

Background

The Humane Society of Santa Clara Valley, established in 1929 is an independent non-profit organization that brings people and animals together in mutual respect, harmony and joy. The Humane Society of Santa Clara Valley is the largest animal shelter on the West Coast. It cares for 40,000 animals a year, and is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for incoming animals.

The Humane Society has a comprehensive program of adoptions, animal care, investigations and education as well as a low-cost Spay / Neuter Clinic that also provides vaccinations. For the pets in their care, The Humane Society provides shelter, food, emergency medical treatment as necessary and humane, compassionate euthanasia when all other efforts fail. The Humane Society strives to be the community's first choice when, seeking a pet to adopt, looking for a lost animal, searching for an answer to a pet related question, and when a credible, reliable partner is needed to address animal issues in the community.

Problem

With an annual operating budget of about \$5.5 million, The Humane Society of Santa Clara Valley relies on individual donations, program fees, dues, foundation and corporate grants to support the growth and operation of the organization. The organization's fundraising campaigns consist of regular direct mail campaigns and dozens of annual fundraising events.

The success of the organization is infinitely tied to its ability to maximize fundraising efforts. But with 65,000 donors in the organization's database, effectively communicating with each donor can plague even the most efficient organization. Historically The Humane Society relied on various fundraising software programs to manage its donor database. The organization found that it was not consistently targeting donors based on giving history and as a result was wasting considerable amounts of time on futile communication and marketing efforts.

"We conduct approximately 20 direct mail campaigns per year. With each campaign, we can target upwards of 10,000 to 12,000 donors at any given time," said Alisa Ervin, development coordinator at The Humane Society of Santa Clara Valley. "The Humane Society recognized the inefficiencies the organization faced and looked for an alternative solution to track and manage its donors."

Solution

Five years ago, The Humane Society implemented Exceed! by Telosa Software, an easy-to-use fundraising and information management software solution. Today with the assistance of a direct mail consultant and Exceed! software the organization is maximizing the value of donor information through its ability to communicate with donors based on donor history and personal preferences. For example, The Humane Society can segment donors and target them based on different variables, ranging from last gift date, amount given, and geographical information as well as campaign preferences. In addition, the organization can easily keep tabs on the 3,000 to 5,000 acknowledgements, or thank you letters staff members send out each month.

"It is through Exceed! that we are streamlining our marketing efforts," added Ervin. "The Humane Society is saving time on the administrative tasks and headaches associated with managing thousands of donors and donations on any given day."

Results

Over the past two years, The Humane Society of Santa Clara Valley has experienced a dramatic increase in overall contributions. "Working with Exceed! and our direct mail consultant has enabled us to segment the market and use the donor data in a way we never thought possible," remarked Ervin "It is due to more effective communications and marketing efforts that we have been able to double total contributions from \$1.5 million in 1999 to \$2.8 million in 2001."