



Using the Internet to Raise Funds and Build Donor Relationships

TOOLS, TIPS AND TECHNIQUES FOR BOOSTING DONATIONS

INCLUDES:

Key benchmarking metrics for measuring your organization's online success

Real examples of effective fundraising campaigns from nonprofit organizations of all sizes

Best practices for effective online fundraising campaigns

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Most nonprofit organizations understand the importance of the Internet for increasing fundraising dollars and improving donor loyalty. The Internet is an efficient channel for nonprofits to reach more people and increase support.

This guide was created by a team of experts with the experience of working on Internet projects with nonprofit organizations throughout the United States and Canada. It's designed specifically for nonprofit professionals as a handbook about the fundamentals of online fundraising. It describes how to build a file of email addresses, develop strong online relationships with supporters, and execute effective online fundraising campaigns that turn those supporters into loyal donors. This guide also covers some of the basics of email marketing — the cornerstone of any online program — as well as online trends, such as social media and peer-to-peer fundraising.

Throughout the guide, you'll notice words or phrases that appear in **bold type**. These terms are defined in the glossary at the end.

For more detailed best practices about online fundraising and marketing, refer to the "Additional Resources" section at the end of this guide, or visit www.convio.com/our-research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction to Online Fundraising	4
Getting Started	6
Online Fundraising Campaigns: The Basics	11
Tapping Your Constituents for Volunteer Fundraising	15
Organizing for Success	19
Measuring Online Fundraising Success	20
Online Fundraising in Action: Examples from Successful Nonprofits	27
Spotlight on Convio	37
Additional Resources	39
Glossary	40

INTRODUCTION TO ONLINE FUNDRAISING

The trends simply can't be ignored: Online fundraising continues to generate positive year-over-year growth¹. And with more people than ever — including middle and major donors — giving online, nonprofit organizations must make the Internet a core part of their fundraising strategies to survive and thrive for years to come².

An increasing number of online success stories prove that the Internet is an efficient and effective channel for boosting donations. And the fact that Internet software designed specifically for nonprofits is more readily available and more affordable than ever makes a strong online strategy and presence within reach for any size nonprofit. By ramping up your online fundraising efforts, you can make the following strides:

- » Give your supporters more control
- » Maximize your web presence
- » Become more strategic with your email communications

Here are some of the advantages of online fundraising that nonprofits are recognizing:

Cost-Effectiveness

Traditionally, development professionals have relied heavily on direct mail and telemarketing for their fundraising campaigns. The relatively high cost of these methods, however, makes them impractical for the frequent communications with potential and existing donors necessary to grow relationships. Supplementing traditional fundraising methods with cost-effective email communications allows you to communicate more frequently and maintain an ongoing relationship with constituents — key for improving both online and offline fundraising results.

Timeliness

Organizations often have an urgent need for donations, or have a small window to raise funds in the wake of a current event. In these cases, there's no time to write, design, print and send a direct mail piece. The immediate nature of email communications and social media channels allow you to be nimble; you can execute fundraising campaigns and respond to timely issues in a matter of hours.

1 *The Convio Online Marketing Nonprofit Benchmark Index™ Study*

2 *The Wired Wealthy: Using the Internet to Connect Your Middle and Major Donors*

Quick Results

With direct mail appeals, there can be a response lag time of several weeks, or even months. Email appeals, however, typically return 80 percent of total responses within 48 hours of a mailing. This allows you to evaluate the results of your fundraising campaign and quickly adjust your strategy as needed. In addition, providing donors with the option to give online allows you to receive the funds immediately and automatically, rather than waiting on the mail for a check that must be manually processed.

Insights into Donor Behavior and Giving Trends

You can track how many people open emails and click on links within emails to your website, allowing you to quickly analyze the effectiveness of your fundraising campaigns. This also gives you insight into donor behavior, giving trends, and what motivates each of your donors, so you can improve future campaigns.

List Segmentation and Targeted Appeals

Internet communications allow you to develop a complete view of constituents by encouraging them to volunteer information about their interests through online surveys and forms. You can then segment your list and target groups for communications and appeals based on their interests and history with your organization. This approach ensures that every communication is relevant and valuable to each constituent, and thus increases the likelihood that individuals will respond.

This guide covers basic concepts for taking advantage of the Internet for your fundraising programs. From building a list of email addresses and developing donor relationships online to creating effective online fundraising campaigns and measuring online success, it will help you to develop online fundraising programs that get results. It also touches on recent trends in online fundraising so that you can understand what your peers are doing to leverage the latest tools and technology.

GETTING STARTED

Building an Email Address File

The first step in executing any effective online program is to build a list of constituent email addresses. Adding new donors, volunteers, advocates, and supporters to your list is important for growing your donor base because email can and should play a key role in stewardship and donor renewal.

Consider this: By gathering constituents' email addresses, you can send email newsletters and other online communications to constituents to develop an online relationship with them, and also use online surveys to learn more about their interests and opinions so you can make an educated first appeal. This type of online relationship building would be cost- and time-prohibitive through traditional means, such as direct mail or telemarketing.

The following proven tactics will help to get your online program off the ground.



Let us help you create your strategy and launch successful list building and fundraising campaigns.

See how we've helped other clients:
www.convio.com/portfolio

GATHER EMAIL ADDRESSES OFFLINE

Every time you communicate with current or prospective supporters, you have the opportunity to collect email addresses. Planned interactions such as renewal appeals, membership drives, and event invitations are perfect opportunities to ask for email addresses. Simply add an email address field to all response forms. At events where you will interact with a large number of constituents, set out a newsletter sign-up sheet or offer a giveaway for attendees who drop in a card with their name and email address.

Remember, when asking constituents for email addresses offline, you should emphasize the benefits they will receive by providing this information. Remind supporters that by communicating with them online, your organization can save money and time, allowing you to more effectively serve your mission. Also emphasize the benefit of timely communication: With email communications, you are better equipped to respond to compelling events and inform them quickly of important news, developments, events and programs.

TIP:

When collecting email addresses, be sure to let people know that the organization is collecting this information and how it will be used. Always give people a chance to opt out of receiving email by providing a check box that says something like, "I'd like to receive future mailings," which they can uncheck.

GATHER EMAIL ADDRESSES ONLINE

Your website is the best source for reaching new prospects and existing constituents, and collecting their email addresses. Visitors to your website have sought you out because they are interested in your organization. This existing affinity is a powerful incentive for online visitors to provide you with the information you need to build longer-lasting relationships with them online.

Provide a “quick” online registration mechanism

Use a web-based registration form that allows site visitors to register easily and quickly. Remember that the more information you request, the less likely people will be to complete the entire form. So, think carefully about the information you want to capture, and minimize the number of required fields — name and email address should suffice. You can always ask for more information about that individual through follow-up communications so that you can build a detailed profile of your new supporter.

Give site registration prominent and clear placement

Dedicate a consistent area of your home page to promoting online registration. Place it in an eye-catching spot **above the fold** to reflect its importance. You might also use an image or graphic to draw attention to this message. Don't forget to promote registration throughout the rest of your website — you may consider including a registration link in your **page wrapper** so the message will be included on every page of your site.

Promote the benefits of online registration

Make registration compelling for your site visitors. Create special benefits for registered members, and link to a separate page explaining the perks, such as free email newsletters, or advance notification of upcoming events. Invite site visitors to register by using an action phrase such as “Register to receive updates” or “Sign up for our educational newsletter.”

Move beyond your traditional donor database

At the end of the day, successful fundraising comes down to the data an organization has on existing and prospective donors and the systems in place to manage it effectively and efficiently. Most traditional donor databases are built either for major donor fundraising or for direct mail. In either case they fail miserably at tracking and accounting for multichannel behavior such as interacting with an organization via email, direct mail, social media, etc. Today's modern donor is not just giving through multiple channels; they volunteer, advocate, participate in and, for some organizations receive services, as well as champion the cause to others. To be a successful fundraiser online or offline, organization's must choose a CRM/donor management system that helps track and manage relationships in one place and get a complete view of all constituents and their activities with your organization — without the limitations and hassles of your traditional donor database or multiple spreadsheets.



convio
COMMON GROUND™ CRM

The Convio Common Ground CRM system was designed to help nonprofit professionals build stronger relationships with your supporters — all of your supporters, not just donors. It reaches further than traditional donor databases, making it possible for you to pull together constituent information from multiple tools, across all of your organization's departments.

DRIVE TRAFFIC TO YOUR WEBSITE

Maximize traffic to your website by including your URL in your offline communications (e.g., ads, brochures, business cards, direct mail, phone hold recordings, or voice messages). Online channels and communications, such as Facebook™ and email newsletters, should link back to your site for more information. The idea is to tell prospects and supporters about the resources available to them on your website and keep the website content current and informative so that visitors will return.

You can also use **search engine optimization** (SEO) and the free Google Grants program for **search engine marketing** (SEM). With SEM, you want to “purchase” keywords to promote visibility. Keep in mind that searchers are pre-qualified prospects; you need to compel them to visit your website and act by crafting offers that are designed to drive traffic and registrations.

CALCULATE CONVERSION OF SITE VISITORS TO REGISTERED CONSTITUENTS

To determine whether you are effectively gathering email addresses online, you must understand how well your website is motivating visitors to register. To measure effectiveness at converting website visitors to registered constituents, track the conversion rate.

