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Keeping Fund Raisers Honest Commentary

by Sarah Greenberg

*Sarah Greenberg, former Standards Chair had this to say. The PMRS Rules of Conduct and Good Practice are very clear on this issue. The relevant passage (Section 2.1 on page 3) reads: **The Responsibility of the Members to the Public:***

"Since most marketing research depends on the cooperation of respondents, members should ensure a continuing climate of goodwill, responsibility and trust. Respondents should be left positively disposed to marketing research. Therefore, a meticulous standard of good manners should be maintained at all times. Marketing researchers have a direct responsibility to ensure that respondents are in no way embarrassed or hindered in other ways as result of any interview. The purpose of interviewing must be limited to the finding out of information or observation of reactions relevant to the research problem at hand."

"Interviewing must not be used as a disguise for selling or developing sales leads, nor for deliberately influencing the opinions of those interviewed. Client products must not be given to respondents to develop sales leads."

Of course, it is not likely to be PMRS members who engage in this type of activity. Over the past year, Sarah has received four complaints. Myron's article indicates that frugging is perhaps more prevalent than the number of complaints indicates.

The National Society of Fund Raising Executives (Toronto Chapter) was also contacted. Rob Brown, Membership Chair said "Frugging is just another form of the bait and snatch technique. It is 100% against our code of ethics and that of the Canadian Direct Marketing Association (CDMA) and the Canadian Telemarketing Association (CTA). At best, it is misleading and, at worst fraudulent." He indicated that fund raises get better results by being honest with donors. The purpose of any call or direct mail piece should be disclosed clearly, early in the call or written piece. Perhaps, the one grey area that was mentioned by Brown was the need to prequalify donors by asking a few questions. "Let's say an opera company has various subscription packages. They may wish to determine the habits of the potential purchasers through two or three questions and then direct them to the right package."