



# United Way Newsletter

**Perspectives**  
Consulting Group

## In This Issue

Focus on Exceeding Donor Expectations

June 2009

Look at this Book: Focus: The Future of Your Company Depends on It

### Focus on Exceeding Donor Expectations

### Useful Link



*In order to focus donors on your United Way, you must first focus your efforts on your donors. Exceed donor expectations by thanking them and keeping them informed.*

From our experience in working with United Ways, we have

discovered ways for you to grow your donor base by exceeding expectations in the following ways:

- Communicate what has been accomplished with donor contributions
- Inform donors of how contributions have been used effectively
- Thank your donors
- Ask your donors to give at the right time

### Nonprofits Help Donors Choose, Spend Wisely

Read [here](#) about how some nonprofits are leading an effort to identify which organizations give the most bang for the buck.

### Featured Articles

At Perspectives Consulting Group, we have conducted over 60 studies for United Ways that have focused on approaches to increase campaign contributions, understanding and exceeding donor expectations. From these studies, over 50 percent of donors want to be contacted more than once a year, which includes wanting to be notified about the impact that their contributions have made.

Statistically, communicating the impact of a donor's contribution is the most important factor. Increasing the percentage of donors who say that their expectations are exceeded, by knowing the impact of their contributions, results in a proportional increase in the percentage of donors who increase their contributions.

Donors are more likely to say that their overall giving experience was better and that expectations were exceeded, if your United Way is communicating the impact of donor contributions. Whether you decide to include an insert with a thank you note about the positive impact that contributions have made, or post more information on your Web site about where donations are going and keeping the focus on how it is helping locally, donors will be more likely to give to your United Way over other organizations.

A common misconception about United Way is that since it is a national organization, many people believe their contributions only help out on a national level and that donations go toward staff and the organization, instead of making a difference locally. It is very important to make sure your donors know that their contributions are staying in the local community and are aware of how they are making a difference, so that they trust your United Way.

Be sure to make your donors feel appreciated and let them know that their contributions are making a difference in your local community. If you exceed donor expectations by thanking them and keeping them informed, donors are more likely to think of your United Way when they decide to donate to an organization.

For more information on how Perspectives Consulting Group can provide research that will help your United Way exceed donor expectations, contact Melissa Demetriou at (800) 724-9994.

**Look at this Book:  
Focus: The Future of Your Company Depends on It**

## The Art of Recognizing and Thanking Your Donors

Donors want to see what their contributions allowed you to accomplish. Read about thanking your donors [here](#).

## Helping Donors Make Wise Choices

Read [here](#) about ideas that might help make the giving experience a success for both you and your donors.

## Words of Wisdom

"Goals provide the energy source that powers our lives. One of the best ways we can get the most from the energy we have is to focus it. That is what goals can do for us; concentrate our energy."

*-Denis Waitley*

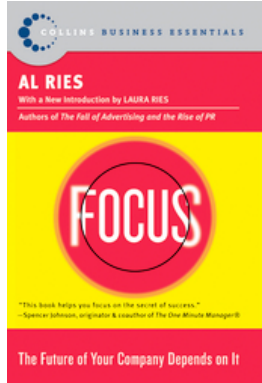
## United Way CD-ROM



A resource developed specifically for United Ways.

The CD-ROM includes all of the information about Perspectives Consulting Group: who we are and what we do. Request a copy of our United Way CD-ROM by e-mailing

By Gary M. Goscenski, Director of Consulting Services



It may appear odd to recommend a book with the phrase "the future of your company depends on it" in the title, but the lessons taught by the author Al Ries are just as applicable to United Ways as they are to corporate America.

At the simplest level, the book attempts to prove the argument that less is more. The premise is that narrowing the focus of your organization will result in greater success than

trying to be all things to all people. All of the examples in the book are from the business world - most are from the automotive, technology and food industries. Since the book was first published in 1996, the examples are now somewhat dated, although they still make valid points.

The logical extension of this argument is that a United Way should not be trying to get everyone to donate to or volunteer at their organization, but rather to develop relationships with donors that are deeper in commitment of time and money. If a United Way offers too many programs or services, it loses its sense of direction - its mission statement loses its meaning.

To achieve focus, it is necessary for the organization to own a word in the prospect's mind that defines the category. Ries offers countless examples in the book such as how Volvo owns the word "safety," Heinz owns the word "ketchup," and Campbell's owns "canned soup." Ries suggests that your organization may be the leader in your category, but that may have no meaning to the customer. He states it is not leadership that matters, but the word that you own in the prospect's mind.

The book provides guidelines and tips for developing a focus for your organization. Perhaps the most controversial, but also most helpful for a United Way, is that focus needs an enemy. Most nonprofits do not think of other nonprofits competing for donations and time as "the enemy." However, when donors look at charitable organizations, and evaluate how to make a difference with their limited time and dollars, there will most certainly be a couple of winners and many more losers. An organization that recognizes how other charities are positioned in the minds of donors will benefit in developing an effective focus.

Ries concludes that focus is the art of carefully selecting your category and then working diligently in order to get yourself categorized. It is not a trap to avoid; it is a goal to achieve.

[ksylvester@perspec.com](mailto:ksylvester@perspec.com) or call (800) 724-9994 to see how Perspectives Consulting Group can help your United Way.



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Source: Ries, Al. *Focus: The Future of Your Company Depends on It*. Collins Business. 2005.

## About Perspectives Consulting Group, Inc.

We are dedicated to our mission of providing information and planning that make the difference for United Ways. We use state-of-the-art market research techniques including telephone and mail surveys, interviews, and focus groups to obtain the necessary information to make effective decisions to plan for the future. We would be pleased to share our experiences working with other organizations and discuss how we can help your United Way make informed decisions and plan for continued success.

Sincerely,



Melissa Demetriou  
Consultant

Perspectives Consulting Group, Inc.  
100 W. Big Beaver Rd.  
Suite 200  
Troy, MI 48084  
(800) 724-9994  
[www.perspec.com](http://www.perspec.com)

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Perspectives Consulting Group | P.O. Box 496 | Paw Paw | MI | 49079