

Telemarketing – The Christian Appalachian Project

The Christian Appalachian Project is an interdenominational, non-profit Christian organization committed to serving people in need in Appalachia by providing physical, spiritual and emotional support through a wide variety of programs and services.

CAP has worked with Telemarketing firms for a number of years. We have maintained an overall average of 70% retention and depending on the job it can be as high as 80%. Close supervision is maintained by CAP to ensure that we have control over the scripts. We personally meet and talk with the callers before each job. We discuss the philosophy behind our calling and answer questions from the callers. Our present vendor has shown an interest in our organization beyond the normal vendor/client relationship. They are committed to our cause.

Telemarketing Jobs:

1. This year we used the phone to call a limited number of our donors to say “Thank You”. It was well received and added a personal touch that cannot be done through the mail.
2. Operation New Hope Campaign - This campaign funds Cap’s housing program. It is a combination mail/telemarketing campaign. The telemarketing adds a personal contact to 30,000 of our best donors (multiple givers, \$50 +). This program is expected to raise \$1,000,000 + each year. We feel that the telemarketing is a must in order for this campaign to be successful. In order to raise this type of money through a mail only campaign we would have to mail at least 600,000 donors.
3. Operation Relief - This campaign funds emergency relief. This year CAP has been involved in flood relief. We tested a Telemarketing only campaign and a mail only campaign. Telemarketing allowed us to be in touch with our donors within 2 days. A quick turn around on the response. The mail campaign took 3+ weeks to begin receiving responses. When time is of the essence and help is needed immediately, the phone is the best method of getting immediate help. We have found that email does not work as well since only a small portion of our file has email addresses.
4. Monthly Donor Club – This is a sustainer program. We call our low-end donors (\$10-\$25 MRG< 0-24 months) who are giving multiple gifts. We try to convert them to our monthly giving club. The phone allows any questions about the program to be answered immediately, thus, allowing them to make immediate decisions. The mail would not be as successful. We have found that when questions go unanswered or have to be answered via mail, you stand a greater chance of not getting that commitment. This commitment saves CAP for several reasons: 1. We have usually upgraded the contribution. 2. We no longer have to mail these people; they are taken out of the regular mail program resulting in less expense for mailing. This is an important program to CAP and we are presently looking at ways to grow the program, which includes the usage of telemarketing.

5. Lapsed Donors - This serves two purposes: It allows us to reactivate people that for some reason have stopped giving to our organization. It also provides us with a list of donors that we would have had to rent or exchange. Our expires reactivate at a rate of 2.5% which is better than we are acquiring in our acquisition program. It has been successful. The phone allows personal contact and it also allows us to answer questions and find answers as to what we did wrong or right with these people.

CAP has a database file that has close to two million names. We have approximately 600,000 active names. It costs us approximately \$250,000 to produce a housefile mailing. This includes all expenses. With a 10% response rate on each mailing, it would take years to get a response from 90% of the file. I do not think it would be possible to get a response from everyone. The amount of money spent in trying to accomplish this task would be prohibitive. It would certainly damage our programs, as the moneys would have to come from that area to fund the mailings. At the present time CAP puts 84.2% of all funds raised into our programs.

We exist to help the less fortunate people of Appalachia, most of whom have missed sharing in the American dream. I grew up in Appalachia; I was one of those children that we help on a daily basis. We are a good charity and we do a great deal of good for our people. We pride ourselves on the fact that we spend the money of our donors wisely.