample of 4,146 was made up of two groups: 1) women who received the institution's fall 2001 solicitation letter but did not respond; and 2) women who were excluded from the fall sample because their initial visit had fallen within six-month period preceding the fall mailing but whose initial visit did not fall within the six-month period preceding the spring mailing. The selection of this group observed all the caveats applied to the first sample *(see p. 28).*

A random sample of half of the 4,146 was drawn by splitting the sample into two groups of 2,073 patients based on first letter of the first name of the patient. Care was taken to avoid a possible intervening variable of wealth correlating with last name (such as "Kennedy," for example) that could arise if the sample was divided by first letter of the last name of the patient. In addition to the solicitation letter, the first half of the group received a "clinical trial update" (see Appendix F). This research update, which was printed on pink paper to connote breast cancer awareness, detailed the asking institution's current breast cancer clinical trial research and explained that such research is supported by philanthropic funding such as was being requested. The second group of 2,073 patients did not receive the update and received the solicitation letter only. Different solicitation codes were pre-printed on the enclosed response envelopes for those who received the clinical trial update versus those who did not. Donors who gave in response to this mailing were called by the researcher, who inquired about the presence of the second pink sheet to assure that the envelopes were codes properly and consistently by the mail house. Giving responses to each set of mailings (with the clinical trial update and without) were analyzed.

RQ 4: Was the overall response rate higher for the donors who received the research update along with their solicitation letter than for the donors who did not?

RQ 5: Was the average gift more for donors in the group that received the research update along with their solicitation letter than for the donors in the group that did not?

IV. RESULTS

The Thanking Variable

The data generated by this portion of the study were coded into Microsoft Excel spreadsheets by the researcher. The spreadsheets were then spot-checked for coding accuracy by an individual not associated with the study. The data were interpreted through a variety of appropriate tests using the SPSS statistical analysis computer software program.

The methods of thanking the 88 donors in the thanking variable sample are categorized as follows in Table 1.

RQ 1: Were donors more likely to make a repeat annual gift in 2002 when an interpersonal contact was made to thank them for their 2001 gift?

No. The likelihood of a repeat gift in 2002 was not increased when an interpersonal contact was made in 2001. A chi-square test for this crosstabulation showed

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF FALL 2001 DONORS THANKED VIA EACH OF FIVE VARIOUS THANKING METHODS

Number of donors who gave $100 - $499	**88**
Number of donors thanked via standard letters only	34
Number of donors thanked via voice mail messages	12
Number of donors thanked via handwritten notes	6
Number of donors thanked via phone conversations	25
Number of donors thanked via personal visits	11

no significant difference in the likelihood of a repeat gift from the group that was interpersonally contacted versus the group that was not ($\chi^2 = 1.477$, df = 1, $p < .160$).

Table 2 shows that of the 88 donors in the sample, 52% (n = 46) made repeat gifts in the fall of 2002. Of the 54 who were thanked interpersonally (via a voice mail message, a handwritten note, a telephone conversation or a personal visit) following their fall 2001 gift, 57% (n = 31) gave a repeat gift in the fall of 2002. Of the 34 whose fall 2001 gift was acknowledged only via the standard thank-you letter, only 44% (n = 15) gave a repeat gift in fall 2002.

Stated another way, of the 46 repeat gifts that were given in fall 2002, 67.4% of those had been thanked interpersonally following their fall 2001 gifts while 32.6% were not.

RQ 2: Did the type of interpersonal contact made with the donors increase the likelihood of repeat gifts?

Due to the small sample sizes within each of the "methods of thanking" categories, it could not be statistically determined that one type of thanking method used

TABLE 2: LIKELIHOOD OF REPEAT GIFT IN FALL 2002

BASED ON CONTACT MADE FOLLOWING FALL 2001 GIFT

	Repeat Gift Made in 2002	No Repeat Gift Made in 2002	Total
Standard Thank-You Letter Only	15 (44.1%)	19 (55.9%)	34 (100.0%)
Alternative Form of Thanking	31 (57.4%)	23 (42.6%)	54 (100.0%)
Total	46 (52.3%)	42 (47.7%)	88 (100.0%)

$p < .05$

in fall 2001 was more likely to lead to a repeat gift in fall 2002. Therefore, the five methods of thanking were collapsed into three new categories: standard contact (thanked via standard letter only), one-way interpersonal contact (thanked either via voice mail or handwritten note) and two-way interpersonal contact (thanked either via phone conversation or personal visit). The data for the broader categories are shown in Table 3. When the data for these new categories were analyzed, it was found that $\chi^2 = 5.188$ with $p = .080$, which was not significant.

