

# John Sutton & Associates

## Fall 2012: The Pledge Drive Procrastinator Amnesty Package Overview

NPR and John Sutton & Associates have partnered to provide stations with a fundraising services package designed to get more contributions at the beginning of the last day of the fund drive.

Pledge Drive Procrastinator Amnesty is a messaging strategy for stations doing traditional on-air fund drives. The concept is simple.

- On the next-to-last day of the drive use moderate messaging urging listeners to give now to avoid being a pledge drive procrastinator. This sets up the amnesty program on the last day.
- During the first hour of the last day the on-air hosts offer, tongue-in-cheek, Pledge Drive Procrastinator Amnesty to anyone who gives by the end of the first hour.
- The messaging gets a bit more urgent near the deadline, not unlike a challenge grant deadline.

JSA has tested this approach in three markets, on news and music stations, with exceptional results. It seems a little corny, but contributions and money raised increased between 300% and 1,000% during the first hour of the last day. Most of the gains were in phone contributions but web giving was also up significantly.

This package includes:

- This how-to guide with instructions on implementing the messaging strategy
- Next-to-last day on-air scripts
- Scripts to use for the last day
- Outlines for constructing the most effective on-air breaks
- On-air spots from NPR personalities that play up the joke

Questions about implementing this at your station? Please write John Sutton or Sonja Lee. Their emails are [john@radiosutton.com](mailto:john@radiosutton.com) and [sonjalee@radiosutton.com](mailto:sonjalee@radiosutton.com).

### Fundraising on the Last Morning

JSA recommends scheduling 5 to 6 pitch breaks on the last morning with up to 26 minutes of pitching during the hour, not including local traffic, weather or underwriting. These regular items from your morning show should be present, even during fundraising. However, we do recommend dropping on-air promos for other shows, events, or other fundraising activities.

It's best to schedule slightly longer breaks at the end of the half-hour and at the end of the hour, even if your station does not pitch goals on the air. Many listeners use these times as benchmarks for events in their morning routines. They need to be doing something by half past or before the beginning of the next hour. It's a good idea to create time and space for them to give *before* they move to the next event in their morning.

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## Fall 2012: Fall 2012: The Pledge Drive Procrastinator Amnesty Package

### Pledge Drive Procrastinator Amnesty

Many listeners respond to fund drive deadlines and this is a different way to create one. The idea behind the Amnesty messaging is to have a little fun with listeners and get the last morning off to a good start. We recommend using this messaging during the first hour of the last day. Part of your justification is that “early risers can’t possibly be procrastinators!”

Count down the hour much like you count down a challenge grant or goal. We do not recommend having a goal, match, challenge, or sweepstakes deadline in this hour. Procrastinator Amnesty is the deadline. A sweeps or challenge that has a later deadline can be pitched. You can also pitch premiums. Be sure to pitch sustainers, a lot, if you have a sustainer plan.

Have fun with it! But don’t overdo it. Listener Focused Fundraising research shows that a little self-deprecating humor around the pledge drive serves you well. Properly implemented, this messaging strategy communicates that you can have a little fun while doing the serious business of fundraising.

### Break Outlines

JSA uses break outlines to organize the on-air messaging of every pitch break. A sample outline for Pledge Drive Procrastinator Amnesty is below. This is just one of many ways you can organize the break, but no matter how you do it, start with a strong set-up and try to get in all of the elements.

A: Break set-up w/Amesty  
B: Sustainer or How-to-Give  
A: Case (Station Value, Funding Fact, Listener Comments)  
B: New Member or Incentive (premiums, etc)  
----- Amnesty spot -----  
A: Amnesty (follow-up with minutes left to go)  
B: New Member or Incentive (premiums, etc)  
A: Case (Station Value, Funding Fact, Listener Comments)  
B: Sustainer or How-to-Give  
A: Last Day/Wrap up with Amnesty mention

The average pitch should be 25-30 seconds. Longer pitches reduce urgency. The set-ups for Amnesty will run about 45 seconds and no other pitch should be longer than set-ups for this messaging strategy. Use the Amnesty message no more than 3 times per break – beginning, middle, and end. **Use only one spot per break.** It is okay to extend the Amnesty message from a spot with your own pitch.

### Amnesty Scripts

We’ve attached some sample break set-ups and scripts along with some good quotations about procrastination. We also have provided scripts for you to use throughout the next-to-last day of the drive. Use these as a guide to help pitch this message. It’s best to learn the essence of scripts and perform them in your own words than to read the scripts word for word. Practicing a little before going on the air with this is highly recommended.