Here is the calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Number of registrations per month}}{\text{Total number of unique site visitors per month}} = \text{Conversion Rate (\%)}$$

For example, if 30 of every 1,000 visitors to your site register each month, the conversion rate is 3 percent. Typically, nonprofit organizations register 2 to 3 percent of all site visitors. During promotions, fundraising drives and other events, this rate may increase.

If your registration rate is low, consider these tactics:

- » Ask someone unfamiliar with your organization's website to go to the home page. He or she should find the registration option within five seconds. If the registration box or link is not prominent, valuable prospects may fail to register. Consider varying the position of the registration option on the page to gauge the effect. Often, top right-hand placement yields the best conversion rate.
- » Ask supporters if the incentive to register — which, for many groups, is a newsletter — would make them provide their email address.
- » Include a link to your organization's privacy policy near the registration box that explains how the information will be used; this may allay fears about potential misuse of email addresses.

TIP:

Look for online fundraising software that includes tools for automatically measuring website traffic. This will reduce, and possibly eliminate the need to manually calculate Web statistics.

BUILD YOUR LIST THROUGH VIRAL MARKETING

“Tell-a-friend” email — a type of **viral marketing** — can help you reach new supporters and grow your email file efficiently. In a viral campaign, your organization sends an email with a call-to-action (such as a solicitation for donations) to your existing email file, or to selected groups of constituents in the file. The email also asks recipients to forward the message to friends, relatives and co-workers so they, too, can get involved. When a new supporter from this previously untapped network of friends clicks through to your website to register and take action, you can ask for their permission to include them in future communications.

eCards are another way to build your email address list. Constituents can create their own email greetings — using your eCard template, with your organization’s branding — to send to their networks of friends and family.

CONSIDER USING LIST RENTALS OR AN EMAIL APPENDING SERVICE

To increase your email list, you can have a third-party list owner cross-promote your organization. They should do so by sending an email with their brand and a link to your website for interested parties to opt in to your email list.

If you have an extensive donor or supporter database, but few current email addresses, consider taking advantage of the growing number of **email append** services that will take a postal mail address and attempt to find a matching email address. These services will typically provide (for a fee) all email addresses from their database that don’t bounce. A cautionary note: This process does not obtain permission for you to add the email addresses to your list. Even if a constituent has a relatively strong offline relationship with your organization, that does not necessarily mean they are happy to receive email from you. The safe way to use an append service is by having the service send an email driving people to your website, and obtaining an explicit opt-in from site visitors. This results in a smaller list, but one of higher quality.

Developing Online Relationships with Supporters

Most development professionals understand the value of strong constituent relationships for driving donations. However, the high-touch nature of relationship building typically makes it impractical for use with every supporter. The Internet is a fast, cost-effective channel for constituent communications, enabling you to build online relationships quickly and easily. Sending email newsletters, notifications of upcoming events, and updates on your organization’s progress, as well as creating an online community, all help to keep your cause “top-of-mind” and make supporters feel more connected to your organization. This, in turn, makes them more likely to donate when you send an appeal.

Following are a few ways to begin building online relationships with your constituents.

FOCUS ON DONOR TREATMENT

The economics of direct mail fundraising, or the cost to produce and send a piece of mail, require an approach focused on solicitation; through almost every piece of direct mail they send, nonprofits must solicit a contribution to offset the cost. With this approach, however, there's little focus on treating a donor or prospect like a valued supporter because it seems as though you only contact them when you want money.

Online fundraising turns this approach around. Through email, you can communicate with donors and prospects at close to zero cost, so every acknowledgement and general update no longer has to be cost-justified. In addition, online constituent relationship management solutions make it easy to learn what is most important to donors and personalize updates and appeals according to their interests and giving history.

GIVE SUPPORTERS A VOICE

Supporters who feel they have a voice in the organization are more likely to contribute time and money. Create an ongoing conversation with constituents through online surveys, polls and petitions. In addition, create a constant narrative by regularly updating website content. Supporters will stay engaged online to see how your organization is progressing.

CREATE A SENSE OF SHARED IDENTITY

In addition to giving supporters the sense that they have a voice in your organization, it is important to make them feel part of the cause. Consider creating an **online community**, as well as online forums such as blogs, to allow constituents to voice their opinions, make suggestions, and communicate with other supporters as well as your organization's staff. The access to ideas and opinions on the site gives each supporter a sense of being part of the organization and part of a community.

Also, consider taking advantage of social media channels, such as Facebook, LinkedIn™, and Twitter™ to broaden your organization's reach by tapping into the networks of supporters. As you face increasing competition for donor dollars and supporters' time, social media can be a powerful way to keep your constituents engaged and involved.

TIP:

Be sure your online fundraising software includes constituent relationship management functionality, making it easy to learn what is most important to donors and personalize updates and appeals according to their interests and giving history.

MANAGE RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALL OF YOUR SUPPORTERS

Relationship management today requires knowing all of your contacts and supporters (not just donors), understanding their relationships with others, and coordinating those relationships into support for your cause. An increasing number of nonprofits are turning to Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) to take advantage of the customer relationship approaches that retailers like Amazon.com have used for years.

If you're still using a simple contact management system, consider looking into using a CRM system built for nonprofits. These systems are surprisingly cost-effective thanks to years of fine-tuning by industry leaders and evolving technical innovations. And, you can start reaping the following benefits of CRM relatively quickly:

- » You can use it to manage relationships with everyone involved with your organization
- » It connects with the other programs and applications you use on a daily basis
- » It gives you a total view of your supporters so you can optimize your communications with them based on history, interests, and other factors
- » It works with the technologies your constituents use to communicate: YouTube™, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn™, blogs, and more

LEARN MORE

For more tips on using CRM to manage your relationships with all of your supporters, refer to: *Toolbox for the Modern Nonprofit: Donor Management Made Easy*. See the "Additional Resources" section at the end of this guide.

ONLINE FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS: THE BASICS

Once you have begun to develop an online relationship with your constituents, it's time to make that first "ask." Consider the approaches in this section to ensure each email appeal and online campaign is as effective as possible.

Determining Objectives

It's critical to clearly understand the strategic objectives of your fundraising campaign before you get started. Setting objectives will help you sharpen your message and determine the best approach — from email newsletters and urgent news updates to email fundraising appeals — for your communications. It also will help you to effectively evaluate results and understand your return on investment.

For instance, your goal might be to improve awareness of your organization and acquire new donors among younger supporters aged 28-40. The campaign might include four different individual emails, executed over a 12-week period. The objective of the first communication might be to engage this demographic with an informational update on your organization's activities. The second email might be an invitation to a special event for younger supporters. And the third might include a fundraising appeal, followed by a reminder to those who have not yet donated.

Segmenting Your Email List to Target Specific Audiences

As with direct mail, you will improve response rates by segmenting your email file based on factors such as interests, donation history, gender, age, length of membership or any other defining characteristic, and then targeting supporters with specific messages. Here are a few techniques for gathering more information about your donors and prospects:

- » Regularly ask registrants to volunteer information about themselves — such as their preferences for specific causes — that will enable you to send more personalized communications. Include these questions in online surveys and forms, and create printed surveys for gathering information at events.
- » Conduct “profiling drives” of existing donors, offering them the opportunity to receive personalized information that matches their specific interests.
- » Ask donors and prospects for ZIP code information, which you can then use to send communications about events or news relevant to their local area.

Cross-Marketing to Reach More Donors

One of the greatest benefits of creating a database of email addresses with detailed profiles of each constituent is the ability to cross-market. For example, you may know through your profiles that several supporters have previously volunteered for your organization, but have never donated. This information indicates that they already have a strong affinity for your organization. Consider sending them a targeted email to thank them for past support and re-engaging them with your organization. Then, after re-establishing that relationship, send them another email encouraging them to donate.

Building the Online Fundraising Campaign

While setting goals and targeting your audience is the beginning of an effective online fundraising campaign, you should consider other campaign building blocks as well. The following approaches will maximize your online success.

CREATE COMPELLING MESSAGES THAT GET READ (THE TRUST RULE)

Email messages are the cornerstone of any online program. To ensure that each email message gets optimal response, follow the TRUST rule. Be sure each email is:

Timely

Time email messages around some kind of current event, holiday, or something else that’s happening with your organization. This approach will help grab the recipients’ interest.

Relevant

By including information specific to each constituents’ interests, each email communication from you will be more valuable to them.

Urgent

Email messages should make it clear why it's important for the recipient to act immediately. Otherwise, the message might sit for days without a response.

Specific

Make sure the reader can determine exactly what you want them to do, such as make a donation or sign up for an event, after reading your email message.

Tested

Test your email message and ensure all links work properly before you press send. In addition, run it through a **spam checker** to test for elements that might get your message caught in a spam filter. Also, test the message content for effectiveness by sending two or more messages — with a varied element in each message, such as the subject line — to a subset of your target audience. Then, send the most effective message to the remainder of the audience, without sending it again to the test group. (Your online fundraising software should allow you to do these types of tests.)

TIP:

Choose online fundraising software that allows you to automatically customize an email message based on each recipient's interests, geographic location or other unique characteristics from your database.