Because the standard and one-way interpersonal contacts appeared similar in the repeat gift response rates and appeared to be different than the two-way interpersonal

TABLE 3: FALL 2002 BREAST CANCER DONORS COLLAPSED INTO STANDARD, ONE-WAY INTERPERSONAL AND TWO-WAY INTERPERSONAL CONTACT LEVELS

Number of donors who gave $100 - $499	***88***
Standard Contact	
Number of donors thanked via standard letters only	34
Total Standard Contacts	**34**
One-Way Interpersonal Contact	
Number of donors thanked via voice mail messages	12
Number of donors thanked via handwritten notes	6
Total One-Way Interpersonal Contacts	**18**
Two-Way Interpersonal Contact	
Number of donors thanked via phone conversations	25
Number of donors thanked via personal visits	11
Total Two-Way Interpersonal Contacts	**36**

contact group, the two categories were collapsed together even further: standard and one-way interpersonal contact were collapsed together and two-way interpersonal contact remained independent. Table 4 shows the data collapsed in this way.

Analysis of this data allowed the researcher to determine if a phone conversation or a personal visit really made a significant difference in the likelihood of a repeat gift. As is shown in Table 5, of the 52 donors who were thanked via the standard or one-way interpersonal methods for their fall 2001 gift, about 42% (n = 22) gave again in fall 2002. Of the 36 donors who were thanked in a two-way interpersonal way for their fall 2002 gift, about 67% (n = 24) gave again in fall 2002. The chi square test showed this to be a significant difference ($\chi^2 = 5.059$, df = 1, $p < .021$).

TABLE 4: FALL 2002 BREAST CANCER DONORS COLLAPSED INTO STANDARD OR ONE-WAY INTERPERSONAL AND TWO-WAY INTERPERSONAL CONTACT LEVELS

Number of donors who gave $100 - $499	*88*
Standard or One-Way Interpersonal Contact	
Number of donors thanked via standard letters only	34
Number of donors thanked via voice mail messages	12
Number of donors thanked via handwritten notes	6
Total Standard or One-Way Interpersonal Contacts	**52**
Two-Way Interpersonal Contact	
Number of donors thanked via phone conversations	25
Number of donors thanked via personal visits	11
Total Two-Way Interpersonal Contacts	**36**

TABLE 5: LIKELIHOOD OF REPEAT GIFT IN FALL 2002 BASED ON

METHOD OF CONTACT MADE FOLLOWING FALL 2001 GIFT

	Repeat Gift Made in 2002	No Repeat Gift Made in 2002	Total
Standard/One-Way Interpersonal Contact	22 (42.3%)	30 (57.7%)	52 (100.0%)
Two-Way Interpersonal Contact	24 (66.7%)	12 (33.3%)	36 (100.0%)
Total	46 (52.3%)	42 (47.7%)	88 (100.0%)

$p < .05$

RQ 3: For donors who gave a repeat gift in fall 2002, did the amount of that gift increase, decrease or stay the same as compared to their fall 2001 gifts?

Analysis of changes in the amount of fall 2002 gifts after donors were thanked for their fall 2001 gifts showed that the type of thanking contact did not result in any significant changes in the overall amounts of the fall 2002 versus the fall 2001 gifts. An ANOVA test was used to compare the change in donation (gift 2 – gift 1) to determine if the change differed by contact and the test showed no significant difference ($F (2,43) = .575$, $p = .567$). In fact, the overall average of the fall 2001 gifts was $130 and the overall average of the fall 2002 gifts was just $3 less at $127.

Even when the data were collapsed into standard contact (standard letter only) versus interpersonal thanking contact (voice mail, handwritten note, phone conversation or personal visit) to determine if the change in donation from fall 2001 to fall 2002 differed by contact, neither the ANOVA test or the paired t-test showed a significant difference.

