



PHILLIPS & ASSOCIATES

Eleemosynary Environmentalists

The fundraising profession attracts some of the finest people, dedicated to the worthiest of causes that vitalize our nation's unique philanthropic tradition. Preserving that philanthropic tradition requires that today's professionals must become *eleemosynary¹ environmentalists*; people dedicated to protecting one of our nation's most endangered species: the fundraising volunteer!

With dramatic growth in our nation's not-for-profit sector we are experiencing a very short supply of men and women both able and willing to volunteer their time to personally persuade others to support their chosen charitable institutions.

Major fundraising campaigns for universities and cultural institutions are concluding with dollar goals reached but with short rosters of fundraising volunteers to thank. Charitable organizations dedicated to community health, youth and welfare struggle to enlist volunteers to aid them in securing gifts and grants.

Our profession needs to renew a once standing commitment to volunteers. Enlist and encourage their efforts. Be patient with their good intentions if not always best results. Shelter them from ill-defined responsibilities and incomplete planning. Preserve their essential role in philanthropy.

We also need to remain focused on the highest and best use of volunteers, i.e. encouraging support from others. And, refrain from giving them tasks better suited for professionals such as preparing organizational plans, materials and events.

Perhaps a theme for our renewed professional commitment to volunteer fundraisers should be *accentuate the asking and eliminate the elementary*.

As with the whales, condors and our world's rain forests we need to protect and care for our volunteers. Without them organizations dedicated to the arts, education and public service may have little chance of meeting the challenges to their financial survival.

We need to become eleemosynary environmentalists.

What are you doing to preserve your volunteer resources?

¹ "el-ee-mo-sy-nary" (adjective): of, relating, or supported by charity.