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Marketing Research for Mission-based Thrift Suggests Relationship Marketing Strategy

Jon M. Martin
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ABSTRACT

In order to alleviate the risks associated with a lack of objective marketing research data and to apply marketing research in a unique niche, the author, in collaboration with a local mission-based thrift (“Thrift XYZ”), conducts marketing research regarding the motivations and preferences of shoppers and donators for one primary thrift location in North Carolina as a gratis community service. The findings are that XYZ’s shoppers and donators routinely and regularly shop and donate (respectively) with XYZ and that the nature of this target market is ideal for developing and applying a relationship marketing strategy with each/both groups.

INTRODUCTION

Many rescue missions and charitable not-for-profits often use thrifts or second-hand retail outlets to generate operating funds. However, many small businesses and not-for-profits cannot afford the cost of professional marketing consulting, and inadvertently depend upon internal intuition and observed consumption patterns to gain insight into consumer preferences. While these informal observations can be helpful, they can also be erroneous and misleading; managers vary in the accuracy and insight of their marketing perspectives and business intuitions (Perreault, Cannon, & McCarthy, 2009). In order to alleviate this risk for one organization and to confirm or alter their intuitive perceptions, the author, in collaboration with a local mission-based thrift (“Thrift XYZ”), conducts marketing research regarding the motivations and preferences of shoppers and donators for one primary thrift location in North Carolina.

METHODS

Fifty Donor and Shopper (written) surveys containing 19 items (respectively) are prepared in collaboration with Thrift XYZ’s manager in both English and Spanish, and are administered randomly on-site to volunteer respondents during spring and summer 2014 (See Appendices A and B). Of the 19 items, the first 7 are demographic in nature, with the following 12 being specific to thrift donations and/or XYZ donations. Of these 12, 5 have single-choice answers, 6 have multi-choice answers, and 1 is open-ended. Spanish is voluntarily chosen for 20 of the shopper surveys but for none of the donor surveys. The shopper surveys are completed first in the spring due to shopper traffic prevalence; donation surveys extend into the summer due to the “drop and leave” nature of donator traffic. Due to the extensive and unsubsidized nature of the research, it is conducted solely based upon the research ability of the author and without the time and expense of statistical item validation and/or IRB reviews (Swanson & Holton III; 2005). Items are crafted and field verified through collaboration with the store manager. Upon

collection of the surveys, single-response data is entered into a database for PASW 18 (SPSS, IBM) calculated frequencies, correlations, and regressions for identifying statistically significant trends and relationships in the variables. Multiple response and open-ended items are manually tallied for analysis (Field, 2009).

RESULTS

Shopper Surveys

Table 1
Shopper Demographic Frequencies

Variable	Choice #	Label	%	Variable	Choice #	Label	%
<i>SS#1:</i>	0	No response	0%	<i>SS# 6:</i>	0	No response	2%
<i>Gender</i>	1	Male	18%	<i>Relationship</i>	1	Married	48%
	2	Female	82%		2	Separated	2%
					3	Divorced	10%
<i>SS# 2:</i>	0	No response	0%		4	Single	30%
<i>Education</i>	1	HS/GED	44%		5	Alternative/Other	8%
	2	2 yrs. college	20%	<i>SS# 7:</i>	None	No response	4%
	3	4 yr. college	24%	<i>Zip Code</i>	Filled in	275xx	32%
	4	Grad. degree	12%		Filled in	27707	26%
<i>SS# 3:</i>	0	No response	1%		Filled in	Other 277xx	26%
<i>Age</i>	1	19 or younger	2%		Filled in	Other 27xxx	4%
	2	20-29	26%		Filled in	All Other zips	8%
	3	30-39	12%				
	4	40-49	18%				
	5	50-59	22%				
	6	60-69	12%				
	7	70-79	6%				
	8	80 or older	2%				
<i>SS# 4:</i>	0	No response	0%				
<i>Income</i>	1	\$0-20K	28%				
	2	\$20-40K	30%				
	3	\$40-60K	15%				
	4	\$60-80K	13%				
	5	\$80-100K	7%				
	6	\$100-125K	0%				
	7	\$125-150K	2%				
	8	\$150K-200K	2%				
	9	> than \$200K	2%				
<i>SS# 5:</i>	0	No response	0%				
<i>Ethnicity</i>	1	Black	40%				