The Informing Variable

RQ 4: Was the overall response rate higher for the donors who received the research update along with their solicitation letter than for the donors who did not?

No. The overall response rate was the same for both experimental groups. As shown in Table 6, the number of responses for the two groups were identical: 51 out of 2,073 responded to both the solicitation with the research update and the solicitation without. Each mailing had an identical response rate of 2.5%.

RQ 5: Was the average gift more for donors in the group that received the research update along with their solicitation letter than for the donors in the group that did not?

No. A t-test showed that there was not a statistically significant difference in the average gift of the group who received the research update versus the group who did not. The average gift from the group that received the update was $131, while the average gift from the group that did not receive the update was $54 less at $77.

TABLE 6: RESULTS OF SPRING 2001 MAILING TO BREAST CANCER PATIENTS COMPARING SOLICITATION WITH INSERT TO SOLICITATION ALONE

Name of Mailing	Total Pieces Mailed	Total Number of Donors (Response Rate)	Total Amount Raised	Average Gift
Breast Cancer with Research Update	2,073	51 (2.5%)	$6,270.00	$131
Breast Cancer without Research Update	2,073	51 (2.5%)	$3,956.00	$77

V. DISCUSSION

The results of this study yielded interesting insights regarding how development officers can maximize relationships with female donors. Before discussing the results of this study, it is necessary to note how ideal this situation was for testing female giving. First, because it has been found that women like to give to “female” causes (Brilliant, 2000), asking female breast cancer patients to support breast cancer research allowed the women to express a personal value. Further, all the donors in the sample had a highly personal connection with the institution soliciting them in that they were all cancer patients at that center. Finally, because the peak age for the development of breast cancer begins after women are 50 years old (Storniolo, 2003), it can be assumed that the majority of women who were part of the samples for this study were baby boomers. This means these women are most likely in the time of greatest wealth in their lives and the time when they would be most likely to engage in philanthropic giving. This unique situation made for an excellent sample to test.

This study is very timely as the practice of health patient-based fund raising has been forever changed with the passage of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), a federal law that greatly limits the ability of fund raisers to access patient information for solicitation purposes (*Medical Privacy*). Specifically, this law prevents fund raisers from targeting patients with fund-raising messages based on the patient’s disease area unless a written, signed agreement is in place between the asking institution and the prospective donor. As of April 14, 2003, fund raisers can no longer legally access listings of patients and communicate with them using letters or research updates that discuss their specific diseases. This makes identifying new donors through the traditional annual giving campaigns much more difficult than it has been in the past and places premium value on existing donors. Although it has always been important to maximize every donor relationship, development officers now have far fewer means of accessing and engaging new donors and therefore must maximize every interaction with every donor. As the literature review clearly showed, many of these critical donors are women, making information about how to best communicate with female philanthropic donors highly valuable to development professionals.

The first variable tested in this study was the thanking variable. Although the results did not show a statistically significant difference in the likelihood of a 2002 repeat annual gift following an interpersonal contact thanking the donor for her 2001 gift, the examination of the first research question did show that 57% of women who were thanked interpersonally gave a repeat gift as compared to 44% of those who received only the standard thank-you letter. This 13% difference may not be statistically significant, but it is certainly significant to a development officer whose goal it is to acquire and retain new donors for a program. Since obtaining a repeat gift from a “old” donor is almost always a more successful, economical and cost-effective process than obtaining an entirely “new” donor, every repeat donor is critical. Further, one donor has the potential to make a huge financial impact on an organization, so statistical significance is not the only means of judging the importance of the 13% difference in repeat giving. In the post-HIPAA climate of fund raising, ensuring that patient donors become repeat donors is of utmost importance due to the aforementioned stringent guidelines the law places on procuring new donors from a patient database.

