



WELCH SIGN

Ten Tips for Developing a Successful Donor Recognition Program

■ **Start Early**

Donor recognition planning is a multi-step process. Plan ahead so that everyone involved can be thoughtful about the needs.

■ **Hire a Qualified Professional**

Working with someone who has experience with all the issues can save valuable resources - time and money. Be sure the company you hire has experience with design, fabrication, installation and on-going service. Equally important is their ability to help you "manage" the process.

■ **Involve Key Donors**

Involving key donors in the process ensures that both sides are represented. It also adds credibility to policies and design choices.

■ **Manage the Details**

All aspects of developing a successful program requires attention to detail. Identify a sharp, detail oriented individual to administer the process. A sense of humor is also helpful!

■ **Put it in Writing**

Developing a recognition policy and documenting the details will help you avoid uncomfortable situations with donors. Everyone has a different idea regarding recognition, and a written policy will keep everyone on the same page.

■ **Develop a Timeline**

First, decide when you want your donor recognition signage in place. Work backward to determine important benchmarks for policy decisions, preliminary design, final design, start of fabrication and installation. Make sure all involved are aware of the timeline, and be sure to update regularly. Be sure the company you hire has a reputation for meeting deadlines.

■ **Decide on a Location Early in the Process**

If your recognition program includes a primary dedication wall, be sure to consider location before starting the design process. Understanding the physical elements of the space is critical for design and installation

■ **Be Creative**

Today's donors are sophisticated. They are looking for something new and fresh.

■ **Obtain Cost Estimates with Design Proposals**

Don't decide on a design unless the designer gives you a cost estimate. It can be disappointing to become excited about a design only to learn later that it doesn't meet your budget requirements.

■ **"Tell Your Story"**

Be sure the design is uniquely yours. This is an opportunity to visually celebrate your organization!