BUILD CONTEXT IN WHICH SUPPORTERS CAN PARTICIPATE

The Internet is an ideal vehicle for providing campaign context and for creating a sense of urgency. Take advantage of this by challenging supporters to participate in drives with hard deadlines and specific goals. Create the context — or use an existing context such as a breaking news event — and then give supporters the opportunity to take action and be heard within that context. For example, an animal welfare organization could create a campaign to raise funds for dog immunizations, with a stated goal to raise \$30,000 within the next three months. The group could then ask its supporters to donate to that campaign, and send weekly updates to let them know how the campaign is progressing.

CREATE MULTI-PHASED EMAIL APPEALS

As with any campaign, it's important to include a series of communications to maximize response; your online fundraising campaign is no exception. It's not about a fancy design; it's about having a coherent message. Think of your fundraising campaign as having a beginning, middle, and end. For example, in the first message of a campaign, you might announce the campaign and provide details including how the funds raised will be used. A second message, sent only to those who did not respond to the first, could remind recipients about the campaign and encourage them to respond. A third message, again sent to those who did not reply to the first or second messages, might tell recipients how the campaign has progressed, and encourage them to help your organization meet its goal. Managing multiple messages and recipient groups in a campaign might seem overwhelming, but online fundraising software can make it easy. Choose software that automates the process of sending multiple campaign messages, tracks responses within the context of the campaign, and then aggregates the results.

INCLUDE DEDICATED LANDING PAGES/WEB PAGES

It's important to include a link to a landing page for each campaign so constituents can find out more details about your campaign and where they can make a donation. You can also extend your online campaign by promoting it on pages throughout your website. Consider creating a dynamic personal campaign page where existing donors are individually recognized, thanked for their most recent donation, shown the results of all of their past donations, and offered the opportunity to donate again. This special personalized touch helps you to acknowledge past donors and make them feel appreciated.

OFFER CONVENIENT, SECURE ONLINE DONATION PROCESSING

Offering online donation processing can help your organization in multiple ways. Donors often prefer the convenience of making a donation online using their credit card. In addition, providing donors with the option to give online allows you to receive the funds immediately and automatically, versus waiting for a check to arrive by mail and then manually processing it. Choose online fundraising software that offers secure donation processing capabilities, including configurable online donation forms so you can choose exactly what donation options you will offer to individuals.

CUSTOMIZE GIVING LEVEL OPTIONS

Include several giving options so that donors/members can make the donation at the level they desire. Your fundraising software should allow you to customize an online donation form based on a donor's giving history. For example, if a donor gave \$100 one month, the next time he visited the site, he would see giving options for \$100 and more. These tailored giving levels should encourage increasingly larger gifts. You should also offer sustainer giving options that allow repeat donors to set up regular online payments. Sustainer giving creates a stronger level of attachment to your organization, with benefits, premiums, or membership privileges. It also provides your organization with steady cash-flow. From an organizational perspective, sustainer giving reinforces your brand and mission, smoothes income over the course of the year, and makes you less reliant on one-time year-end appeals when the economy is soft and donor giving has been impacted.

GIVE ONGOING FEEDBACK

While most fundraising professionals ensure that every donor gets a thank you message of some kind, they don't always keep the constituent informed about what the organization did with the donation. Constituents can feel disconnected with an organization when they make a donation, and then never hear about the impact of the donation.

To keep donors involved, always give feedback about how their donation was used — tell them how it made a difference. If they make a donation to a specific campaign, for example, send them an email update on a regular schedule to let them know how close the organization is to meeting its goal for that campaign. Then, send them another update to let them know how the organization used the funds. With these simple acts, donors will never feel as if their donations were meaningless because they will always know the results of their gifts. As a result, they'll be more likely to give again when they receive your next fundraising appeal.

TIP:

When choosing online fundraising software, be sure it allows you to set up a personal campaign page so that it automatically recognizes existing donors and inserts the appropriate information onto each of their individual pages.

TIP:

Be sure to choose online fundraising software that enables you to offer convenient, secure online donation processing, including sustainer giving options that allow repeat donors who support any ongoing cause to set up regular online payments billed directly to their credit card.

TAPPING YOUR CONSTITUENTS FOR VOLUNTEER FUNDRAISING

Your supporters are your organization's greatest asset. They share passion for and commitment to your organization's mission. What if you could channel that passion and commitment by turning your constituents into volunteer fundraisers for your organization? Using the right Internet software and strategies, you can.

Raising Funds Through Run/Walk/Ride Events

Many organizations have discovered the effectiveness and efficiency of tapping their constituents for fundraising events such as walks, runs, and rides. This peer-to-peer fundraising approach allows you to not only raise funds through participant registration fees, but also provide participants with the motivation and online tools to contact the people they know for contributions, who in turn can reach out to the people they know, and on and on for a continuously growing support base. By becoming directly involved with your organization, supporters feel a sense of responsibility for your organization's success.

Following are the basics for a successful online program for run/walk/ride volunteer fundraising:

CHOOSE THE LATEST ONLINE TOOLS FOR WALK/RUN FUNDRAISING

To create and maintain an effective volunteer-based fundraising program through run/walk/ride events, it's important that you first select online tools that help you and your volunteers (including event participants, team captains and corporations) manage effective campaigns via the Internet. Consider the following online software capabilities before choosing your Internet tools:

Tools for participants to create personal fundraising Web pages and send donation appeals via email to their networks of family and friends

Be sure your online software allows individuals or teams to create and maintain their own websites, manage email communications with friends and family regarding their event participation, and easily measure and display progress according to their fundraising goals. They should be able to include photos, links and progress reports on their sites, and online donation processing should be fast and secure.

Increasing donations by leveraging corporations

Choose online software that allows you to set up special administrative access for a designated coordinator at each of your participating companies. You should be able to easily send updates and motivational communications to all company coordinators, their team captains and team participants. The coordinator also should be able to use your online software to easily email updates, reminders, motivational messages and other communications to all team captains and participants within his or her company, encouraging them to tap their networks of friends and family to support your cause. The benefit: Instead of having several teams at the same company raising funds without overall coordination, the company can create a "super team" with a single point of contact between the company and your organization.

TIP:

Your special event fundraising software should include executive summary reports to give you insight into your run/walk/ride event participants and volunteer fundraisers.

MOBILIZE RUN/WALK/RIDE PARTICIPANTS AS VOLUNTEER FUNDRAISERS

With online fundraising software in place, you need to get your participants motivated as volunteer fundraisers. The more engaged they are with your program, the more funds they will help you raise.

There are several ways for your organization to increase participation and fundraising results for your event:

Recruit people who have participated before

Participants from past events are the lowest hanging fruit when it comes to recruiting for an event.

Ask supporters to become participants

Activists, donors and volunteers have an existing affiliation with your organization. Because of this connection, these individuals are more likely to take part than a person who has never been involved with your organization in the past. Reach out to them and ask them to participate!

Motivate and encourage your volunteer fundraisers

Send regular emails to keep volunteer fundraisers motivated. Consider sending special messages to those who are close to their goals; and to those who are not. Also, send emails to volunteer fundraisers at intervals — such as four weeks out, three weeks out, and two weeks out — to keep them engaged. Include motivational stories to remind them of how their work is helping the organization, and highlight techniques that people are using to reach their fundraising goals.

Provide an email template to individual fundraisers

Craft a standard email message that can be equally effective as-is or if used as a foundation for a customized email.

TIP:

When choosing special event fundraising software, be sure that it allows you to set up emails to send automatically at specific times, such as two weeks prior to the event, to keep your volunteer fundraisers motivated to reach their fundraising goals.

SHARE BEST PRACTICES WITH VOLUNTEER FUNDRAISERS

You can position your individual fundraisers to reach their goals by sharing best practices of successful individual fundraisers. For example:

Start early

The earlier you get your team leaders and individual participants started on their fundraising activities, the more time they'll have to raise funds, and the more likely they will be to meet their goals.

Develop an exhaustive list of prospective donors

Fundraisers should reach out to anyone who might donate. Individuals shouldn't limit themselves to friends and family; names from organizations or clubs (e.g., a running club, a church congregation) can also be added to the list of prospective donors.

Ask, ask, and ask again

The only way that people can make a donation is if you give them the opportunity to do so. So encourage fundraisers to get out there and ask!

Get creative

Fundraisers need to think outside of the box when it comes to encouraging people to donate. Suggest that they give people a jar and ask them to save their change for a month; or hold a raffle or an auction to boost donations.

Driving a New Source of Funds Through Personal Fundraising Websites

Peer-to-peer fundraising for your walks, runs, and rides is just the beginning of this unique and effective approach to boosting donations. The same approach can be used throughout the year to further tap your constituents to raise funds and drive support. Specifically, you can use personal fundraising websites, which give constituents online tools to set up websites in memory or in honor of a friend or family member.

Through a personal fundraising website, a supporter can tell his or her story about a friend or loved one, send emails to friends and family asking them to visit the site, and solicit donations on behalf of your organization. These activities help your organization raise much-needed funds, reach new supporters, and put a personal face on your organization's mission.

Some examples of personal fundraising sites include the following:

- » A site supporting breast cancer research for a loved one who is suffering from or has passed away from breast cancer

- » A site honoring a community teacher, with donations going to a local reading program

LEARN MORE

For more tips on raising funds through run/walk/ride events, refer to: *A Race Against the Clock: How to Maximize the Fundraising Success of Your Event Participants*. See the "Additional Resources" section at the end of this guide.