The data from the second research question clearly show that two-way interpersonal communication contacts – thanking donors via phone conversations and personal visits – yielded a statistically significant increase in the number of repeat annual gifts versus the other thanking methods. This is not surprising given that Grunig's (1984) public relations models and Kelly's (1995) parallel fund-raising models support that two-way communication is the most accurate and satisfying means of communicating for all involved parties. The literature further supports that two-way communication in regard to thanking is especially essential for female donors since they place premium value on being appropriately thanked for their gifts (Stone & Sublett, 1992). Although it is admittedly time-consuming for a development officer to call or visit donors and personally thank them, the increased rate of repeat giving that this study shows could result may well make such interpersonal thanking a wise use of an officer's time. Kelly (1998) writes that a common fund-raising principle is "the larger the gift, the more personal the communication," but this study supports the cost-effectiveness of translating that principle to at least a portion (in this study's case, donors who gave $100 - $499) of an organization's annual giving campaign. Again, it is almost always less expensive to cultivate an "old donor" whose linkage to the organization, interest in its mission and ability to give has already been shown than it is to grow a "new donor." Further, the opportunity to engage in two-way communication with a donor allows the officer a unique opportunity to strengthen that donor's relationship with the organization. During this time, the officer can strive, based on Stone and Sublett's (1992) research, to clarify gift use and express interest in a female donor's connection to the organization. Interaction during a phone call or visit also allows the officer to glean important information regarding a potential major gift or planned gift and react to any informational needs that the donor may have in regard to such endeavors. Based on the social exchange theory (Thomlison, 2000), such interaction can also allow the officer an opportunity to exceed the woman's comparison level for thanking. The research has already established that female donors have a higher baseline comparison level for appropriate thanking than do male donors(Stone & Sublett, 1992), so a personal communication of gratitude may have a huge impact on a female donor's level of relational satisfaction and therefore ensure that her philanthropic relationship with the institution continues.

The results for the third research question warrant further investigation to potentially support the establishment of a new paradigm in fund raising: thanking a donor in a highly interpersonal way may well lead to an increase in the incidence of repeat gifts, but such thanking methods do not lead to gifts of increased amounts. For example, the results of this study support that a $100 annual gift donor in year one may be more likely to give another $100 annual gift in year two if she is thanked in a highly interpersonal way following her year one gift, but she would not be likely to increase year two's gift amount to $150 or $200. This finding has a greater implication when it is paired with the findings for the second portion of this study: the informing variable. This study found that providing an increased amount of information about how the gift was used to female donors did not impact the overall response rate but did impact the overall average gift.

Kelly's (1998) assertion that the two essential factors in the cultivation process are information and involvement were clearly supported by this study. Every woman solicited met the involvement criteria as she had been or currently was a patient at the asking institution. The information criteria was simply and economically met by inserting the research update with the solicitation letter. Continuing to make the research updates available to women should effectively continue the cultivation process based on Stone and Sublett's (1998) finding that development professionals can cultivate continued giving from female donors by building trust and confidence over time through continued communication about gift use. Kelly (1998) also agreed that it is important to keep donors aware of how their gifts are impacting an organization.

Clearly, the data show that exactly the same number of donors responded to each of the two mailings that were part of the informing variable portion of the study (the solicitation with the clinical trial update and the solicitation without the update). Therefore, the inclusion of this extra information regarding the impact of philanthropy does not appear to motivate those who would not already be philanthropically inclined to make a gift. However, the results of this study did show that the presence of the research update providing additional information about gift use did create an increase in the amount of the gift – about $54 per gift in this case – and therefore gave the fund-raising effort more "bang for the buck." Although the examination of the data did not show this to be a statistically significant increase, it can be argued that, from a fund-raising standpoint, it is important nonetheless. For example, if a simple research update sheet added to a mailing motivated 500 donors to each increase their annual giving by $50, an organization would raise $25,000 more that year at virtually no increased fund-raising cost. It would appear, then, that a donor who is engaged in an organization's mission and is willing to give to that cause can be persuaded to give a larger gift when provided with information on how previous giving is making an impact. The literature supported this premise would be true among a female donor population, and this study further substantiates that assertion.

A second interesting point regarding the statistical insignificance of the $54 average gift increase can only be gleaned when one understands the reason statistical significance does not exist. The standard deviation is so great for the donors who received the solicitation with the research update that the increased annual gift was a result of just a few donors who gave comparatively larger gifts than the others in the sample. Although this negates statistical significance, it is actually helpful to the fund raiser because the donor who has made the larger gift has just self-identified as a potential major gift prospect.

The value of including the research update is further substantiated if the information sharing is viewed through the lens of the social exchange theory. As the literature review has firmly established, women expect to be informed about gift use. By consistently meeting this expectation on an annual basis through the inclusion of the research update in the annual mailing, the institution can keep its relationship with the donor above the comparison level for alternatives and, based on the model, prevent the women's philanthropic interests from turning to another organization (Thomlison, 2000).