	2	Asian	2%				
	3	Hispanic	16%				
	4	Native/Inuit	2%				
	5	Middle-Eastern	0%				
	6	Slavic	0%				
	7	White/Caucasian	40%				

Table 2
Shopper Non-demographic Single-Response Frequencies

Variable	#	Label	%	Variable	#	Label	%
<i>SS# 8:</i>	0	No response	4%	<i>SS# 12:</i>	0	No response	8%
<i>Times/yr.</i>	1	Rarely	6%	<i>% of</i>	1	0-20%	20%
<i>Shop at</i>	2	1-2	12%	<i>Annual</i>	2	21-40%	30%
<i>XYZ</i>	3	3-4	4%	<i>Thrift/2nd</i>	3	41-60%	14%
	4	5-6	4%	<i>Hand spent</i>	4	61-80%	20%
	5	7-10	6%	<i>At XYZ</i>	5	81-100%	8%
	6	Almost mnthly	22%				
	7	Almost weekly	28%				
	8	Almost daily	14%				
<i>SS# 9:</i>	0	No response	0%	<i>SS# 15:</i>	0	No response	22%
<i>Freq. of</i>	1	Rarely	10%	<i>How long</i>	1	< 1 year	6%
<i>Shopping</i>	2	1-2	6%	<i>Shopping</i>	2	1-2 years	6%
<i>at Thrifts</i>	3	3-4	0%	<i>Thifts/2nd</i>	3	2-5 years	0%
	4	5-6	4%	<i>Hand stores</i>	4	5-10 years	20%
	5	7-10	6%		5	10-20 years	20%
	6	Almost mnthly	28%		6	>20 years	26%
	7	Almost weekly	26%				
	8	Almost daily	20%				
<i>SS#na:</i>	0	No response	14%				
<i>Amt. spent</i>	1	\$0-50	6%				
<i>annually</i>	2	\$51-100	10%				
<i>at thrifts</i>	3	\$101-250	22%				
<i>2nd hand</i>	4	\$250-500	28%				
<i>stores</i>	5	\$500-1000	14%				
	6	Over \$1000	4%				
	7	Over \$5000	2%				

Table 3
Shopper Multi-answer Question Frequencies

Variable	#	Label	# rspn	Variable	#	Label	# rspn
<i>SS#10:</i>	0	No response		<i>SS#14:</i>	0	No response	0
<i>Reasons</i>	1	Value/thrift	29	<i>Months that</i>	1	January	34
<i>shoppers</i>	2	Hobby related	13	<i>XYZ</i>	2	February	35
<i>shop</i>	3	Nearby/convenient	6	<i>shoppers</i>	3	March	31
<i>at</i>	4	Passes time	9	<i>shop at</i>	4	April	33
<i>thrifts</i>	5	\$/economy/budget	12	<i>thrifts and</i>	5	May	29
	6	Curious/interesting	17	<i>XYZ</i>	6	June	30
	7	Helping XYZ	5		7	July	31
	8	Buying to resell	18		8	August	31
	9	Buying low end use	9		9	September	31
					10	October	31
<i>SS#11:</i>	1	Selection/variety	25		11	November	30
<i>What</i>	2	Good prices	26		12	December	30
<i>shoppers</i>	3	Clean/organized	19	<i>SS#16:</i>	0	No response	0
<i>like about</i>	4	Good layout	13	<i>How XYZ</i>	1	Word-of-mouth	15
<i>shopping</i>	5	Charity based	16	<i>shoppers</i>	2	Saw the store	31
<i>@ XYZ</i>	6	Christian based	13	<i>knew about</i>	3	In newspaper	1
	7	No riff/raff, drama	5	<i>XYZ 's</i>	4	On Internet	3
	8	Good cause	18	<i>store</i>	5	Other	2
	9	Can deal/haggle	5				
	10	Good peeps/staff	10	<i>SS#17:</i>	0	No response	0
<i>SS#13:</i>	0	No response		<i>What XYZ</i>	1	Nice people/staff	33
<i>Other 2nd</i>	1	Salvation Army	20	<i>shoppers</i>	2	Clean and tidy	25
<i>-hand or</i>	2	Goodwill	34	<i>like about</i>	3	Efficiently run	9
<i>thrifts</i>	3	Antiques/used	18	<i>XYZ 's</i>	4	Good selection	28
<i>XYZ</i>	4	Vintage clothing	4	<i>store</i>	5	Good prices	22
<i>shoppers</i>	5	Grannies Panties	9		6	Good charity	26
<i>shop at</i>	6	Play It Again Sprts	5		7	Convenient loctn	15
	7	Other Thrifts	3				
<i>SS#19:</i>	0	No response	0	<i>SS#18:</i>	0		
<i>Open</i>	1	Happy; likes it	3	<i>What did</i>	1	Not clean/tidy	2
<i>question</i>	2	High prices	3	<i>XYZ</i>	2	Rude staff/peeps	1
<i>for</i>	3	Selective mission	1	<i>Shoppers</i>	3	Not run very well	0
<i>feedback</i>	4	Dressing mirrors	1	<i>not like</i>	4	Poor selection	1
	5	Good if traveling	1	<i>about the</i>	5	Prices not good	3
	6	Need to organize	2	<i>store</i>	6	Church affiliated	2
	7	Good Cause	3		7	Bad location	2