- » A site created by a homeless shelter volunteer, describing how he's been touched by his work, and encouraging friends and family to make donations to the organization
- » A site in tribute to a grandmother whose lifelong passion was promoting animal welfare, with donations from the site going to a humane organization

Try the following techniques to create and optimize a personal fundraising program for your organization:

GIVE CONSTITUENTS CONVENIENT TOOLS FOR PERSONAL FUNDRAISING SITES AND EMAILS

Drive new sources of sustainable funding by empowering your constituents with a convenient way to support your organization. For example, offer constituents the option to create a personal fundraising site so they can ask for donations in lieu of flowers for a funeral. Visitors and those invited to the site can make donations directly to the organization as a tribute to the person being memorialized. Be sure to choose online software that allows your constituents to easily set up their sites and send emails to friends and family throughout the year.

GIVE CONSTITUENTS SUGGESTED BEST PRACTICES

Communicate with supporters who have set up personal fundraising sites. Encourage them to keep their sites updated with fundraising progress reports and recent personal stories. Suggest that they send solicitation emails on the honoree's birthday, anniversary or other occasion, such as Mother's Day or Father's Day, to keep their sites active.

CONVEY YOUR MISSION THROUGH A LIST OF PERSONAL STORIES

In addition to being an effective fundraising vehicle, personal fundraising sites can be one of the best ways to communicate your mission. A list of many sites with corresponding personal stories conveys a powerful message. For example, an anti-drug organization might have 50 constituent-created memorial sites around victims of drug-related violence, helping the organization further its message and make its concerns more personal and compelling. Launch your personal fundraising program by having a small group of your top supporters establish personal fundraising sites that you can promote on your organization's website.

CONSIDER ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF PERSONAL FUNDRAISING SITES

In addition to helping your organization raise more money, personal fundraising sites also give your supporters a way to communicate how your organization's mission has touched them. These sites can help your supporters become more involved and dedicated to ensuring your organization's ongoing success. At the same time personal fundraising sites can expand your organization's reach to new people — your supporters' friends and family — who are more likely to donate and become involved with your organization in other ways because the appeal comes from someone they know and trust.

TIP:

Be considerate of constituents who may have just suffered a loss. Use more sensitive wording in communications with constituents who have set up memorial sites compared with those who have set up sites honoring a living person or pet.

ORGANIZING FOR SUCCESS

According to a study conducted by Convio, most nonprofit managers feel their organization is continually strapped for resources. The study uncovered three related themes:

- » Having the right people on staff is just as important as having more people.
- » Whether you use a centralized, decentralized or hybrid organizational model, you need to realize that organizational structure is important and will impact the performance of your online initiatives.
- » Not having an Internet plan is a recipe for failure. You need to have a plan and stick with it.

With these themes in mind, assess the diversity and quality of your in-house skills. How ready are you to take your online efforts to the next level? Armed with your assessment, you can identify key gaps that you need to fill so that you are organized for success. Consider outsourcing these pieces until your staff is trained properly to handle these tasks themselves.

Case in Point: Hope & Heroes Children's Cancer Fund

Hope & Heroes Children's Cancer Fund took this methodical approach when the organization was eager to share compelling stories online, but had limited staff to support its plans. Guided by a team of Convio online experts, Hope & Heroes learned how to use the Convio online marketing tools and how to achieve a set of clearly defined goals tied to their online success.

With the Convio Go! program, the two-person Hope & Heroes team received coaching on the development of communication templates, donation and registration forms, and best practices related to technology and marketing. This comprehensive introduction to online communications and fundraising methods provided the ideal foundation upon which Hope & Heroes began to build an integrated marketing communications strategy. Despite its limited staff, the organization hit the ground running and sent its first relationship pathway email within a month of joining Convio Go!. In the four months that followed, the organization launched a Personal Events campaign, Personal Fundraising, and an integrated (online/offline) end-of-year campaign with results that were three times higher than the year prior.

LEARN MORE

For more tips on optimizing your organization for online success, refer to: *The Secret of Online Success: Why Structure Matters*. See the "Additional Resources" section at the end of this guide.

MEASURING ONLINE FUNDRAISING SUCCESS

Online donations are one metric you can use to measure the success of an online fundraising program. Several other metrics can also help you to determine each online campaign's effectiveness.

Key Metrics

Any time you run a campaign, it is critical to define your goals and track metrics to determine the success of your campaign. Here are three example objectives with corresponding key metrics, benchmark numbers, and best practices that you should consider when planning campaigns, evaluating results and determining success:

IMPROVING OUTREACH

Building a base of future supporters by growing your email address file should be a key component of your online plan. The following metrics will help you track your results in improving outreach:

Website traffic growth

Increasing the number of people visiting your website is important because it helps to ensure you are increasing your organization's exposure to potential future donors. This metric is typically measured on a monthly basis so that you can easily see the impact of specific campaigns on website traffic, month-over-month.

Percentage of website visitors who register (also known as conversion rate or registration rate)

While getting people to visit your site is important, equally important is getting them to register by voluntarily giving you their email address so that you can begin an online relationship with them. This metric gives you a better idea of how effective your website is at grabbing site visitors' attention. A typical conversion rate for organizations is 2 to 3 percent.

Email address file growth

A growing number of names in your email address file is critical to online fundraising success because you need to expand your pool of prospective donors in order to increase overall online dollars raised.

To maximize results for each of these metrics, try these techniques:

- » Draw members, constituents and new visitors to your website and focus on site traffic growth by promoting the site at offline events, adding frequent content updates, and making the site a valuable resource.
- » Convert website visitors into registered constituents by using a prominently displayed registration field and clearly stated registration benefits. Offer members and other supporters a reason to sign up to receive emails and return frequently to your website.

- » Integrate online and offline programs, events, and campaigns to draw more people online.
- » Use urgent appeals that motivate constituents to forward web pages and messages to family and friends. Also consider offering incentives and online “gifts” such as email greeting cards that registered site visitors can send to friends and family.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Get to know your existing and prospective donors by building a profile of their interests and online interactions with your organization. Use this information to create regular targeted communications that will help you develop a loyal online relationship which could, in turn, lead to ongoing support.

Consider these metrics when tracking results in relationship building:

Percentage of email file providing a detailed personal profile

Detailed profiles about constituent interests, geography and other demographics allow you to segment your list and target constituents with information that interests them most. The greater percentage of people who provide you with details about themselves, the more effective you will likely be in developing relationships and turning constituents into donors. To develop individual profiles, determine the four or five pieces of information relevant to your organization for more targeted communications, and then begin to gather that information.

Email open rate

This metric shows how well you're getting through to your constituency and how engaged they have become. Open rate tells you what percent of the total recipients of your message actually opened it. A good open rate is 20 percent or more.

Email click-through rate

This metric is the percentage of your total email recipients who clicked on a link within your message — such as a donation form, petition, survey or other link. This metric shows how effective your email communication was at driving action from recipients. For regular email communications, a good click-through rate is 4 to 6 percent, however, organizations may see as high as 10 percent for targeted, personalized communications. A 2 to 3 percent click-through rate on fundraising appeals typically is good.

Response rates to surveys and polls

Surveys and polls enable constituents to provide their feedback and further information about themselves. Measuring the percentage of recipients who complete surveys is a way to understand how many are open to a deeper relationship with your organization. A 1 to 2 percent response rate typically is good.

TIP:

Be sure to choose online fundraising software that allows you to track multiple metrics, including open rates, click-through rates, and response rates.

Opt-out rates on emails

This metric is a measurement of the number of people who unsubscribe to your emails each time you send a communication to your email file. It is important to minimize the opt-out rate to maintain a list of interested and engaged constituents, and to avoid getting labeled as a spammer, or someone who repeatedly sends unsolicited emails. Your opt-out rate should be at 0.1 to 0.2 percent.

The following approaches can help you maximize your results for these metrics:

- » Ask constituents to indicate their interests, and then offer relevant, personalized content both in email communications and on web pages.
- » Build detailed profiles of constituents over time using surveys and polls, rather than asking for a lot of information up front when they register.
- » Integrate between functions within your organization — such as development and advocacy — to build a richer, deeper understanding of each constituent.
- » Engage constituents online with surveys, stories, photos, and online communities to keep them interested in your organization.
- » Use email marketing best practices, such as sending emails at an optimal frequency, to minimize the number of people who opt out of receiving communications from your organization.

DRIVING ACTION

The key objective for most online fundraising campaigns is to motivate constituents to respond by making a donation, becoming a member, or purchasing a ticket for an event. In addition to overall funds raised online, the following metrics can help you gauge success in driving action:

Response rates to email solicitations for donations

Look at the percentage of people who responded, rather than the total number who received the solicitation email. This metric is a measure that will help you to determine the effectiveness of each individual email message, as well as overall campaign effectiveness. A response rate above 0.15 percent for a targeted, personalized message is very good.

Overall offline plus online funds raised

This metric helps you to determine if your campaigns are meeting or exceeding your organization's goals, and lets you monitor the overall effectiveness of multiple communication methods (e.g., direct mail, telemarketing, and email/website communications).

