

HOUSTON SYMPHONY

LEAGUE

Driving Revenue through Redefining Membership Dues



PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

With an ever increasing need to raise more funds for the Houston Symphony, the Houston Symphony League had to be creative in finding new ways to do so. Three changes were made to encourage members to renew or join at a higher level. First, we decided to **add benefits** to our higher levels of membership of \$250 and above which we had never done before. Second, a \$2,000 level was added to “**stretch**” the dues up a major level to see if we could get more higher-level dues especially at the \$1,000 level. Third, the membership levels were **named with a musical theme** to sound more interesting and attractive. Project Lead: Leslie Nossaman peoranun07@gmail.com..

GOALS:

One goal was to create benefits that would **incentivize** people to either join as a new member at a higher level or renew and move up at least one level. A related goal was to create benefits that would not conflict with the Houston Symphony donor benefits and complement theirs to increase tickets. We also had a goal of \$47,000 in membership dues.

STRATEGIES:

The benefits were created in concert with the Houston Symphony staff to assure we did not overlap or compete with any of their donor benefits. Benefits include items such as an invitation to meet musicians, drink tickets in the Symphony hall, access to the Green Room, and having your name highlighted in various public printed materials.

We had modeled an increase of 30% at each level yet we were surprised we did not have the number of additional numbers at the lower levels but had a significantly higher increase of numbers of higher levels.





One of the benefits included free Champagne table service at our major fundraising event. Our strategy was to encourage attendance at the fundraiser. We also added Symphony-provided events such as invitations to a Meet and Greet with an Artist, a Meet the Orchestra, and private rehearsals. The strategy was to engage the members to further connect with the Houston Symphony and thereby potentially purchase tickets or subscriptions. Or even become a new donor.

Our higher levels and their corresponding names were \$250 - Concerto \$500 - Sonata, \$1,000 - Fanfare, and \$2,000 - Symphony (the new level).

One of the extra benefits at the \$2000 level was a Baccarat Lucky butterfly. These were gifted by a generous donor. We wanted the highest level members to have something that they can look at, enjoy, and think of the Houston Symphony League and Houston Symphony.



RESULTS:

All goals were met and exceeded.

The benefits had an impact. We had **50 members in this project year** who paid at the higher levels which is up from **30 members in the previous year**. This resulted in an **additional \$14,250** in membership dues. This represents around 11% of our total donation to the Houston Symphony for this project year. The largest increase came from the number of members at the \$1,000 level. Ten members joined at the \$1,000 level in the project year, up from one in the previous year. One member joined at the new \$2,000 level. We also exceeded our goal of \$47,000 in membership dues to result in \$56,200 in dues.

IMPACT:

So, for minimal upfront effort we were able to increase our dues not only for this project year but in a way that would translate into future years' growth from membership dues. For example, after only seven months, we have a total of **59 members this year** who have joined at the higher dues levels. This compares to the total of **50 members for the entire year that this submission covers**.