

AUTONOMOUS FUNDRAISING CUSTOMER STORIES

STRENGTHENING THE BASE OF THE PYRAMID AT INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Profile

- Public University founded in 1865
- Terre Haute, IN
- ~110,000 alumni
- 7 frontline fundraisers



Strengthening the Base of the Pyramid

10 Months

- **\$160,502 raised**
- **1,285 gifts**
- **\$8,821 from lapsed donors**
- **14,000 personalized messages**



Samantha,
Indiana State's VEO

Opportunity: Strengthening the Base of the Pyramid

Indiana State University closed its second-ever comprehensive campaign on June 30 of this year, surpassing its \$100M goal more than a year ahead of schedule. Yet as the campaign wound down, leaders recognized a gap in their advancement structure.

With 110,000 alumni and only seven frontline fundraisers, the vast majority of annual giving donors did not receive the one-to-one engagement needed to stay connected and make giving consistent. Most of Indiana State's resources were dedicated to major gifts, leaving the base of the giving pyramid under-resourced.

To sustain momentum beyond the campaign, Indiana State University needed a way to engage this large group of loyal but unmanaged donors—improving retention, boosting participation, and setting the stage for future philanthropy.

Solution: Trusted Digital Labor

Indiana State University became the first institution in Indiana to launch a Virtual Engagement Officer (VEO).

Leadership gave Samantha, Indiana State University's VEO, a portfolio of annual giving donors with recent gift activity who were not assigned to a gift officer, along with foundation members who opted in. The goal: **strengthen retention, increase participation, and build sustainable support** from this under-engaged segment.

Through personalized outreach, stewardship touches, and real-time engagement tracking, the Samantha expanded Indiana State University's reach while seamlessly handing conversations to staff when human connections were needed.

This consistent, scalable coverage at the base of the pyramid created new fundraising capacity without adding staff—helping Indiana State University close its campaign strong and carry forward its culture of care.

Results:

In the first ten months, Indiana State's Virtual Engagement Officer, Samantha, demonstrated the ability to strengthen donor relationships and generate gifts as the natural outcome of engagement.

Samantha raised **\$160,502 from 1,285 gifts**, including **\$8,821 from lapsed donors** who re-engaged after years of inactivity. Over this same period, the VEO sent nearly **14,000 personalized messages** and held 543 conversations with alumni—interactions that often translated into renewed giving, increased event attendance, and even testimonials that Advancement staff used in appeals and campaigns.

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Most of our team's resources are dedicated to major gifts. Samantha allows us to strengthen the base of the pyramid and give more alumni the personal engagement they deserve.



Andrea Angel
Vice President of University Advancement,
CEO of the Indiana State University Foundation



Indiana State's VEO Highlights in 10 months

- \$160,502 raised from the portfolio
- 1,285 gifts secured, including \$8,821 from lapsed donors
- 14,000 outgoing messages sent with 190 donor conversations
- Increased alumni event attendance through VEO-to-staff handoffs