Although the thanking and informing variables were tested separately using different samples, the overall results of the study brings the two variables together. This study has shown two things to be true:

- Thanking donors in a highly interpersonal way (through a phone call or personal visit) leads to an increased likelihood of repeat giving but not to increased gift size.

- Informing donors about the impact of previous philanthropy by including a research update along with the standard solicitation letter leads to an increased gift size but not to an increased response rate among those who would not be inclined to give anyway.

It would seem, then, that if these two variables were applied simultaneously and prospective donors were mailed research updates with their solicitations and then thanked via phone calls or visits for their gifts, the end result could be a great number of repeat annual gifts that are each larger in size. Ideally, if donors are first informed through the inclusion of a research update in their solicitation, they could then be engaged in two-way communication during the thanking process and the criteria for both variables could be met.

VI. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher actually attempted to test RQ 4 and RQ 5 on two separate samples: one that was split and mailed to in spring 2002 and one that was split and mailed to in fall 2002. However, the fall 2002 sample included many members of the spring 2002 sample who were actually being solicited for a repeat gift. A confounding variable was discovered in that some members of the fall 2002 sample who did not receive the clinical trial update may have, in fact, received the clinical trial update in the spring of 2002, and their recall of that document could have impacted their decision to make a fall 2002 gift. This confounding variable is intensified by the fact that end-of-year solicitations (such as the fall 2002 one in question) do generally have higher response rates because philanthropic giving traditionally increases at the end of the calendar year. The fall 2002 data were therefore thrown out. The study should be repeated in the future when the confounding variable can be eliminated.

VI. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

One suggestion for future research would be to conduct a study parallel to this one with a sample of male donors, such as prostate cancer patients. The results of such a study could be compared to the female donor study to determine if there are significant male versus female differences in the methods of thanking donors that lead to larger and/or repeat gifts and in the way that information about gift use impacts giving.

A second, more longitudinal study that could be conducted in the future would test the effect of keeping those donors who do not make repeat gifts informed of gift use anyway. In other words, continue to send the research update to former patients who made a gift at one time but who have stopped responding to other solicitations. This suggestion is based on Stone & Sublett's (1992) assertion that "cultivating women through continued communication over time is essential because although women will give initially based on their perception of an organization and its effectiveness, trust and confidence must be cultivated for additional gifts to be made." One highly economical means of continuing this cultivation would be to utilize e-mail to disseminate clinical trial/gift use updates. If gift vehicles began requesting e-mail addresses from donors at the time of the initial gift, future research updates to non-repeat donors could be e-mailed to them. If a link to the organization's online giving site was included with this e-mail, some donors might choose to make a repeat gift at that time.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

FALL 2001 BREAST CANCER SOLICITATION LETTER

October 3, 2001

The LAST NAME Family
ADDRESS
ADDRESS

Dear LAST NAME Family,

How do you stop a breast cancer tumor from growing? Through the generosity of donors, our laboratory began exploring this simple concept six years ago.

One answer to this question is clear to our breast cancer researchers at the Indiana University Cancer Center. For some patients with advanced breast cancer, a new drug (anti-VEGF) that stops blood vessels from forming around the tumor actually reduces the growth and stops the spread of the tumor. For one patient participating in our drug study, the answer is profound: **Cancer that spread to her lungs two years ago has been arrested.**

For two years, this compound has been used to treat patients with advanced breast cancer at the Indiana University Cancer Center. **Because of promising results, we have taken a leadership role in a major nationwide study.** Our goal is to shepherd this compound through pivotal clinical trials so that ***all*** women with advanced breast cancer have access to this promising therapy.

We learned another important lesson, too. Your contribution to support breast cancer research at the Indiana University Cancer Center creates a dynamic partnership that fuels new research!

Please make a gift to help us move more research concepts from laboratory science to patient solutions. Thank you. Every penny will be used to develop better treatments for women with breast cancer.

Sincerely,

George W. Sledge, M.D.
Director, Breast Cancer Research Laboratory

P.S. Please make your gift payable to: IUCC Breast Cancer Research.