Donation Surveys

Table 4
Donor Demographic Frequencies/Percentages

Variable	Choice #	Label	%	Variable	Choice #	Label	%
<i>DS# 1:</i>	0	No response	0%	<i>DS#5:</i>	0	No response	
<i>Gender</i>	1	Male	38%	<i>Ethnicity</i>	1	Black	20%
	2	Female	62%		2	Asian	6%
					3	Hispanic	6%
<i>DS# 2:</i>	0	No response	0%		4	Native/Inuit	0%
<i>Education</i>	1	HS/GED	12%		5	Middle-Eastern	0%
	2	2 yrs. college	24%		6	Slavic	0%
	3	4 yr. college	26%		7	White/Caucasian	68%
	4	Grad. degree	38%				
<i>DS# 3:</i>	0	No response		<i>DS# 6:</i>	0	No response	0%
<i>Age</i>	1	19 or younger	0%	<i>Relationship</i>	1	Married	60%
	2	20-29	4%		2	Separated	2%
	3	30-39	16%		3	Divorced	10%
	4	40-49	26%		4	Single	26%
	5	50-59	26%		5	Alternative/Other	2%
	6	60-69	16%				
	7	70-79	12%	<i>DS# 7:</i>	Filled in	275xx	20%
	8	80 or older	0%	<i>Zip Code</i>	Filled in	27705	14%
<i>DS# 4:</i>	0	No response			Filled in	27707	26%
<i>Income</i>	1	\$0-20K	0%		Filled in	Other 2770x	16%
	2	\$20-40K	12%		Filled in	2771x	12%
	3	\$40-60K	20%		Filled in	Other 27xxx	4%
	4	\$60-80K	18%		Filled in	Other 2xxxx	2%
	5	\$80-100K	12%		Filled in	Other zips	2%
	6	\$100-125K	2%				
	7	\$125-150K	2%				
	8	\$150K-200K	2%				
	9	> than \$200K	6%				

