

"Old Boys' support has always been the lifeblood of our College Bursary Program and we need your donations STAT!

I'm in, join in!"

**Dr Anthony Crombie – Surgeon
GT 1996**



Savvy Secrets behind on-line Giving Days

After completing two annual on-line giving days at my now former school, St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace (Terrace), Brisbane, I was honoured to present on this topic at the New Zealand Chapter Conference. Here are a few tips from that session.

- 1. Giving days are the 'Uber' disrupter of Annual Giving** - they are convenient, exciting and effective because they 'gameify' giving and provide immediate gratification. Gone are the days of expensive mail outs and/or multiple broadcast emails and reminders then hoping/praying/waiting for a response! BUT beware, they are not the silver bullet. I see them as part of a short-term program (i.e. banked within 12 months) and not a medium-term program (2-5 year campaign pledges) just like I wouldn't see them as a long-term program (5+ year bequests).
- 2. Aligning perceptions with reality** - every institution I've worked for has had a massive gap between the perception of who donates and how much they ACTUALLY donate compared to reality. Both in the participation rate and amount. Alumni are always perceived to be giving more and it's presumed that parents are only capable of giving less. A Giving Day puts the facts right there in front of us all. While you can remain anonymous, the fact is there was 'X' donated by 'Y' donors. No matter what those numbers are "we" have the opportunity to celebrate what "we've" achieved in one magnificent day. The added benefit is that it will seed others for next year as people talk about the event - pre, during and post.
- 3. Set scary objectives** - in the first year, our goals were to create an avenue for the Old Boys' Association and the College's Foundation to collaborate to inspire alumni to donate. We aimed to generate new donors of all ages and sizes. We decided to raise funds towards 'our bursary boys' and use the opportunity to clarify misconceptions

around the difference between a scholarship and bursary (i.e. financial need). Our goal was \$100,000 and we had three matching donors willing to go up to \$75,000 so every \$1 = \$4 but believe me, the other \$25,000 was scary as it was equivalent to 50% of funds raised the year before ... not in one day and we had 44 days from approval until Giving Day! It is achievable.

- 4. Be secure enough in your own brand to be YOU** - while it's important to explain to your community what and how a Giving Day works, especially in the first year, beyond that it's essential to inject as much of your unique community as possible. At 144 years old, Terrace is one of the oldest schools in Australia and a member of the prestigious GPS Association but proudly charges one of the lowest fees based on its Christian Brother heritage. It's an elite school that isn't elitist and felt secure enough in itself to have fun with its approach while also highlighting and celebrating the diversity of its Old Boy career pathways and all very tongue in cheek!
- 5. Finding your 'Matchers' and 'Characters'** - Your largest immediate past donors to the same cause (ie building or bursary fund) will love the idea that if they are willing to 'do the same again' but as a 'matcher' then their gift will be leveraged to have more impact and warm the hearts of smaller donors that they are 'such a generous soul'. Your characters must be diverse but most importantly very well-known, respected and much-loved. Who are the 'characters' in your community that people just can't resist to view, like, share and support, especially reading a 'cheesy' quote from them? Don't forget your mascot too.
- 6. How did THAT happen!** (logistics) - We hit \$100,000 in 89 minutes and finished up with \$209,187. This year our goals were \$300,000 with \$150,000 from six matchers and with participation from 350+ donors. After only 8 hours we reached \$300,000 and by the end \$337,819

from 353 donors. The clips and social media over the two years received more than 44,000 views, clearly resonating with that community. There's now anticipation as people recommend characters for next year and/or look forward to who lends their support with a cheesy "I'm in!" because it's become a tradition, it's part of the culture, the culture of philanthropy.

7. What we learned (metrics and more) - the 2018 Annual Giving donations increased by 271% with a further increase of 62% this year. Last year 47% of Giving Day donors were giving their first gift EVER to Terrace and this year a further 34%. But here's the fantastic aspect. Our Giving Day approach captured the participation of young alumni like nothing I've ever seen because they see their immediate impact and group action. In 2018, 19% of donors graduated 10 years ago or LESS, even better is that 14% were five years or less (I call them 'B.O.Bs', Baby Old Boys). Our 2019 figures grew to 24% from 10 years or less with 20% being B.O.Bs. However, this year Giving Day was promoted to the entire school community where all donors who weren't an Old Boy had to 'adopt a class' and many of the current parents adopted the B.O.Bs. Again, a great tradition!

8. No budget means being resourceful! - I asked the school photographer, Kirby Studio, to donate their skills to film and edit the clips and to minimise his time we 'recreated' each workplace on campus and shot them all in two and a half hours. My favourites are the Pilot walking into the Airport Lounge (i.e. the Staffroom) and the Surgeon scrubbing in (i.e. a disabled toilet) both shown above! This year we had to do two offsite but again all donated. The two enormous trophies for the Class with Highest Participation and the Class with the Highest Amount Raised, were provided at cost by the school trophy supplier.

9. WARNING don't save money here - Both years we partnered with Charidy because they specialise in on-line Giving Days, provide a systemised and templated approach, and they support and run all of the technology required for a percentage of donations. After year one ran so smoothly, it was raised at a Board meeting that perhaps the school IT could run this aspect for free? I managed to convince them that it was best to have it outsourced to ensure no technical difficulties. Thankfully we did, because thirty minutes before Giving Day went live this year the perfect storm hit - internet and all phones cut for at least 'a few hours'. We had some B.O.Bs volunteer to make some calls so I asked a staff member to cancel them as I grabbed my laptop, ran up the road to a hotel and managed to send out all 7,000 'we are live emails' which took three and a half hours!

So, in summary, no time and no budget? No worries, give these ideas a try! Lastly, yet most importantly, I share my daily mantra with you, focus on being "brave, not perfect" (Reshma Sanjani).

I write this from my new school in preparation for our first Giving Day which will be aligned with Valedictory giving. From approval to Giving Day will be 12 days with no budget so watch this space!

Update: Our goal was \$200,000 and we received \$226,050 from 359 donors. #braveNOTperfect



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*"A bursary provides a boy
with the opportunity to 'fly',
then the sky's the limit!*

I'm in, join in!"

**Andrew Backstrom - Pilot
GT 1985**