APPENDIX B

GIVING ENVELOPE

No gift is too small.
All gifts are appreciated.

Please make my contribution a tribute gift.

❍ In Honor ❍ In Memory

please print tribute name here

Thank you. **Your gift supports progress in cancer research.**

❍ $100 ❍ $500 ❍ $1000 ❍ $5000 ❍ Other ________

Your name ________

Your address ________

City, State, Zip ________

Your phone number ________

❍ Visa ❍ Mastercard ________ ________

Gift Amount *Credit Card Signature*

Credit Card Number *Expiration Date*

Please make your check payable to: *IU Foundation - IU Cancer Center.*

Please acknowledge my tribute gift to:

Name ________

Address ________

Your gift is tax deductible. For more information about giving to IU Cancer Center, please contact Mary Maxwell at (800) 643 6975 or mmaxwell@iupui.edu

INDIANA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

APPENDIX C

STANDARD THANK-YOU LETTER MAILED TO ALL DONORS WHO RESPONDED TO FALL 2001 BREAST CANCER SOLICITATION LETTER

April 22, 2003

The LAST NAME Family
Address
Address

Dear LAST NAME Family,

Thank you for joining with the breast cancer team at the Indiana University Cancer Center to support a vigorous research program. Your gift of AMOUNT supports the development of new therapies for women with metastatic breast cancer.

We strive to be a leading clinical program in the nation, but we believe that academic-based cancer centers must do more. Our goal is to complement our clinical strength with research for better treatments for patients whose cancer cannot be cured with standard therapy.

Thank you for your generous gift of financial support for our breast cancer research program. You are making a world of difference by stimulating new research that will lead to better treatments.

Sincerely,

GW Sledge Jr MD

George W. Sledge, M.D.
Director, Breast Cancer Research Program

APPENDIX D

FALL 2002 BREAST CANCER SOLICITATION LETTER

DATE

The LAST NAME Family
ADDRESS
ADDRESS

Dear LAST NAME family,

Philanthropy has taken breast cancer research at the IU Cancer Center to new heights. In the past year, **three new investigators have joined our breast cancer care and research team** and are now working with us discovering better ways to treat breast cancer. **As our team continues to grow, so does our need for your financial support.**

Our new team members are working on several exciting research projects:

- **Linda Malkas, Ph.D., Vera Bradley Chair in Oncology**, is credited with discovering that the "replication machine" in cancer cells shares a common "broken cog." Since moving to IU with her husband, **Robert Hickey, Ph.D.**, and their staff of 10 scientists, Dr. Malkas has been working with us **to develop cancer therapies that target only cells with the broken cog and leave healthy cells alone**.

- **Sharon Soule, M.D.,** is the newest member of our treatment team. She works closely with Dr. Malkas examining changes that occur in cancer cells during chemotherapy or radiation. Dr. Soule is currently managing a clinical trial **testing a new drug that breaks down the scaffolding of cancer cells as they divide and grow**.

- **Sunil Badvi, M.D.,** is a breast cancer pathologist who will focus on using samples of a woman's cancer cells to determine **which therapies will be most effective** in treating her cancer.

Your contribution to the Indiana University Cancer Center fuels innovative research in the treatment of breast cancer. **Please join our team by supporting breast cancer research at the IU Cancer Center.** Your gift makes progress possible!

Thank you for your gift!

Sincerely,

George W. Sledge, M.D.
Ballvé-Lantero Chair in Oncology
Director, Breast Cancer Research Laboratory

P.S. Checks should be made payable to *IUCC Breast Cancer Research*. **Your contribution will be used to develop better breast cancer treatments.**

APPENDIX E

SPRING 2002 BREAST CANCER SOLICITATION LETTER

April 5, 2002

The LAST NAME Family
ADDRESS
ADDRESS

Dear LAST NAME Family,

Breast cancer researchers at the Indiana University Cancer Center ask – and answer – important questions everyday. Your gift makes this possible. **Please make a gift to support our search for the answers.**

Our breast cancer researchers are seeking the answers to your questions.

- ***Why doesn't chemotherapy kill all cancer cells?*** Cells that are resistant to treatment are now being targeted with improved therapies. Our researchers are leading a study to test a new drug that "tricks" even drug-resistant cancer cells into absorbing it.

