



Wilson College Drives in 10% Response Rate for Fundraising Campaign

Case Study



Case Study: Wilson College drives in 10% response rate through multichannel fundraising campaign

- Project:** Wilson Fund Annual Giving Campaign
- Vertical Market:** Education
- Business Application:** Fundraising via multi-channel marketing utilizing print and web based marketing
- Description:** Creative design and copywriting for direct mail appeal and email campaign
- 8.5" x 11" personalized letter (2 versions: regular mailing and Pines and Maples- which was for larger donations)
 - Brochure: 8.5" x 5.5", 6 panel, 23.375 x 5.5 flat • Wallet Envelope with enclosed form (#9 BRE)-QR code included to drive reader online. Letters personalized with recipient data.
 - Multiple email touches incorporating look of printed piece along with consistent messaging and images
 - Point of contact: Pamela V. Lambert, Director of Development
 - Wilson College





Wilson College is a small women's liberal art college located in Chambersburg, PA. Each year they go out to alumni to ask for money for the Wilson Fund. The fund helps provide money to the college for students, studies, enhancements etc. The college is filled with 143 years of tradition and has a long rich history that stays with the women that attend the college. The fund helps many women attend that would not be able to without the support of the fund. The goal this year was to increase the number of donations by helping alumni connect with their past at Wilson and see what their donation can do for the future.

Business Objectives:

Drive in revenue for the annual Wilson Fund. Reinforce importance of donations via dialogue with alumni to understand the results of giving every year.

Results:

Wilson had 10% of recipients donate to the fund with an average gift of \$344.39



Campaign Architecture

- The campaign focused on the theme “Give every year. Make a difference every day.”
- There were 3049 brochures/letters mailed out
- The brochure was mailed to people that had given in the last five years
- There were 322 people that made donations to the Wilson Fund
- After the initial mailing there were five targeted email follow ups reaching out to those that had not responded to the initial direct mail campaign
- The emails were consistent in look and feel to the direct mail component
- The campaign brought in \$106,415 dollars

Traditionally Wilson had mailed out personalized letters and business return envelopes for the annual fund. This time around they hired HBP along with our marketing division, Ellipse Design, to create a look and feel that would provide an emotional appeal and a creative template that could be used throughout the campaign to drive home the message of “Give every year. Make a difference every day.”

Our creative team at Ellipse put together a brochure that reinforced the theme by showcasing current students and telling a story of how the dollars given to the fund help today’s students. The look and feel was then used repeatedly on all web based touches. The expectation will be that the look and feel of the campaign that was developed will continue to be used in future campaigns and build upon itself with stories and memories.

The brochure also included a QR code that took recipients directly to the secure giving page.

Wilson College was very pleased with the results and credits a few reasons:

- Brochure provided an emotional appeal by tying students with alumni and great photographs to showcase the college and its current students
- The messaging throughout the campaign was consistent, targeted and relevant to alumni



- After the initial direct mail piece went out there were 5 email follow ups that were closely aligned with the look and feel of the direct mail components
- Within the emails they used the concept of “complete the picture” by putting in a blank space where certain images had been used throughout the campaign showing what their dollars were doing
- Tying in the QR code on the brochure provide an immediate way for alumni to respond
- **Understanding that the average response rate for education fundraising campaigns is typically around 2.1%, Wilson realized their 10% response exceeded most direct mail campaigns.**

Summary

Wilson College set out with a goal to increase the amount of alumni that gives to the college every year. They were able to appeal to alumnae in an emotional way that helped them feel reconnected to the school and what it is doing for students. They included quotes from previous students and current students to help bring the groups together and the images included gifts that alumnae had donated in previous years as well as action photos of students in various stages of active learning.

The result was that they realized an increase in both responses and in dollars given. Incorporating multi touches via email after the direct mail campaign helped keep the campaign active and visible for all to see and continue to give even after the first donation.

The next opportunity Wilson has is to also connect with their students obtaining degrees via their adult education program. This is a growing audience for Wilson and has the potential to increase the dollars raised each year significantly. Wilson would target the campaign to both men and women and develop messaging that would resonate with this very different audience.