Number of online donors

For every fundraising campaign on your website, look at how many website visitors turn into donors by measuring the number of people who donate via the website (versus those donating in direct response to an email solicitation). This metric will help you to determine how effective your website content is at motivating visitors to make a donation.

Try these techniques to improve results for these metrics:

- » Use urgent, timely calls to action with clear deadlines and purposes.
- » Develop a relationship with constituents by providing them with something of value prior to asking them to take action.
- » Provide constituents with multiple ways to respond, to match a variety of preferences.
- » Use **micro-campaigns** — each with a specific purpose — rather than a single, broad online request for donations.
- » Offer premiums — such as a certificate or bumper sticker — in exchange for online donations.

LEARN MORE

For more information about metrics and benchmarks for online fundraising, refer to *The Convio Online Marketing Nonprofit Benchmark Index Study*. See the “Additional Resources” section at the end of this guide.

Other Online Success Factors

For any organization, the true value of the Internet is in creating and sustaining constituent relationships to ensure ongoing support. This is achieved by implementing an **online constituent relationship management** strategy to involve donors, volunteers, and other supporters in more than one activity so they can be involved with your organization in multiple ways at different times.

When evaluating the overall success of your online fundraising efforts, consider these factors, which, in some cases, are more significant to the organization than online donations:

DRIVE ONLINE AND OFFLINE GIVING

Consumers frequently conduct research online before making a purchase. However, when making the decision about where to make actual purchases, they tend to follow individual preferences based on convenience, comfort with online transactions, and other factors. Donors, like consumers, make gifts or purchases where they feel most comfortable and, for some donors, that still is through traditional methods such as direct mail or telephone. Keep in mind that your online communications and appeals will likely drive offline donations, and remember to factor that into the assessment of your online success.

INCREASE DONOR LIFETIME VALUE

The lifetime value of a donor is based upon his average gift level, gift frequency, and expected retention rate. Each of these variables depends on the quality of the organization's relationship with the donor. Effectively communicating with your donors and involving them in additional activities — such as advocacy, volunteering, and sending messages to friends — will likely help you develop closer and stronger donor relationships.

Traditional mass communications such as direct mail and telemarketing focus primarily on solicitation, but the Internet opens a world of new possibilities for donor relations because of the ease and low cost of sending constituents frequent, targeted and personalized online communications. When measuring online success, remember that online communications increase an organization's capacity to build stronger, more personalized relationships. And, that often leads to greater lifetime value of each donor.

ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE NEXT GENERATION OF DONORS

It's more complicated to be a fundraiser than it was even a few years ago. The pace of change is accelerating as each new generation of donors brings a new set of habits and expectations. As you measure your online success, consider how you are communicating with Generation Y, Generation X, and Baby Boomers. This type of communication strategy is essential for stewarding donors and other supporters through their lifetime and ensuring a steady stream of support for your organization.

REDUCE COMMUNICATION AND FUNDRAISING COSTS

Paper-based communications such as newsletters, member updates, and program guides are expensive. By moving many of these communications online, you can significantly reduce costs without sacrificing the frequency or quality of communications. While the Internet will never completely replace paper-based communication, in some instances — for example, urgent appeals based on a current event — email and website content are better alternatives. Plus, by using the latest online fundraising software, you can prevent information overload for your constituents (and cost overload for your organization) by only sending relevant information to your based upon preferences supporters indicate through online registration and other means.

LEARN MORE

For more tips on charitable habits of different generations, refer to: *The Next Generation of American Giving*. See the "Additional Resources" section at the end of this guide.

SUPPORT MAJOR GIVING

As your donors become more comfortable giving online, your organization likely will see larger transactions over the Internet. And don't overlook the online channel as an effective mean of supporting traditional major giving efforts. The Internet has proven to be a cost-effective way for nonprofit organizations to expand their ability to communicate regularly in a personalized manner with large groups of major donors and prospects, resulting in more "marketing coverage" at a reduced overall cost.

The research from *The Wired Wealthy: Using the Internet to Connect with Your Middle and Major Donors* yielded some key recommendations for dealing effectively with major donors and prospects:

- » Make it a priority to use the online channel better.
- » Segment lists because the best donors want different things from an organization (e.g., a business relationship versus a casual connection).
- » Provide donors some control over the content and frequency of emails.
- » Don't replace quality with quantity; don't communicate when you have nothing to say.
- » Listen and respond to the evolving preferences of this group.

LEARN MORE

For more information about supporting major giving, refer to *The Wired Wealthy: Using the Internet to Connect with Your Middle and Major Donors*. See the "Additional Resources" section at the end of this guide.

CONTRIBUTE IN OTHER AREAS

Donors and prospects may want to support your organization in ways other than providing financial support; this other types of support can be just as valuable as a direct financial contribution. Use email and website content to encourage supporters to volunteer, participate in advocacy campaigns, attend fundraising events, and forward your messages to friends and family.

REAL WORLD METRICS

The Convio Online Marketing Nonprofit Benchmark Index™ Study 2010

For the fourth consecutive year, Convio has created *The Convio Online Marketing Nonprofit Benchmark Index Study* to help you answer the following questions:

- » What online marketing metrics should I focus on?
- » How is my organization doing?
- » What targets should I set for my organization?

The study looked at nearly 500 nonprofit organizations' online marketing and fundraising results and compiled a series of benchmarks for evaluating fundraising, email, advocacy, and marketing success online. The study revealed the following key findings:

Online giving grew 14 percent despite a difficult economy. Overall, 69 percent of organizations raised more in 2009 than 2008, while 31 percent saw declines in their online fundraising.

An increase in gifts drove fundraising gains. 92 percent of the organizations in this study saw an increase in the number of gifts in 2009 compared with just 43 percent of organizations seeing an increase in their average gift amount.

Donors were still giving, but giving smaller amounts. 61 percent of all organizations saw their average gift drop in 2009.

Regardless of mission, online fundraising continued to grow. The exception was Disaster & International Relief organizations, for which 2008 was a year with more significant disasters than 2009.

Small organizations grew fastest. Organizations with fewer than 10,000 email addresses on file, many of which are participants in the Convio Go! program, grew online revenue by 26 percent, and gifts by 32 percent.

Email files continued to grow strongly. The total email file grew 27 percent in 2009 to 39,100 constituents.

Web traffic growth continued for most, but at a slower rate. 60 percent of organizations grew their website traffic from 2008 to 2009. Web traffic growth in 2009 was in the single digits at 6 percent compared with double digit growth seen in previous years.

Web traffic was strongly correlated with email file growth. 38 percent of an organization's success building large email files could be directly attributed to the amount of traffic to the organization's website.

Registration rates dropped. The rate at which organizations converted website visitors to their email file declined to 2.12 percent in 2009.

Constituents were reluctant to click through. While open rates for both fundraising appeals and newsletters remained around 20 percent, the click-through rates for both types of online communication declined in 2009.

LEARN MORE

For more information about metrics and benchmarks for online fundraising, refer to *The Convio Online Marketing Nonprofit Benchmark Index Study*. See the "Additional Resources" section at the end of this guide.

ONLINE FUNDRAISING IN ACTION: EXAMPLES FROM SUCCESSFUL NONPROFITS

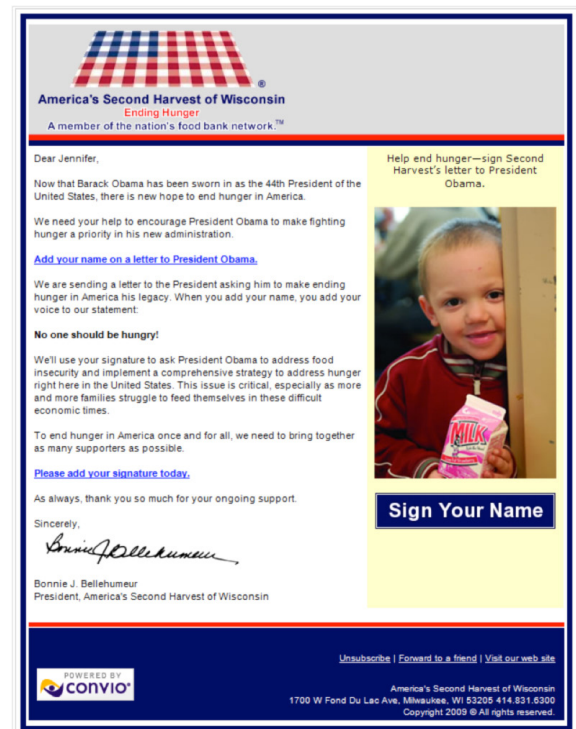
As an increasing number of organizations take their fundraising efforts online, more examples of effective campaign strategies are emerging. Here are a few examples of effective approaches from some of your peers.

Current Event Campaigns

Because the Internet allows for fast communication, it is ideal for creating campaigns around current events. By jumping into action immediately following a current event, your organization can create a fundraising campaign that grabs constituents' attention and moves them to respond.

