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STUDY OF UNIVERSITY DONOR RECOGNITION EVENT

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Introduction

Festivals, fairs, conventions, ballgames, concerts and fundraising activities are types of special events that individuals typically attend to participate in the festivities and enjoy with friends, family and colleagues (Causin & McCarthy, 2017; Causin et. al, 2010). Fundraising in higher education has been around for hundreds of years. In the early 1900's, the driving motivator for fundraising was to provide funds for students specifically for housing expenses, books and food (Cook & Lasher, 1996).

Research has shown that donors are more likely to give when their contributions are made known to the public (Sheremeta & Samek, 2017). In an effort to create awareness and appreciation, many institutions have incorporated events to honor donors. However, there is little research on how and what type of donor recognition is most effective and will encourage donors to give. Determining what motivates a donor to give large contributions and if publicly recognizing donors at a major event motivates others to give is still to be determined. Although research has shown that donor recognition is important in cultivating relationships, the type of recognition that is most effective is unknown (Sheremeta & Samek, 2017).

Methods

This study utilized a quantitative survey research design. The sampling procedure was census. The data collection technique was an online survey using Qualtrics. The questionnaire was sent to the sample population of 214 past event attendees. There were 97 completed surveys returned for a 45% response rate.

The data was analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive frequencies and percentages were used to analyze demographic data, preferences of the attendees on the gala time and location, raising awareness and impact of private giving and other variables.

Results/Discussion /Implication

Majority (91%) of the respondents were twenty years and above, male (56%) and 95% were from the East Texas area. Of the respondents, 69% preferred to keep the gala during the holiday season; 75% most likely to give and 84% will most likely promote the gala. Additionally, 64% of the respondents confirmed that faculty recognition should occur during the gala and 77% wants to keep the black-tie attire. Overall, the respondents were extremely satisfied with the food and beverage offerings and they will also attend future events.

It is recommended that the annual gala continue to have black-tie dress code, remain during the holiday season, and continue to honor both major donors and faculty accomplishments. On the other hand, the investigators would like to reach out to those who were invited to the gala but did not attend to find out a way to motivate them to attend the event. For individuals who are working in the development and advancement fields, it is advised to determine the best way to cultivate relationships and steward donors to increase customer satisfaction for philanthropy and successful fundraising purposes.

References are available upon request