Table 5
Donor Non-demographic Single-response Frequencies

Variable	Choice #	Label	%	Variable	Choice #	Label	%
<i>DS# 8:</i>	0	No response	0%	<i>DS#13:</i>	0	No response	8%
<i>Times a</i>	1	Rarely	12%	<i>% of giving</i>	1	0-20%	40%
<i>year</i>	2	1-2	18%	<i>that goes to</i>	2	21-40%	18%
<i>donate at</i>	3	3-4	24%	<i>XYZ</i>	3	41-60%	16%
<i>XYZ</i>	4	5-6	16%		4	61-80%	8%
	5	7-10	12%		5	81-100%	10%
	6	Almost mnthly	14%				
	7	Almost weekly	4%	<i>DS#14:</i>	0	No Response	
	8	Almost daily	0%	<i>Months they</i>	1	January	
				<i>donate to</i>	2	February	
<i>DS# 9:</i>	0	No response	0%	<i>thrifits</i>	3	March	
<i>How often</i>	1	Rarely	2%		4	April	
<i>donors</i>	2	1-2	16%		5	May	
<i>donate to</i>	3	3-4	16%		6	June	
<i>thrifits</i>	4	5-6	20%		7	July	
	5	7-10	20%		8	August	
	6	Almost mnthly	22%		9	September	
	7	Almost weekly	2%		10	October	
	8	Almost daily	2%		11	November	
					12	December	
<i>DS#10:</i>	0	No response	2%	<i>DS#15:</i>	0	No response	6%
<i>Reasons</i>	1	near/convenient	7%	<i>How long</i>	1	Less than a year	2%
<i>donating</i>	2	good reputation	20%	<i>been</i>	2	1-2 years	14%
<i>to XYZ</i>	3	christian	13%	<i>donating</i>	3	2-5 years	12%
	4	Fast/easy	16%	<i>to thrifits?</i>	4	5-10 years	22%
	5	Takes all stuff	5%		5	10-20 years	24%
	6	Know staff	6%		6	Over 20 years	20%
	7	Worthy Cause	31%				
<i>SS#11:</i>	0	No response	4%	<i>DS#16:</i>	0	No response	7%
<i>Reasons</i>	1	Give good stuff	47%	<i>How donors</i>	1	Word-of-mouth	29%
<i>donating</i>	2	Get rid of junk	4%	<i>know about</i>	2	Saw the store	47%
<i>to thrifits</i>	3	Tax write-off	17%	<i>XYZ</i>	3	Newspaper	4%
	4	Season cleaning	25%		4	Internet	2%
	5	Christmas clean	3%		5	Other	11%
<i>DS#12:</i>	0	No response	6%	<i>DS#17:</i>	0	No response	3%
<i>Value of</i>	1	\$0-50	6%	<i>What donors</i>	1	Friendly/courteous	23%
<i>annual</i>	2	\$51-100	14%	<i>Like most</i>	2	Clean & tidy	11%
<i>donations</i>	3	\$101-250	14%	<i>About XYZ</i>	3	Efficiently run	10%
	4	\$250-500	28%		4	Good selection	13%
	5	\$500-1000	14%		5	Good prices	14%
	6	Over \$1000	18%		6	Worthy cause	16%
					7	Good location	10%

RESULTS AND OBSERVATIONS

Shopper Survey

Survey Language

- 20 shopper surveys were completed in Spanish.
- This may imply that: 1) a significant percent of shoppers are of Hispanic origin, and/or 2) prefer Spanish, and/or 3) do not read English well enough to answer questions.
- XYZ should consider and assess this in operational decisions involving written language.

SS# 1: Shopper Gender

- Approximately 80% of shoppers are women and 20% of shoppers are men.
- Female shoppers may prefer or emphasize high service, courtesy/manners, and efficiency and convenience regarding layout, selections, pricing, décor/ambiance, and dressing rooms. Marketing techniques and publications should consider female trends and preferences.

SS# 2: Shopper Education

- 2/3 of shoppers have 2 years of college or less; 1/3 has a four year degree or more.
- The median is interpolated to be at less than 1 year of college.
- The store should consider education level in operational decisions.

SS# 3: Shopper Age

- Age is fairly evenly distributed across shopper ages
- 90% are between the ages of 20 and 70.
- The median age is interpolated to be approximately 45.
- This may mean that the store appeals equally to most age groups and may imply that the age demographic is not significant for identifying or appealing to the target market

SS# 4: Shopper Income

- 58% of shoppers are near, at, or below poverty level.
- XYZ seems to have a “lower/lower-middle class” target market; this segment volume will increase if the middle class experiences predicted erosion and bimodal properties.
- This implies that XYZ is selling to a target market with limited discretionary income and who may be “value shoppers”; high pricing comments in the surveys support this.
- The Thrift may want to consider reducing or holding prices.

SS# 5: Shopper Ethnicity

- The Thrift’s shoppers are Black (40%), Caucasian/White (40%), and Hispanic (16%).
- XYZ should be familiar with and consider ethnic cultures, preferences and tastes regarding their store layout, language in signs, items sold and displayed, and general marketing and operational choices.
- The store may want to especially consider Black and Hispanic preferences since both groups are increasing in the census.

SS# 6: Shopper Relationships

- The Thrift's shoppers are basically dichotomized into married (48%) and various non-married (50%).