EXAMPLE: CURRENT EVENT CAMPAIGNS

America's Second Harvest of Wisconsin (SHOW), a food bank that nourishes over 235,000 people in the eastern half of Wisconsin, leveraged current events to grow their list of email addresses and reach a wider audience with their message. They composed a letter that they distributed online on the heels of President Obama's inauguration. The letter educated the public with trends and statistics (such as "13 million children are at high risk of inadequate nutrition due to poverty"), and the embedded form allowed signers to incorporate their own personal comments on the subject of hunger in America. SHOW sent a series of emails to their list, requesting that recipients sign the letter for delivery to President Obama. To appeal to a diverse audience, SHOW varied the subject lines, text, and photos in the email series, and also reflected the cross-section of people who depend on the food bank, day in and day out. People who took action and signed the letter during the campaign received an alternate version of the follow-up email, asking them specifically to help spread the word about the campaign. While this campaign doubled SHOW's housefile, it also delivered much more. For thousands of members of the public, the contents of the campaign put a current face on hunger. It also placed hunger on their mind-map of policy priorities at a time when many issues were vying for their attention. Additionally, the significant list growth helped contribute a fresh new cohort of prospective donors that SHOW could leverage during future fundraising activities.



Invitation to Sign Letter to President Obama

eCards

eCards are a powerful communication tool that can help leverage one of your greatest assets — your existing supporters. With eCards, you offer online greeting cards on your website so constituents can send them to friends and relatives. Because people send eCards to others with whom they already have a personal relationship, recipients are more likely to open these communications and read the content, which may include a fundraising appeal.

While eCards help increase awareness about an organization, they also can be used to:

Build an organization's email file

An organization can include a message that encourages card recipients to visit the organization's website and sign up for an email newsletter or other online communication. Compelling content, including an attention-getting graphic, helps drive response. Convio clients often use this type of eCard as a simple way to add new constituents to their email files.

Get people to donate to a timely campaign or in the wake of current events

A nonprofit can use eCards to quickly send a high-impact message. For example, a relief organization could include a photograph of flood victims with information about the extent of damage the people have suffered. This kind of communication can motivate people to donate, volunteer, or become involved in a timely cause.

Expand a campaign's reach

eCards can increase the effectiveness of almost any campaign. For example, an organization promoting a membership drive through email, direct mail and telemarketing could add a series of membership eCards to its website, encouraging existing members and other constituents to send them to friends and family.

Provide constituents with an online service

Constituents typically are involved with an organization because they care about its mission. By offering graphical, motivational, humorous, fun or informative eCards, an organization provides a valuable service for constituents. Supporters now have a fun and easy-to-use tool for promoting the group and its cause to others. Compared with a form letter sent from an organization's website, eCards are a friendlier, more personal way for a constituent to encourage someone he or she knows to get involved.

EXAMPLE: ECARDS

Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation (OMRF), one of the nation's oldest and most respected nonprofit biomedical research institutes, wanted to spread the word about their nonprofit to garner further community support for the organization's life-saving medical research. OMRF knows its core audience – fans of scientific research, and also medical professionals, patients, and the families who rely on them. With this audience in mind, OMRF decided to move forward with the theme “geek...it's the new chic.” The nonprofit launched an online multi-part giveaway campaign with a chance to win a “Geek Pack.” Current subscribers were invited to enter for the chance to win by simply forwarding funny content (in this case entertaining eCards which OMRF designed based on a Convio template) to friends and family. Each eCard sent counted as an extra entry in the drawing. With a response rate of 9%, OMRF found that many of its supporters willingly forwarded information about OMRF. Their combined efforts helped to build community awareness and got the foundation's “research is cool. pass it on.” message into more than 300 new inboxes. In addition to an overall 5% increase in their list, OMRF now knows which of its constituents are proud to expose their “inner nerd” and talk to friends and family about the importance of research. With consistent, high quality stewardship over time, the foundation has increased the probability of converting these supporters into volunteer fundraisers.

OMRF geek...it's the new chic

You already love OMRF. And we love you back. So much that we're ready to make you an honorary scientist. Every time you tell a friend about OMRF using one of our eCards, your name will be entered in a drawing for a free Geek Pack.

Geek is the new chic. Support OMRF and win a Geek Pack!

Our Geek Pack includes:

- A genuine, unused, biohazard-free lab coat—embroidered with your name!
- The latest in personal protective eyewear, because we practice safe science, y'all.
- And the finishing touch—a pair of second-skin lab gloves to protect your digits from harmful stuff. And of course, you better believe they make that nice, yeah-I'm-a-doctor snappin' sound when you tug 'em on. Extra cool.

When you don your Smarty Pants duds, your IQ will gain an instant 20 points. We guarantee it! Plus, you'll be helping spread the word that research is cool.

So please, pass it on! Don't forget to tell your fellow geeks. Be a Smarty Pants and get your name in the game.

The Deadline to Enter is Wednesday, June 24th!

Unsubscribe | Forward to a Friend | Visit Our Web Site

POWERED BY CONVIO

Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation | 825 N.E. 13th Street
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73104
OMRF © 2009 All rights reserved.

Tell a Friend Email About the Chance to Win a Geek Pack

Integrated (Online/Offline) Campaigns

It's important for your organization to operate in a multi-channel mode, creating campaigns that are promoted and reinforced both online and offline to maximize constituent engagement and results.

EXAMPLE: INTEGRATED CAMPAIGNS

St. Francis House, a nonprofit, nonsectarian day shelter, improved its communications and reached out regularly to supporters, by sending a scheduled email newsletter, launching coordinated online and offline fundraising campaigns, and segmenting constituents based on giving history and other data collected. This integrated communications strategy helped St. Francis House increase the size of its email housefile from 150 to 1800 email addresses within 12 months, and raise more than \$73,000 online within 10 months — exceeding the organization's fundraising goal by over 500%. In addition to attracting many new donors who gave online, St. Francis House also increased online giving from existing donors who traditionally gave offline.

"Ask" Email from Three-Part Welcome Series

Online Appeal Complements Direct Mail Piece

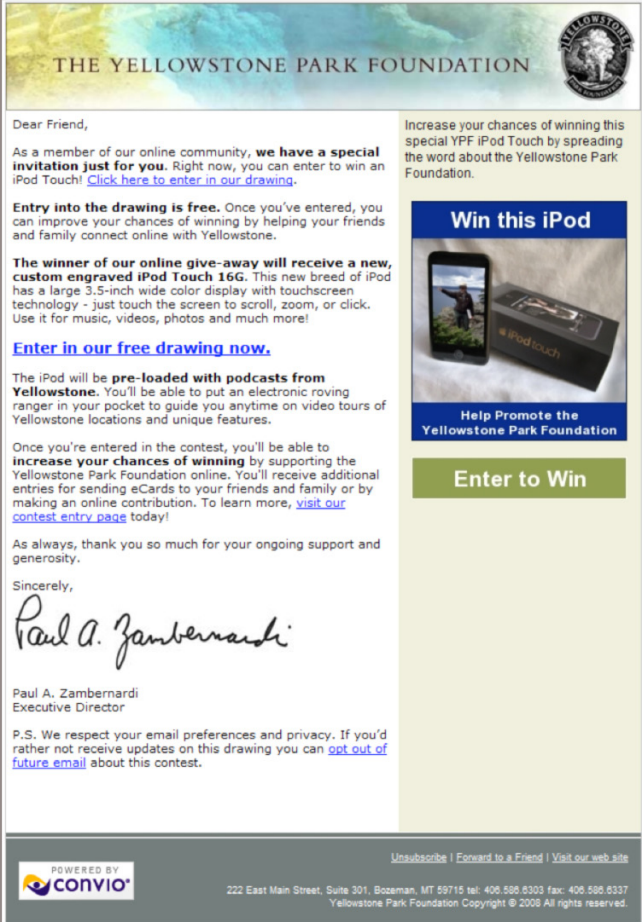
Offline Proof of Direct Mail Piece

List Building Campaigns

With email as the cornerstone of your organization's online communications, list building campaigns should form an integral part of your strategic efforts.

EXAMPLE: LIST BUILDING CAMPAIGNS

The Yellowstone Park Foundation (YPF), a nonprofit organization started to protect, preserve, and enhance Yellowstone National Park, needed to grow awareness of their park improvement and conservation activities, in order to connect with a wider community of potential supporters. Convio's Go! Program consultants worked with YPF to define an online giveaway contest — publicized entirely by email and the foundation's website — that highlighted compelling features of the park experience while empowering supporters to spread the news within their online networks. The contest prize was an iPod Touch, known for its ubiquitous appeal to tech-savvy individuals seeking music, photos, videos, and more. This particular iPod Touch came engraved by the foundation and pre-loaded with Yellowstone ranger podcasts that would “put an electronic roving ranger” in the pocket of any park visitor. The campaign included a three-part email series to current subscribers, and encouraged entrants to increase their odds of winning by sending eCards about the contest to friends and family, or by donating online. With over 12,000 contest entrants yielding a fresh influx of park supporters and new list members, the foundation brought their message of park preservation to many more members of the public. With their ongoing email newsletter series, YPF plans to nurture these new relationships for long-term mutual benefit.



THE YELLOWSTONE PARK FOUNDATION

Dear Friend,

As a member of our online community, **we have a special invitation just for you.** Right now, you can enter to win an iPod Touch! [Click here to enter in our drawing.](#)

Entry into the drawing is free. Once you've entered, you can improve your chances of winning by helping your friends and family connect online with Yellowstone.

