



## SECOND HARVEST HEARTLAND

### **Donor Relationships**

Drivers, agency staff, and volunteers are the face of Food Rescue to any store. When visiting donors you are representing Minnesota's food banks. Your professionalism validates the positive perception of the Food Rescue program. Positive interactions encourage future donations and healthy community relationships.

#### **Positive interaction leads to consistent donations**

**Customer Service:** The process of caring for our partner stores as respected businesses and vital donors. The importance of our donor relationships should never be underestimated or undervalued. Optimal service builds trust and relations.

#### **Who is the customer?**

Our customer is each store, store manager, department manger, receiver and employee, store customers and other vendors in the store. Our goal is to make donating as easy as possible for the stores as the alternative creating waste.

#### **Examples of maintaining good relationships with stores:**

- **Opening doors for store customers**
- **Knowing names of managers and receivers**
- **Keeping designated areas in stores cleaned and stocked**
- **Prompt response to store concern**

**Customers don't care what you know  
Until they know you care!**



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### Examples of Positive Communication

- Communication
- Empathy
- Respect

From time to time a store may ask you something you do not have an answer for or a challenge will arise. Using positive scripts can show that you respect the store and the program.

### Positive Scripts or Key Phrases

#### Don't Say

#### Use instead

“I don't know”

“That's a good question”

“Let me find out and get back with you.”

**(Commit a day or time in which you can follow up)**

“We can't do that”

“That may be tough, lets see what I (we) can do.”

**(Find alternative solutions)**

“You need to...”

“Next time can we please do X this way?”

“It would be great if.... “

**Make the stores feel heard**  
**Make the stores feel understood**  
**Make the stores feel respected**  
**Make the stores feel helped**  
**Make the stores feel appreciated**



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### **Driver /Program Coordinator Communication**

Communication to each other and the stores is the most important piece of building a successful program. If challenges arise in store, the quicker we respond and resolve the issue, the more our stores are reassured of the programs reliability.

The relationship continues past the first introduction of the program to the store. By working in partnership with a company or store, you will build a relationship that can last the lifetime of the partnership.

### **How do we build relationships?**

The easiest way to build the relationship is to talk and ask questions. Your program should have one person (driver, coordinator, director, board member, volunteer) who can make extra effort to talk with store personnel on an ongoing basis. Even small programs need to find one person who could commit 1 or 2 hours per month checking in with the stores. Ask key store employees how we are doing, how the program is working and is there anything that we can do as a team to improve? Do not feel intimidated by hard questions or questions you are unsure of answers. **However, do not make up answers or guess!** Use simple scripts to reassure stores that you hear their concerns and set the time to find the answers and report back.

With time constraints in many programs, how do we have time to build relationships?  
How can we help our contact for the stores maximize their time?

- Have a list of store and department managers handy, ask your drivers to update any changes of key employees.
- Keep a running log of questions or comment for each store , note if an issue has been resolved
- Notes can be a handy reminder and ways to bridge conversations for your store representative. Brief notes such as “loves dogs” or “going to Mexico for wedding anniversary “can help you find common ground in conversation. The personal touch makes us partners and not just donor recipients.