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## Fall 2012: The Pledge Drive Procrastinator Amnesty Package

**Next-to-Last Day Pitch Points:** Use these up to twice per hour on the next-to-last day of the drive (and find some horrific punishment for anyone who uses the word “penultimate.”)

It's the next to last day of the fund drive. You've been meaning to give. Maybe you even had your hand on the phone... or your wallet... but then there was a distraction. Well, the time to give is almost gone. Don't be a pledge drive procrastinator! It only takes two minutes. Please get it done now. [STATION\_PHONE] or give on-line at [STATION\_WEBSITE].

Procrastinators unite! (pause) What's that? You're not a procrastinator? Well you've been putting off that contribution. It's the next to last day of the [STATION\_NAME] fund drive. This is your moment to shine. Please give now to support (PROGRAM NAME) and help end the fund drive successfully! [STATION\_PHONE] or give on-line at [STATION\_WEBSITE].

The [STATION\_NAME] fund drive is coming to an end tomorrow. Have you made your contribution? Please, procrastinate no longer! Your contribution is essential so we can continue to pay for (PROGRAM NAME) in the months to come. Every gift matters... 5... 10 or maybe 30 dollars a month. [STATION\_PHONE] or give on-line at [STATION\_WEBSITE].

You said you would do it. You said you'd make a contribution to help pay for your listening. But now... the pledge drive is almost over...it ends tomorrow. Have you gotten around to it? Well this is your chance to get it done. Don't be a procrastinator! It takes just two minutes to give... and when you do... you'll feel great about doing your part to pay for (PROGRAM NAME). [STATION\_PHONE] or give on-line at [STATION\_WEBSITE].

Tomorrow is the last day of this fund drive. Thanks to everyone who has already made a contribution. If you have yet to give, you're running out of time to support (PROGRAM NAME). Make it known that (PROGRAM NAME) is important to you by giving now. [STATION\_PHONE] or give on-line at [STATION\_WEBSITE].

It's the next to last day of this fund drive. Give now... and you officially will not be a procrastinator! Every gift matters... every dollar makes a difference. So please, do what you've been meaning to do and make your contribution now. [STATION\_PHONE] or give on-line at [STATION\_WEBSITE].

You're not the procrastinating type! So don't put your contribution off until later. It really does take just two minutes of your time. Please take those few minutes now and get it done with. Then it won't be hanging over you. [STATION\_PHONE] or give on-line at [STATION\_WEBSITE].

The [STATION\_NAME] fund drive comes to an end tomorrow. How time flies. You probably thought about giving on the first day. Or maybe over the weekend. Perhaps you promised your spouse you'd take care of it... and then you didn't. Time is just about out! Please don't put off your contribution any longer. [STATION\_PHONE] or give on-line at [STATION\_WEBSITE].

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## Fall 2012: The Pledge Drive Procrastinator Amnesty Package

### Sample Set-ups:

This is the [STATION\_NAME] fund drive.

I'm \_\_\_\_\_ . Our Fall fund drive is ending today. And if you have yet to give...well you are venturing into procrastinator territory. But I'm going to go out on my own here...since it is just us... and offer you an extra incentive if you give by \_\_\_\_\_(time). How about a little pledge drive procrastinator amnesty? Give now and you will be free...let off the hook! We don't have much more time. After \_\_\_\_\_(time) the boss will be here and the plug on amnesty will be pulled. You know we count on listener contributions to pay the bills... and it only takes a gift of 5 or 10 bucks a month when you call [STATION\_PHONE]. Or give on-line at [STATION\_WEBSITE]. Here's \_\_\_\_\_ with more.

I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm here with \_\_\_\_\_. Thanks to everyone who has already given during our [STATION\_NAME] fund drive. If you have yet to give...you're about to become a procrastinator. Not a good label for a public radio type like yourself. Okay...so it's just us this morning. I'm going to go a little rogue here and offer you pledge drive procrastinator amnesty because you're a go-getter... you're up early...and you deserve a break. So for the next \_\_\_\_ minutes I can give you that break and offer pledge drive procrastinator amnesty. Can't do it all day. Just until \_\_\_\_ (time). We count on listener contributions to pay for (PROGRAM\_NAME) and all it takes is 5...10....or 15 dollars a month. [STATION\_PHONE]. Or give on-line at [STATION\_WEBSITE].