The winner of our online give-away will receive a new, custom engraved iPod Touch 16G. This new breed of iPod has a large 3.5-inch wide color display with touchscreen technology - just touch the screen to scroll, zoom, or click. Use it for music, videos, photos and much more!

Enter in our free drawing now.

The iPod will be **pre-loaded with podcasts from Yellowstone.** You'll be able to put an electronic roving ranger in your pocket to guide you anytime on video tours of Yellowstone locations and unique features.

Once you're entered in the contest, you'll be able to **increase your chances of winning** by supporting the Yellowstone Park Foundation online. You'll receive additional entries for sending eCards to your friends and family or by making an online contribution. To learn more, [visit our contest entry page](#) today!

As always, thank you so much for your ongoing support and generosity.

Sincerely,
Paul A. Zambarnski

Paul A. Zambarnski
Executive Director

P.S. We respect your email preferences and privacy. If you'd rather not receive updates on this drawing you can [opt out of future email](#) about this contest.

Win this iPod

Help Promote the Yellowstone Park Foundation

Enter to Win

POWERED BY **CONVIO**

Unsubscribe | Forward to a Friend | Visit our web site

222 East Main Street, Suite 301, Bozeman, MT 59715 tel: 406.586.6333 fax: 406.586.6337
Yellowstone Park Foundation Copyright © 2008 All rights reserved.

Invitation to iPod Touch Giveaway

Membership Campaigns

Using the Internet can help member-based organizations to recruit new members through targeted email solicitations to its email file. In addition, it can help organizations steward relationships with existing members, positively influencing renewal rates.

Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh boosted its member renewals and revenue through regular, personalized online communications including email newsletters and other email updates based on each constituent's interests. This attention to developing online relationships worked — during the first year of online communications, 88 percent of the members who received email newsletters renewed and 72 percent who received other email updates renewed, while overall renewal rates were 62 percent. In addition, the organization dedicated an area of its website to membership, offering multiple member level options and opportunities to log in for special member information. The organization raised \$121,000 online, only one year after taking membership sales online for the first time.

Chicago Public Radio has also seen strong results by focusing on donor/member service using the Internet. Historically, a major challenge for public broadcasting stations has been retention of first-year members, however, sending members a high quality email newsletter has helped Chicago Public Radio grow first-year member retention rates. Those members who received the newsletter renewed at a 20 percent higher rate than those who did not.

Micro-Campaigns

Micro-campaigns can be a highly effective way of raising funds quickly for a specific project by targeting constituents who would be most likely to donate to the campaign.

For example, the **SPCA of Texas** sent email appeals to dog owners, requesting donations in support of replacing plastic water bowls — which can harbor bacteria — with more hygienic stainless steel bowls for the SPCA's dogs. In another campaign, the organization targeted cat owners with an email appeal for donations to support the purchase of cat litter for the SPCA's animal care centers. The result: the organization doubled its goals for both email appeals. Not only are these types of campaigns highly effective, they also allow you to conduct more campaigns without over-mailing the constituents in your email address file.

Peer-to-Peer Fundraising

Empowering your supporters with tools to connect their personal networks with your organization can boost donations significantly. Additionally, peer-to-peer fundraising will help you grow your housefile and increase constituent engagement.

EXAMPLE: PEER-TO-PEER FUNDRAISING

AIDS Foundation Houston, Inc (AFH), Texas' first organization dedicated to HIV prevention education and services, uses Convio Fundraising and TeamRaiser™ to give constituents and AIDS Walk participants easy-to-use tools to reach out to their personal networks on behalf of the organization. Working with Convio, AIDS Foundation Houston has increased total online donations for its annual Walk from \$400,000 to more than \$660,000 within two years, with total revenues from the Walk increasing 64%, from \$597,000 to more than \$944,000. Using Convio TeamRaiser has allowed AIDS Foundation Houston to operate more efficiently by streamlining communications with volunteers and donors, and enabling participants to expand online donations through their own personal networks. Peer-to-peer fundraising has helped AFH grow its email list from 4,825 usable email addresses to 10,375 within 14 months, expanding its outreach by 115%.



TeamRaiser Used for the Annual AIDS Walk Houston

Premium-Based Campaigns

Offering premiums, or gifts, for donations not only provides additional incentives for constituents to donate, it also gives your organization another chance to show donor appreciation. **Chicago Public Radio**, for example, offers premiums including chances to win prizes as an incentive for constituents to pledge a donation by a specified date. **The National Trust for Historic Preservation** offers gifts, such as a free tote bag, for new members.

Social Media

With the widespread adoption of social media, your organization should consider different ways to increase your presence on sites like Facebook, MySpace and YouTube. It is no longer the younger generation that is incorporating these platforms into their daily lives; the demographics are shifting and you need to plan accordingly.

EXAMPLE: SOCIAL MEDIA

Church World Service (CWS), an organization that works with partners to eradicate hunger and poverty and to promote peace and justice around the world, CWS saw an opportunity to reinvigorate its Mother's Day campaign and significantly increase the amount of online donations by pursuing strategic promotional opportunities. Re-branded from the "Best Gifts Catalog" to the "Mother's Day Catalog," the campaign was promoted heavily to CWS's entire email list through two emails, a homepage banner, and an offline mailer, as well as through Facebook and Twitter. Additionally, a "Wall of Inspiration" webpage was created so people could post information about how their mom inspired them. The Mother's Day campaign raised \$9,617 online through 233 gifts in seven days, using an email list of approximately 31k. Of this total amount, 73% of all funds raised were driven by emails. The Mother's Day Catalog alone raised \$7,251 online through 196 gifts, with an average gift of \$37. These results represented a 286% increase in eCommerce catalog revenue from the same period the year prior.

Wrap the world in a Mother's Love.
Show Mom her love has inspired your gift to a mother in need.

Choose a unique gift inspired by her, then send her one of our beautiful eCards letting her know a gift has been made in her honor for Mother's Day.

1 Choose your gift

What kind of gift would your mom (or others you want to remember on Mother's Day) most appreciate or want another mother to have? Blankets? Food for her family? Education? There are plenty of things to choose from. If you prefer, you can also make a traditional donation in her honor (and yes, you'll still get to send the eCard).

Seeds and tools for three families \$50

2 Tell your mom and tell the world!

After you've chosen your gift, you can choose from a number of our beautiful eCards to let her know that she has inspired this gift from you. You can also add your own personal note, making your already unique gift even more special.

click to enlarge

Get Started

Wall of Inspiration

If you use Twitter, you can post here about how your Mom has inspired you, or you can just let the world know how much you love her! Post to Twitter tag #mominspired to have your note posted below.

RT @BUSELL: My mom has always been an inspiration about reaching out and helping others. #cws moms #mominspired
@CWS_CROP - 2:11 PM

My mom has always been an inspiration about reaching out and helping others. #cws moms
@CWS_CROP - 2:18 PM

My mom taught me 2 be proud of being a woman. I'm giving in her honor to @CWS_CROP to help support mother's around the world! #cws moms
@CWS_CROP - 1:37 PM

My mom instilled in me a passion for justice. Though she died ten years ago, her life inspires me still. Thank, Mom! #cws moms
@tharab - 1:34 PM

RT @baacoda: My mom has inspired me 2 never give up, 2 never fear changing my mind, and 2 love to receive love from God. #mominspired
@CWS_CROP - 12:22 AM

See Your Gift at Work

Click the image to the right to view a photo slideshow of mothers and families who have been touched by the work of Church World Service.

Mothers around the world say Thank You!

Donors Choose Gift and Send a Mother's Day eCard

Special Events

Events — a key component of many organizations' development programs — are a great way to raise funds. Increasingly, organizations are publicizing events through email communications and their websites to improve attendance and donations.

EXAMPLES: SPECIAL EVENTS

The **Vision 5K** is a unique run and walk event where blind and sighted participants run or walk side by side. The annual event is coordinated and managed by four independent organizations that serve the blind and visually impaired, with the resulting revenue divided equally between these organizations. By implementing Convio online fundraising and marketing solutions, Vision 5K improved its web presence and email communications. That year, the organization raised more than \$200,000 for the event, and broadened its reach by connecting with participants' friends and family.



Website Home Page

Volunteer Fundraising

Every organization understands the importance of its supporters, so why not take advantage of this valuable asset by empowering them to raise money in support of your organization?

Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization used this approach for its annual RACE Against Breast Cancer fundraiser, enlisting the help of volunteers to raise money on behalf of the organization. Using Convio TeamRaiser, the organization gave its volunteers online tools for setting up their own fundraising pages and sending email solicitations to their networks of friends and family. For its 2004 RACE, the organization exceeded its goal of \$2.5 million to raise \$2.75 million, with more than \$1 million raised online.

