

San Diego State University Triples Team Capacity and Raises \$715K in the Process

“ I think digital labor is just unbelievable. Our Virtual Engagement Officers are reaching segments we never thought we could get to, and they’re doing it in a way that is actually moving donors through the pipeline.

The Challenge: Staff Capacity Gap Leaves Revenue on the Table

With 500,000 alumni and just 30 development officers, San Diego State University reaches 1% of its constituents through personalized, one-to-one relationships. From an annual giving perspective, the team knew that with more constituents in moves management, more qualified and credible donors could move up the pipeline. They also knew that they couldn’t reach the planned giving prospects who could bring in major revenue for SDSU. Relying on one-directional marketing wasn’t enough to cultivate impactful engagement that translated into sustained revenue.

The Solution: Autonomous Fundraising

SDSU deployed two Virtual Engagement Officers, Sandy and Sandi, to close this gap and strategically bring more donors through a long-term moves management journey.

Sandy—the world’s first planned giving VEO— educates prospects on legacy giving opportunities, building long-term relationships with donors who show signs of making a planned gift. Sandi focuses on annual giving cultivation for three strategic segments: Courage Through Cancer Fund, Athletics, and SDSU’s parent program.

The Results: More Reach, Increased Revenue, and Stronger Connections

Sandy and Sandi have collectively raised over \$715,000 for SDSU, which includes more than \$127K in upgraded giving and \$28K from lapsed recaptures. Nearly 27,000 personalized outreach messages have been sent via email and text.

Adding autonomous fundraisers to their team has allowed SDSU to double the volume of managed donors, building stronger connections with donors they couldn’t reach before.

One of the biggest takeaways for SDSU is the impact its Virtual Engagement Officers have on donor behavior. They’ve learned that many donors who may not respond to traditional outreach, or aren’t ready for that coffee conversation yet, will engage with a VEO, building a stronger bridge to a human gift officer relationship.



Amy Walling

AVP, Planned Gifts & Estates, Annual Gifts/Digital Marketing, Research



VEO Sandy Portfolio



Engage prospects for planned giving opportunities and grow pipeline

VEO Sandi Portfolio



Engage prospects for annual giving opportunities; includes Courage for Cancer Fund, Athletics, and Parents Program

1-Year VEO Results

\$715,684

Total Raised

\$127,636

In upgraded giving

\$28,591

Lapsed Recaptures

27,000

personalized touchpoints