

University of Idaho Uses Video Requests to Send Personalized ThankViews to their Donors



60

Student Videos Received through Video Request

Features Used

- Branded Assets
- Merge Fields
- Metrics

The Challenge: How to Reach Donors Digitally and Still Keep it Personal?

In 2017, for the first Vandal Giving Day, donors were primarily thanked through a direct mail piece. “Our program was very much traditional in the sense of phone, direct mail programs,” said Eric Billings, the Director of Annual Giving at University of Idaho. After seeing a spike in online donations, he recognized that his donors would like more digital forms of stewardship including video. Hoping to involve students as much as possible, Eric sought an easy way to wrangle these busy young Vandals to create the video content for him in a way that ensured a high level of participation.

ThankView Solution: Use ThankView’s Video Request to Quickly Gather Student Thank You

For the second Vandal Giving Day, Billings sought a different way to engage with donors. “I really wanted to find another cool way, obviously since they gave digitally, I wanted to digitally engage them and steward them digitally, too,” Billings said. He used ThankView to thank higher end donors as well as all of our donors who did a matching gift or a challenge gift on the day of giving.

The videos that donors received featured current Idaho students, which Billings easily gathered using ThankView’s video request feature. “I don’t really have the time in my job to wrangle students and have them come down to my office and schedule time,” he said. “I really liked that I could send a video request



University of Idaho student Dustin thanks donors for their help during Vandal Giving Day

[to students] and at their home or in their dorm they can record their video.” Inspired by the video request’s mobile friendly format, some students even used iconic campus locations as their video’s backdrops.

If the audio was unclear or a student mispronounced a name, Billings would reply with feedback and have students re-record. Billings was not the only one that benefited from the convenience of the video request feature: “[The students] all thought it was super easy. I think they really enjoyed the fact that they could do it from their house.” They ultimately created dozens of videos using the video request feature.

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The Results: Over 70% Open Rate!

The campaign was a rousing success, with an open rate of 72.7% and a clickthrough rate of 57.8%, higher than their usual email sends. Billings attributes this to the uniqueness and whimsy of the ThankView experience. “There’s something kind of fun about seeing an envelope open,” he said. “Kind of that nostalgic feeling of when you would check the mail, right?”

Billings says that using ThankView allowed Idaho to accomplish its goal of stewarding donors in a creative way that demonstrated that their gift was meaningful to the whole Vandal community. It also served as an exclamation point for a meaningful day across campus: “It’s also a huge morale boost for our alumni community and they have really bought into giving day to come together to celebrate being a Vandal. We usually have high open rates for emails but nothing around 70%. That was crazy.” Next year, Billings says he hopes to use ThankView to thank donors in real time as donations come in, hopefully driving them back to their website in order to make an additional gift.