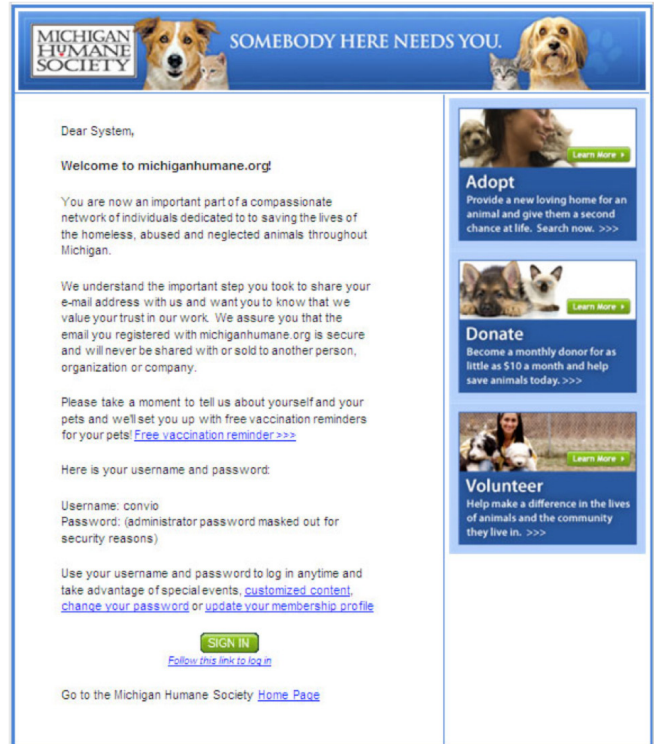
By encouraging supporters to reach out to their networks and by providing them with online tools to reach those networks, any organization can take advantage of this “viral” marketing technique to create an ongoing ripple of interest and support.

Welcome Series

Consider funneling new constituents through an email welcome series to bring them into a closer relationship with you right after they give you their email address. This strategy can serve as a thoughtful welcome that promotes ongoing engagement with your organization, while giving you additional control over the timing and content of your communications to new constituents. After an individual has received all of the emails in the welcome series, they can be added to your larger email list and receive the regular communications sent by your organization.

EXAMPLES: SPECIAL EVENTS

The **Michigan Humane Society (MHS)** wanted to find an effective way to cultivate new registered constituents into donors as quickly as possible, and maximize retention rates. After years of sending the basic registration response of one “welcome” email, MHS designed and implemented a three-part welcome series of emails that welcomes new registered users, informs them of the organization’s work, and introduces them to the president of the organization. Included in each of these messages are opportunities for the constituent to take three actions: adopt, volunteer and/or donate. Convio compared six months of results of those individuals who received the single “welcome” email from MHS, with those who received the three-part welcome series. There was 10% higher retention rate for those who received the welcome series. Additionally, the average gift of welcome series recipients was, on average, \$2.17 higher per gift than the non-welcome series group. There was also an increase in the number of gifts per donor for the welcome series recipients, who donated nearly \$60,000 more than the recipients of the single welcome email.



First Email in the Three-Part Welcome Series

SPOTLIGHT ON CONVIO

Convio builds our software and services around a simple but powerful philosophy: you need action and results, not just technology.

Convio Online – Online Marketing and Fundraising Solutions

Convio's online marketing software suite includes tools for fundraising, advocacy, event fundraising, ecommerce, tribute/memorial sites, web content management, and email marketing. All of our online marketing products share a single online marketing database, Constituent360™ to give you a complete view of your supporters' online activities.

Convio Fundraising & Donations

Convio Fundraising delivers the online capabilities you need to raise money and membership revenue for your organization. With best practices built directly into the software, creating online campaigns has never been easier. More than a “donate now” button on your website, Convio Fundraising helps you build and foster relationships through online campaigns.

Shape the online donor experience by quickly building online donation forms that can be easily customized — allowing you to respond to urgent events and create branded micro-sites to increase results. Donors can direct their gifts to specific campaigns or causes online. Your organization can set up premium gift levels, give loyalty reward points, and allow repeat donors to set up regular payments online. Comprehensive summary reports give you insight into your campaign results. Trend and status reporting helps you continually grow donations and membership by understanding and improving success factors.

Convio Services

More web traffic. Improved response. Increased fundraising. Amazing things can happen when you combine Convio's leading online marketing and fundraising platform with our strategic, creative and technical services.

You may not have the staff, time or skills to develop and execute your fundraising and marketing strategy, and you can't afford to take risks or waste time. You need to get results from your technology investment. That's where the Convio Services team comes in.

The Convio Services team is our in-house agency and professional services group — the largest of its kind serving the nonprofit sector. Our team members are experienced professionals passionate about charitable change and helping our clients achieve sustainable results.

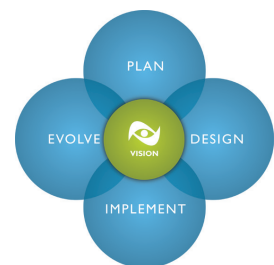
We follow our proven VISION™ methodology to help you translate your mission into an online or integrated marketing program that successfully acquires, engages and converts individuals into lasting supporters. VISION helps produce measurable and sustainable results with any online initiative — fundraising, advocacy, list-building, communications, and your entire web presence.

LEARN MORE

Visit our portfolio to see just some of the examples of work we could do for you:

www.convio.com/portfolio

Then, call us, and let's get moving together.



The Convio Common Ground™ CRM System

We've built the first donor database/constituent relationship management (CRM) system that helps you move beyond just storing data, to using data for raising money more effectively and advancing your mission. Convio's Common Ground donor database/ CRM system transcends traditional donor management by delivering powerful, yet straightforward tools that manage and track donors and other supporters — giving you a full view of all of your constituents.

LEARN MORE

Learn more about Convio Common Ground at www.convio.com/commonground.

Convio TeamRaiser™ for Special Events

Convio TeamRaiser is a complete online software solution for tapping into the personal networks of your strongest supporters and mobilizing volunteers over the Internet. It allows your organization to take advantage of your most valuable assets — your supporters — by empowering them to raise more money for your cause with a convenient, effective way to receive donations from friends and family.

With TeamRaiser, you can give volunteers the tools they need to easily set up Web pages associated with your organization and events, plus email communication capabilities to mobilize friends and family, easy online donation capabilities and reports for measuring progress. TeamRaiser also offers optional event management tools for posting a calendar to your website that displays event listings and allows constituents to register or purchase tickets for events online. TeamRaiser includes:

- » online participant center
- » personal pages for participants
- » email tools for participants
- » email marketing capabilities for the organization
- » web publishing tools for posting event information
- » configurable gift and registration forms
- » credit card processing
- » comprehensive reporting

About Convio

Convio is the leading provider of on-demand constituent relationship management (CRM) software and services that give nonprofit organizations a better way to inspire and mobilize people to support their organization. Convio Online Marketing, the company's online marketing suite, offers integrated software for fundraising, advocacy, events, email marketing and web content management, and its Convio Common Ground™ CRM system helps organizations efficiently track and manage all interactions with supporters. All Convio products are delivered through the Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model and are backed by a portfolio of best-in-class consulting and support services and a network of partners who provide value-added services and applications focused on the unique needs of nonprofit organizations.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

GUIDES

Toolbox for the Modern Nonprofit: Donor Management Made Easy

www.convio.com/donor-management-guide

How to Maximize the Fundraising Success of Your Event Participants

www.convio.com/eventchampionsguide

Integrating Online Marketing (eCRM) with Direct Mail Fundraising

www.convio.com/integratedmarketing

TIP SHEETS

Online Fundraising Tip Sheet

www.convio.com/online-fundraising-tips

5 Proven Strategies of the Top “Run Walk Ride” Events

www.convio.com/run-walk-ride-resources

The Basics of Email Marketing for Nonprofits

www.convio.com/email-basics

RESEARCH

The Convio Online Marketing Nonprofit Benchmark Index™ Study

www.convio.com/2010benchmark

The Next Generation of American Giving

www.convio.com/nextgen

The Secret of Online Success: Why Structure Matters

www.convio.com/structureguide

The Wired Wealthy: Using the Internet to Connect Your Middle and Major Donors

www.convio.com/wiredwealthy

Convio Client Portfolio

www.convio.com/portfolio

GLOSSARY

Above the Fold

The portion of a Web page or email that is visible without scrolling. The fold varies depending on the resolution settings on a visitor's monitor. At lower settings (i.e. 640x480) the fold is relatively high on the page. At higher settings (i.e. 1280x1024) the fold extends much further down the page. Decisions concerning what goes above or below the fold are often made based on a minimum targeted resolution.

Email Append

The process of adding an individual's email address to that individual's record inside a marketer's existing database. This is accomplished by matching the marketer's database against a third-party, permission-based database to produce a corresponding email address.

Micro-Campaigns

Campaigns targeted to constituents who would be most likely to respond to the campaign subject matter.

Online Community

A community of constituents sharing common interests, ideas and feelings over the Internet.

Online Constituent Relationship Management

Using the Internet for the process of collecting information about past, current and prospective constituents, tracking their activity with the organization and aiming to build relationships with them to encourage future support.

Page Wrapper

A consistent, graphical element (usually in the masthead position or along the left side of the page) that is branded to your organization and frames the content of each page of your website.

Search Engine Marketing

Involves posting advertisements in search engine paid listings based on selected keyword phrases to drive visitors to a website; also referred to as pay-per-click, or PPC, advertising, because ad buyers pay only when a visitor actually clicks on their ad.

Search Engine Optimization

The process of optimizing your website so that it does well in search engine listings

Spam Checker

Software functionality that allows you to check emails prior to sending for anything that might trigger spam filters — such as excessive punctuation in a subject line.

Viral Marketing

Marketing phenomenon that facilitates and encourages people to pass along a marketing message.