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# Nonprofit Strategies



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

## How to build a donor list

By Barry VanderKelen

Every nonprofit is concerned about finding new donors. The additional revenue new donors provide allows an organization to fulfill more of its mission.

Finding those people, however, is an ongoing challenge.

One way to find prospective donors is to hold a special event.

A popular event is to hold a raffle or other drawing. Every entrant must provide basic information in case his or her ticket is drawn for a prize.

Compiling a data base of people who purchased tickets would create a list of prospective donors.

There are three reasons people participate in events: a friend or colleague asks them to buy a

ticket; the use of the proceeds is important; and the event looks like fun.

But purchasing a ticket does not reveal which reason motivated the buyer. This is why nonprofits must follow-up with a letter, phone call or email.

Special events are marketing activities and the purpose of marketing is to get someone to buy something or act somehow in the best interest of the organization.

Event ticket buyers are expressing a desired behavior. If you can get them to do it again or do something in addition, you will have a new donor engaged in your organization.

Compiling a data base of all of information captured on ticket stubs is tedious.

But the information is invaluable especially because these people have already supported your organization by buying a ticket.

One reason that more nonprofits do not take the time to build such a list is because once the event is over, volunteers and staff focus on the next event or activity.

Before holding a raffle or other drawing, be sure to complete the necessary filings with state and local government agencies.

Ticket buyers will know the event will be held fairly and that you are paying attention to details.

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### Resource Use

- Support nonprofit leadership
- Board development/training
- Strategic planning

### Nonprofit Business Column of *The Tribune*

Barry VanderKelen, Executive Director of the San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation writes a bi-weekly column to help strengthen nonprofit organizations in the community.

*The Tribune* publishes the column every other week in the Business section.

Each column is reprinted as a one-page handout for use by local organizations. Barry can be reached at 543-2323 or by e-mail at [barry@sloccf.org](mailto:barry@sloccf.org).