- ***Can scientists diagnose cancer before a tumor develops?*** IUCC researchers are looking at early molecular changes that occur when cells become cancerous. One of the goals of the Catherine Peachey Breast Cancer Prevention Program's research team is to develop improved diagnostic markers and more highly targeted treatments.

- ***Why does chemotherapy have such terrible side effects?*** Our researchers are using knowledge gleaned from the human genome project to understand subtle differences in breast cancers and to develop targeted treatments that have virtually no side effects.

Your contribution to the Indiana University Cancer Center fuels cutting-edge research in the treatment and prevention of breast cancer. **Please make a gift to our breast cancer program.**

While many questions remain, what is known is that the answer to cancer will be found through research. **Thank you for your gift!**

Sincerely,

George W. Sledge, M.D.
Director, Breast Cancer Research Laboratory

P.S. Checks should be made payable to *IUCC Breast Cancer Research*. Your contribution will be used to develop better treatments for women with breast cancer.

APPENDIX F

SPRING 2002 BREAST CANCER CLINICAL TRIAL UPDATE

Indiana University Cancer Center
Breast Cancer Clinical Trial Update

Laboratory studies are extremely beneficial in determining the efficacy of new drugs. When a new drug shows promise in the laboratory, Indiana University investigators are encouraged to proceed with clinical studies to determine the safety and effectiveness of the drug in cancer patients. Translational researchers - those who are laboratory scientists as well as clinical caregivers - bring new drugs to the forefront of treatment. They have the unique perspective of linking what they learn from their patients in the clinic to laboratory studies aimed at solving problems.

At any time, about 7-10 new compounds are being investigated in the laboratories of the IU Cancer Center, and an equal number are being tested in clinical trials with IUCC patients.

Breast cancer researchers at the Indiana University Cancer Center continue to take a national leadership role in the study of new drugs that inhibit blood vessel development in and around breast tumors and therefore starve the tumor, a process called anti-angiogenesis. Five clinical trials of new anti-angiogenic therapies will be active at the IU Cancer Center in 2002.

- *Avastin* is now being tested in Phase III clinical trials that will accrue 685 breast cancer patients nationally. IU was the site for the initial use of this drug in Phase I and Phase II studies and has demonstrated considerable leadership in the national trial, which was designed by IU translational researcher Dr. Kathy Miller.

- The first-ever use of *Panzem* was recently investigated in two Phase I trials at the IUCC.

- IU investigators have designed a study that will examine the safety aspects of extended use of a new anti-angiogenic agent for women who have just learned they have breast cancer. The IU study is a precursor for a several-thousand-patient national trial that will seek to determine if the drug decreases cancer recurrences and improves survival rates.

- A Phase II study of another anti-angiogenic compound never before used to treat breast cancer will be open to patients in two locations: the IUCC in Indianapolis and a clinic in Barcelona, Spain. The trial is expected to start in early May.

- An anti-angiogenic agent that is showing promise in reducing blood cell formation and in inhibiting tumor cell growth is expected to enter Phase II trials for breast cancer patients at IU.

Information provided by Kathy Miller, MD. Spring 2002.

VITA

Amber M. Kleopfer was born in Madison, Indiana, on March 2, 1978. She was raised in Hanover, Indiana, and attended Southwestern-Jefferson County schools until 1996, when she graduated salutatorian of her high school class. Kleopfer then attended the University of Evansville in Evansville, Indiana, where she majored in mass communication and interpersonal communication. While a student at UE, Kleopfer was invited to present original research at two conferences. In the spring of 1999, she presented her gender communication study that attempted to assess and differentiate between nonverbal characteristics college-aged men desire in short-term versus long-term relationships at the Southern States Communication Association Conference. In the spring of 2001, her research that explored the listening capabilities of the human fetus and the effects of this early communication on infants and children was presented at the International Listening Association Conference. Kleopfer graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor of science degree from the University of Evansville in May 2000.

Kleopfer was a fellow and graduate assistant at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, from August 2000 to December 2001. She was named the College of Communications Master's Student of the Year for 2000-2001.

Currently, Kleopfer is employed by the Indiana University Cancer Center, where she is a gift development officer. She plans to begin work on her doctorate in philanthropic studies at Indiana University in August 2004.