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Evergreen Update!

Just under two years ago, we learned from Maine Public Broadcasting that branding a Sustainer Program with an identity closely linked to your local area or station's mission can yield significant results: Sustainer Program Sees Green by Going (Ever)Green. MPBN's "Evergreen Friends" started off with a bang, **increasing the average gift in that first drive by 13%**.

And while the initial success of the program was due to this ingenious re-branding of a struggling sustainer program, it's continued growth and astonishing accomplishments are due to the smart strategies implemented by MPBN's membership team, headed by Judi Gardner. Judi and her team saw a good thing and ran with it, and the numbers tell the tale: **Since the advent of the program, the percentage of members who are now Evergreen Friends has grown from 29.9% to 180.2% (aggregate) from FY 07-08 to FY 08-09**.

As our initial Tip described, MPBN first rebranded their sustainer program with a name close to Mainers' hearts, and this was integral in creating purpose and partnership among the group. Members of Evergreen Friends also received their special branded Evergreen Friends MemberCard and directory as a standard benefit, regardless of whether their contribution amount exceeded the regular $90 MemberCard level; this furthered the sense of inclusion for the members of Evergreen Friends. Along with the card and directory, MPBN sent the members of Evergreen Friends a window decal so they could proudly display their affiliation.

In addition to the ingenious branding, MPBN created an on-air pitch strategy that made the program more attractive to prospective members: they pitched it exclusively as a monthly program, with EFT or credit/debit installments of at least $5/month, as well as focused on the amount per month vs. the total contribution. **Perhaps the biggest pitch point was that it's a "green" way to contribute due to the diminished number of mailings members receive - only 1 to 2 per month - which allows for more of the contributor's dollar to go towards programming.** Lastly, they focused on the Evergreen Friends as being within the contributor's means, particularly during this down economy. MPBN's knowledge and awareness of their market led them to promote points they knew would resonate with MPBN audiences.

All of these techniques contributed to the amazing success of the Evergreen Friends program, and Judi Gardner, MPBN's Director of Membership, couldn't be happier: **"Evergreen Friends continues to grow at an alarming rate. We would have thought it would level out by now, as all the low hanging fruit is likely in the door – guess not. What a great problem to have!"** We were happy to play a small part in its success by working with MPBN to offer the Evergreen Friends MemberCard and directory, and we couldn't be more excited and proud to share MPBN's inspiring success story with you!

Special Note:
MemberCard as a branding tool can go a long way, and we can customize MemberCards for any segment in the file you'd like – for **FREE**! Creating an image of your station that members want to align themselves with creates countless membership opportunities, and your MemberCard program is the perfect vehicle. Please contact Joanna via email by clicking here or 800-423-7645 ext. 15 to discuss a branded MemberCard for a segmented file.