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How To Make Money for Your Organization

First, remember the three and a half percent rule: in any given population base, three and a half percent is all that will ever attend cultural events. Everyone else makes promises and then excuses. That's why when you advertise in the newspaper, 96 1/2 percent of your money is wasted. Direct mail is a far better use of your money. Our experience says that this is true. A couple of books concur and our customers agree. Therefore, the name of the game becomes:

- Get that three and a half percent in your house.
- Get them on your mailing list and make them into season ticket holders.
- Take care of them. Give them a warm voice on the telephone. Make allowances for their idiosyncrasies. Be nice to them. In this age of answering machines, voice mail, and hold buttons, the human touch is what is appreciated. And, it's really all you can do.
- Treasure them. These are the people who bring their friends and convert them to subscribers. If you get a bad review, they will take up their pens and argue with the newspaper. They are your loyal friends.
- If you have our software, you can include donors and their seats on performance reports. Use this information and put a bouquet of flowers on their seats. That way they will hold the flowers and at intermission, everyone will be asking, "Where did you get that bouquet?" Offer to renew their favorite seats, season after season.
- If you have a really hot show, you will have newcomers. Use our "Newcomers" report to send them a special mailing. You can use the same report to get a mailing list of subscribers that have not renewed.

This kind of thing is extremely difficult to do on a daily basis. Many times, it seems, customers call up just to make trouble for you. The box office staff never gets respect for what they accomplish. This is in spite of the fact that the box office is the first (and usually only) contact that customers and donors have with the organization.

If you can follow these procedures, you will make your organization money. You will make more money than you would by using any advertising agency, a fund-raising expert or an army of marketing consultants.