



*Christine S. O'Hara, Executive Director  
Alumni Relations and Annual Giving, Niagara University*

“Using the services of Compu-Mail has resulted in our direct mail process being more efficient, timely, and cost-effective. The Compu-Mail staff has extraordinary knowledge and expertise in the mailing industry and they are consummate professionals.”

# Segmentation is the Key

*Niagara University proves targeting is the only way to **really** reach people.*

Christine O’Hara knows what works. Currently the Executive Director of Alumni Relations & Annual Giving at Niagara University and a Niagara University alumna herself, O’Hara has been working in education development and fundraising for more than 15 years.

Over that time, development campaigns have evolved from simple mail packs with just a few recipient versions, to multiple versions sent simultaneously within a single mail stream – incorporating variable data to target the message. Add in email marketing and multiple social media channels, and it becomes clear that today’s higher education development campaigns have become increasingly sophisticated, integrated efforts.

## **Direct Mail is Still the Cornerstone**

Web-based media have taken on important roles in development and alumni relations – providing a great way to stay connected with alumni and supporters, and to reinforce Niagara University’s message – but much of the heavy lifting is still achieved through direct mail.

Direct mail is also where **data intelligence** truly shines. Niagara University relies on Compu-Mail to assist in managing and leveraging their data. By ensuring the right message gets to the right person, they are better able to capture that person’s attention and continue a relevant conversation. Relationships are everything, and O’Hara’s team is responsible for the critical task of maintaining the lifelong relationship students have with their alma mater.

## **Data Intelligence Achieves Results**

Niagara University’s direct mail outreach is based on data segmentation—and, as O’Hara explains further, “Segmentation is the only way you can really get to people. And you need to do it the way people segment themselves: by interest.”

By utilizing the data they maintain on interests pertaining to each individual, and their unique giving history, Niagara University can personalize the message of each mail piece more effectively.

Their diligent segmentation, facilitated by Compu-Mail’s data and production process, **results in more dollars raised**. Last year’s capital campaign, the

Promise of Niagara, exceeded all fundraising goals and was the university's most successful campaign ever, raising more than \$81 million.

### Relationships Are Everything

O'Hara has found that relationships are important not only in the way her team interacts with their donors, but also in maintaining the best creative and production team to get the job done.



She values her relationship with her dedicated account team at Compu-Mail and credits it as much of the reason Niagara University's mail campaigns have seen such success. She notes that personal attention and a focus on customer service take you a long way. Compu-Mail's team views Niagara University not just as a client, but with an invested sense of ownership in each campaign's success, taking the time to understand Niagara University's product and needs.

Some samples of the various printed letters, brochures, and special mailings produced for Niagara University, including the highly successful Promise of Niagara campaign.

## What's Next?

*What does Christine O'Hara see as the future of fundraising?*

Storytelling. Crafting a message that tells a story makes for a more personal connection, and can weave through direct mail, other printed pieces, the website, emails, and the online alumni community for maximum impact.