SS# 7: Shopper Zip Codes

- 50% of shoppers are from the 27xxx zip codes and half of these are from 277xx.
- 30% are from 275xx zips, so almost 1/3 are from outside the area up to an hour away. Most shoppers appear to be from ABC County.
- Marketing/advertising efforts should include and focus on areas within a 45 minute commute from the store.

SS# 8: Times/yr. shopping at XYZ

- 50% shop XYZ monthly or weekly, 15% daily; thus 2/3 are "regular" shoppers
- XYZ needs to embrace the concept of relationship marketing with their customers
- Regular customers better notice inconsistencies and/or changes in operations
- 1/3 of shoppers are sporadic; this is an opportunity to turn them into regular customers

SS# 9: Frequency of Thrift shopping

- Similar to XYZ shopping, over 50% of these shoppers shop Thrifts and 2nd hand monthly or weekly plus another 20% that shop almost daily.
- 3/4 of these shoppers are regular thrift shoppers that probably know the competition and shop and compare.
- XYZ seems to be fairly competitive other than perhaps in the area of pricing/value.

SS#10: Reasons Shoppers Shop at XYZ

- XYZ's greatest draw is in hobby related shopping, interesting and/or curiosity shopping, and in value/economy based motivations.

SS#11: Why Shoppers Shop at XYZ

- There are a myriad of reasons folks like XYZ: selection/variety; prices/value; organization; good cause/charity; a good layout; and good people/staff.
- The overall "package" or combination of service and positioning seems favorable.

SS#na: Value of thrift shopping annually

- The average amount spent Thrift shopping by these shoppers is around \$500.
- With the average visit being weekly that is only \$10/wk.; this implies that most shoppers are making small purchases frequently.
- This has implications for the knick-knack vs. large item areas of the store. A balance is needed; knick-knacks use more time and people while larger items use more space.

SS#12: Percent of thrift shopping at XYZ

- XYZ shoppers spend about 1/3 to 2/3 of their annual thrift spending with XYZ, with the average being about 1/2.
- This reiterates the loyal and repeat relationship with XYZ.
- XYZ's challenge is to increase their number/volume of regular customers.

SS#13: Other Thrifts and 2nd hands that XYZ's shoppers shop at

- XYZ's biggest competitors seem to be Salvation Army, Goodwill, and general antiques/used shops.

SS#14: Months Shoppers Visit Thrifts

- Unlike Donators, shoppers tend to shop regularly in every month of the year.
- However it is likely that experienced shoppers also time and peak their frequency and/or length of visit during months when the peak donations have come onto the floor for sale.

SS# 15: How long shopping at Thrifts

- 66% of XYZ's shoppers have been shopping thrifts over 5 years, 50% over 10 years, and 25% over 20 years.
- The shoppers at XYZ are very experienced thrift shoppers and seem to well discern value and changes that are satisfying and/or dissatisfying.

SS#16: How Shoppers Knew About XYZ

- A majority of people know about XYZ due to word-of-mouth and/or seeing the store.
- This store has good visibility and easy access.

SS#17: What Shoppers liked about XYZ

- There are multiple shopper likes regarding XYZ /store - the staff/people, the organization and layout, the selection, the prices, the cause/charity, and the location.
- This reflects a varied service package that is favorable.

SS#18: What Shoppers disliked about XYZ

- Shoppers made few bad comments on the store
- Only 11 out of 50 shoppers chose to check any negative issues
- Prices are the most repeated contention.

SS#oe: Shoppers Comments on XYZ

- Open-ended comments merely echoed the many positive comments and the few negative previously mentioned in the survey.

Donor Survey

Survey Language

- No donor surveys were completed in Spanish.
- This implies that there are either few Hispanics in the donor target market and/or that those Hispanics that are prefer to take the survey in Spanish.

DS# 1: Donor Gender

- Approximately 2/3 of donators are women and 1/3 are men

- Female donors may prefer high(er) service, courtesy/manners, and efficiency and convenience with their donation receipt and delivery. Some may need or want help and/or prefer pick-up, especially on larger items.

DS# 2: Donor Education

- Almost 40% of donators have graduate degrees
- Approximately 2/3 of donators have a four year degree or more
- Most donators are likely relatively affluent, more liberal, and charitable in nature.
- These donors may prefer and expect good cooperation and convenience when donating.
- They may have few trucks or vehicles for delivery and may need help with large items with and may need help.