I'm \_\_\_\_\_ asking you to make your contribution to [STATION\_NAME] now. Listener support is our most important source of money... and the fund drive is ending today... which pretty much makes you a procrastinator if you haven't given yet. Didn't know you were gonna get hit with that one, did you? You're probably up early each morning, listening, getting all your chores and work done. You take pride in that. Well the bosses aren't in yet and I'm feeling generous. So right now I'm offering you pledge drive procrastinator amnesty. You have \_\_\_\_\_ minutes left to get your contribution in and not be a procrastinator. Call [STATION\_PHONE] or give on-line at [STATION\_WEBSITE].

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## Fall 2012: The Pledge Drive Procrastinator Amnesty Package

### Sample Amnesty Pitches

Good morning. It's (time check) on the last day of the fund drive. And if you've been meaning to give... but haven't yet done so... then you've reached procrastination territory. But it's early in the morning... and you're an early riser... so there's no way you can really be a procrastinator. Now I'm not sure if I'm allowed to do this... but we early risers need to stick together... so I'm going to offer your pledge drive procrastinator amnesty if you get your contribution in here in the next few minutes. How about it? Avoid getting hung with that procrastinator label... join us as a sustaining giver to [STATION\_NAME]. Call [STATION\_PHONE]... that's [STATION\_PHONE] or sign up as a sustaining giver on-line at [STATION\_WEBSITE].

The fund drive ends today. Have you made that contribution? A little disappointed that you waited until the last minute... again? Well we have an offer you can't refuse. Give right now... and you get pledge drive procrastinator amnesty. That's right. It's never been offered before and who knows if we'll ever get a chance to offer it again. But an early riser like you can't really be a procrastinator... so we're giving you a chance to get off the hook. Give by (end of first hour)... and amnesty is yours. But don't wait until the last minute this morning! Do it now by becoming a sustaining giver to [STATION\_NAME]... and you'll never risk being a pledge drive procrastinator again! Call [STATION\_PHONE]... that's [STATION\_PHONE] or sign up as a sustaining giver on-line at [STATION\_WEBSITE].

Do not join the procrastination nation. Make your contribution to [STATION\_NAME] right now and you will receive pledge drive procrastination amnesty. We know how it goes... you think you'll give on the first day of the drive but something more pressing comes up. You're close to giving during the middle of the drive... but your wallet isn't close by. Now you find yourself on the last day of the fund drive... and you have yet to give. Under normal circumstances... you would be a procrastinator... but not today... at least not right now. That's because if you give in the next \_\_\_\_\_ minutes... then you get pledge drive procrastinator amnesty. We don't even know if we're allowed to do this. But heck, we're all early risers here. There's no way we can be procrastinators. Make your contribution. Get amnesty. Then get on with your day. [STATION\_PHONE]... that's [STATION\_PHONE] or give on-line at [STATION\_WEBSITE].

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## Fall 2012: The Pledge Drive Procrastinator Amnesty Package - Quotations

"Procrastination is the art of keeping up with yesterday." Humorist and Journalist Don Marquis

"You may delay, but time will not." -- Benjamin Franklin

"Someday is not a day of the week." -- Author Unknown

"The best way to get something done is to begin." -- Author Unknown

"I do my work at the same time each day - the last minute." -- Author Unknown

"Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today." -- Thomas Jefferson

"Never put off until tomorrow what you can do the day after tomorrow." -- Mark Twain

"If and When were planted, and Nothing grew." -- Proverb

"In a moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing to do. The worst thing you can do is nothing." -- Theodore Roosevelt

"He who hesitates is last." -- Mae West

"Procrastination is like a credit card: it's a lot fun until you get the bill." -- Actor Christopher Parker

"Procrastination is the art of keeping up with yesterday and avoiding today." -- Dr. Wayne Dyer

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." -- Anne Frank

"Yesterday is a cancelled check. Tomorrow is a promissory note. Today is the only cash you have, so spend it wisely." -- Personal Trainer Kim Lyons

"Do or do not do. There is no try." -- Master Yoda

"The sooner I fall behind, the more time I have to catch up." -- Author Unknown

"If it weren't for the last minute, I wouldn't get anything done." -- Author Unknown

"Procrastination makes easy things hard, hard things harder." - American aphorist Mason Cooley

"Nothing is so fatiguing as the eternal hanging on of an uncompleted task." -- Psychologist and Philosopher William James