DS# 3: Donor Age

- 80% of donators are over 40
- Almost 30% of donators are seniors over 60
- Over half (52%) of donators are in the 40-60 range or the back half of their careers.
- This age group of donators would expect service and help with donations and delivery.
- Their being in the back half of their career/life facilitates downsizing of possessions.

DS# 4: Donor Income

- Almost 50% of donors make under \$60K/yr.
- 30% of donors make between \$60K-100K
- Almost half of donors make between \$40K and \$100K
- This is a middle-class/upper middle class set of donors with reasonable discretionary income.
- They are likely to upgrade and discard and tend to be socially responsible individuals.

DS# 5: Donor Ethnicity

- 68% of these donors are white/Caucasian; 20% are black; 12% are Asian or Hispanic
- It is not unusual for the majority ethnicity to be the majority donors in thrifts. I suspect this somewhat reflects the ethnicity make-up of the primary zip codes listed in demographics.

DS # 6: Donor Relationships

- 62% of these donors are married; ¼ are divorced and 10% separated
- Married couples likely have more joint property and item turnover from annual/ongoing cleaning and organizing. Divorced/separated may donate from home adjustments and/or streamlining.

DS# 7: Donor Zip Codes

- 277xx is the zip for 68% of the donors; 275xx is the zip for 24% of the donors
- The donations of this store, as with most/many thrifts is proximity based. This allows for good zip specific focus for marketing and/or mailing efforts regarding donations.

DS# 8: Frequency of Donations to XYZ annually

- 50% donate 4 or less times during the year

- 50% donate 5 or more times during the year
- 26% donate 7-12 times per year
- XYZ's donors are repeat donors that are relatively loyal and regular. This implies that the vast majority of donations are not one-time or sporadic. This warrants trying to formally establish an ongoing "relationship" (i.e., "relationship marketing") with donors.

DS#9: Frequency of donations to Charity

- Similar to XYZ, 50% of these donors give more than bi-monthly and almost monthly
- XYZ should work to increase the value and frequency and % of donations (market share) from these routine/regular donors through "relationship" marketing.

DS#10: Reasons XYZ Donors Donate to XYZ

- XYZ's greatest draw (67%) for donors is its reputation as a mission-based and faith-based worthwhile cause. Beyond this, it is recognized (30%) for its easy process and/or convenience and location. XYZ can leverage this and gain donor market share through word-of-mouth but also publicity and marketing.

DS#11: Why XYZ's Donors Donate to Thrifts

- This supports the donation months' information and confirms that most donors want to do a good thing and offer useful items for a tax write off.

DS#12: Annual Value of Donations to Thrift

- Avg. = \$200/year; median= \$250-\$500/year (tax write-off value)
- 30% of donors give est. over \$1000/yr. (tax write-off value)
- 60% give over \$250/year; 30% give over \$500/year; 20% give over \$1000/year

DS#13: Donor % of giving to XYZ

- Approx. 60% give less than 40% to XYZ; about 1/3 give more than half to XYZ
- XYZ has the opportunity to use relationship marketing to increase their % of giving from their donor pool.

DS#14: Months XYZ's Donors Donate to Thrifts

- Jan, Mar, Apr., May, Aug is above-average months; Feb, June, July, and Sept-Dec is below average for donations. The Sept-Dec period is ideal for working to increase donors, donor frequency, donation value, and donor market share. Jan-May is an ideal time to enter into relationship (marketing) with existing donors.

DS#15: No. of Years Donating to Thrifts

- 66% of donors have been giving to thrifts over 5 years; 44% for over 10 years
- XYZ's donor pool is practiced and regular regarding thrift giving. This "stability" in the donor pool and their donation habits/practices is to XYZ's advantage and opportunity.

DS#16: How XYZ's Donors Know About XYZ

- The majority of people knew about XYZ either due to word-of-mouth and/or seeing the store. This store seems to have good visibility and relatively easy access.

DS#17: What XYZ's Donors Like about XYZ

- The majority of donors liked XYZ for: 1) its friendly/courteous people, it being relatively clean and tidy and organized, being efficiently run, and for its convenient location.

DS#18: What XYZ's Donors Dislike About XYZ

- Very few Donors marked or selected items in this question.

DS#19: Donor Comments on XYZ

- Few Donors made negative comments in this area

Table 7
Donor Variable Correlations

<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>	<i>Correlation</i>	<i>Strength/Comments</i>
How Long Donated	% to XYZ	.492	Moderate. Many donors who have donated longer give a relatively good/high % to XYZ
	Value of Donations	.738	High. Most donors who have donated longer tend to donate more value when donating.
	Ethnicity	.325	Low-Moderate. Many long term donators are White/Caucasian in this study.
How Donors Know XYZ	Income	.328	Low-Moderate. Some upper incomes know of XYZ through seeing the store and the internet
	Age	.354	Low-Moderate. Some older donors know of XYZ through seeing the store and the internet.
Value/Amt. of Donations	Relationship	.343	A significant % of those who donate higher value are also married.
	% to XYZ	.580	Moderate-High. Most who donate higher value tend to give more to XYZ than others
Frequency of Donations	Education	.300	Low-Moderate. A significant % of those who give to thrifts more frequently have higher ed.
	Income	.407	Low-Moderate. Many who more frequently to thrifts tend to have relatively higher incomes.
# Donations to XYZ	Education	.366	Low-Moderate. A significant % of those who donate more frequently to XYZ have higher ed.
	Income	.470	Moderate. Many who donate frequently to XYZ have relatively high(er) incomes.

From these correlations we can see a pattern of variable relationships. The people who are donating the most often and with higher values at XYZ tend to be white, possess upper education and upper incomes, are upper aged, and are married. This is reiterated and reinforced in regression analysis, where there is a strong relationship between the value of donations that donors make each year (DS#12) and how long the donors have been donating to thrift stores in general (DS#15). The regression of these two variables yielded a β of .738 with an R^2 of .535 and DW of 2.1, which indicates a very strong relationship (Field, 2009).

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Shopper

The profile of the average XYZ shopper is female, any age between 20 and 70, equally likely to be black or white and occasionally Hispanic, of varied age, married or not, in the lower to lower-middle class of income, having 0-2 years of college, and living in or within a 45 minute commute from the store. XYZ's shoppers are repeat customers that are relatively loyal and shop thrifts and XYZ regularly. Indications are that the vast majority of shopping experiences are not one-time or sporadic and that these are experienced and dedicated shoppers shopping thrifts for hobby, value, or curiosity purposes. This warrants XYZ's trying to formally establish an ongoing "relationship" (i.e., "relationship marketing") with shoppers through face-to-face and/or virtual memberships or accounts (Gronroos, 1995).

Donor

The profile of the average donor for XYZ is female, married college educated, 50 years of age, white/Caucasian, with an annual income of approximately \$50K/yr. and living in the 277xx area. The strong relationship between donor duration and level of donations (DS#12, DS#15) implies that the donation value from a donor is over 50% explained by the length of time they have donated. Long-term donors (LTD's) are ideal for XYZ to pursue with "relationship marketing" (Kotler & Keller, 2012) – "pulling" these donors into an ongoing and connected relationship with XYZ via face-to-face and/or virtual accounts, emails, mail lists, and perhaps celebration dinners and/or other key marketing events. XYZ should pursue having a list of LTDs and knowing and tracking their visits and donations, and should cultivate and track more donors that will remain loyal over time and can grow to higher amounts and frequencies of giving.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The greatest limitation in this research is the time limitation due to the comprehensiveness of the survey with no monetary subsidation; the gratis nature of the research is appropriate ethically but is limiting logistically. The survey items are not validated formally beyond simple field validation via collaboration with the author and the store manager based upon his knowledge and the author's marketing research knowledge and ability (Creswell, 2009). Thus the research primarily serves as providing specific feedback for XYZ and as a unique marketing research application for the author. Nevertheless, the information seems accurate, the regressions appear to be statistically valid in terms of assumptions of normality, linearity, independence of errors, and multicollinearity (Field, 2009), and the conclusions regarding relationship marketing seem strategically logical and promising. Future research could further examine the differences between ethnic preferences and/or the motivations of shoppers and donors, repeat the research for other XYZ stores, and/or perform similar research for other area thrifts/charities to ascertain if relationship marketing is similarly applicable.

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