

eBook



The Online Fundraiser's Checklist

Send Better Appeals, Retain More Donors, and Raise More Money With This Collection of Our Best Tips

The Online Fundraiser's Checklist

In this eBook, we'll take you step by step through the how-tos of becoming a fundraising superstar. From thanking donors to planning successful events, from polishing your appeals to sending compelling email campaigns, we've got you covered!

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About Network for Good

Become an Outstanding Online Communicator

- Ramp Up Your Emails
- Polish Your Online Writing
- Tell Your Nonprofit's Story

Ramp Up Your Emails

Regularly communicating with your supporters is a great way to inspire action and win support!

Does my email entice readers to open it?

Is my subject line compelling?

These are the most important 8 to 10 words of your campaign. Make sure your subject line is a concise introduction that gets readers to take a look inside.



Does my email seem like it's from a real person?

Your appeal should come from a real person or the full name of your organization. Acronyms and “do not reply” email addresses will make your message more likely to be deleted.

Am I making the most of the preview pane?

At first glance, many of your recipients will see just the first few inches of your message, so make your point—and your brand—stand out.

Does my message encourage donors to act?

Is my email easy on the eyes?

With simple, reader friendly font and style choices, you'll grab and keep your readers attention.

Is there a clear call to action?

Provide a clear call to action that tells donors exactly what you want them to do and how they can do it. Vague calls to action like “support us” are more likely to confuse than to motivate.

Does my email have a personal touch?

Whether it's a personalized greeting, a warm tone, or tailored content, make your email feel like a friendly conversation.

Does the message come through, even if the images don't?

Since many email clients don't automatically display images, balance your design with text and include “alt” text to make your message clear.

Polish Your Online Writing

Spruce up your writing to help spread the word about your cause!

Are you ...

Writing for a specific audience?

Your copy should reflect your cause as well as the interests and concerns of your supporters.

Checking all copy for clarity, grammar, and spelling?

Proofreading is worth the investment!

Focusing on a single, clear call to action?

Make it specific, feasible, and your first priority!

Using eye friendly font styles and colors?

Dark text on a light background is best.

Streamlining your copy?

Remove redundant phrases and unnecessary explanations to make your point clear.

Being consistent?

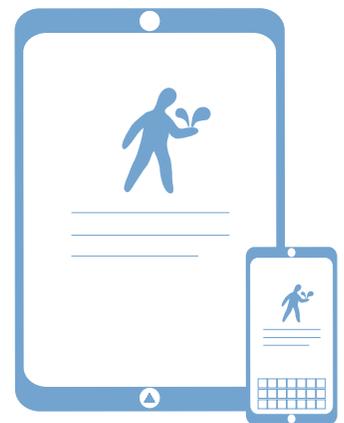
Create a persona by using a consistent tone and writing style in all of your outreach.

Making your text easy to read?

- Help readers skim by breaking up long blocks of text using bulleted lists and bold headings.

Making your missives visually appealing?

- Use white space to help reduce visual clutter and make your copy more readable, especially on mobile devices.

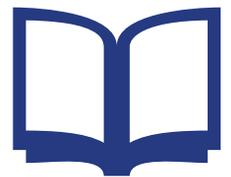


Tell Your Nonprofit's Story

Are you telling a compelling story on your nonprofit website and donation page? Assess the quality of your stories with these questions.

On your home page ...

- Do you have a story that's front and center or the start of one?
- Does your story have a clear protagonist that is a person or a character—and *not* your organization?
- Do you have a large picture with the face of a person or an animal that triggers emotion and connects to your story?
- Does your story inspire supporters to donate?
- Is your story unique and a little unpredictable?
- Does it create urgency? Is there something important at stake?
- Is there a lesson in the story that is connected to your organization?
- Do you keep numbers and statistics to a minimum?



On your donation page ...

- Do you have a call to action on your donation page that relates to your story?
- Do you keep the story going by assigning real value to donations, such as “Donate \$100 to feed a child for 1 year?”

More Resources to Explore

Looking for more resources to improve your nonprofit communication? Check out these free guides and how-to articles.

Ramp Up Your Emails:

- [*The Nonprofit Guide to Email Engagement*](#)
- [*7 Steps to Creating Your Best Nonprofit Marketing Plan Ever*](#)
- [*From Print to Email: Take Your Newsletter on an Epic Journey*](#)

Polish Your Online Writing:

- [*How to Make the Case for Giving*](#)
- [*“How to Create a Nonprofit Editorial Calendar”*](#)
- [*“6 Foolproof Tips for Great Nonprofit Writing”*](#)

Tell Your Nonprofit’s Story:

- [*“7 Ways to Improve Your Nonprofit Storytelling”*](#)
- [*“13 Tips for Pitching Your Story”*](#)
- [*“How to Write a Human Interest Story”*](#)

Launch a Compelling Nonprofit Website

- Improve Your Nonprofit Website
- Make the Ultimate Nonprofit Home Page
- Create an A+ Donation Page

Improve Your Nonprofit Website

Is your organization's website optimized for fundraising? Use this checklist to attract more online donors.

Can you find your donate button in 1 to 2 seconds?

- Make it central to the page.
- Make it prominent.
- Make it big.
- Make it colorful.
- Make it impossible to miss!



Is your donate button framed in a compelling, feel-good way?

- Describe the tangible result of a gift.
- Tell how it personally relates to your donors.
- Make clicking the button fun, touching, compelling, or all three!
- Make sure your button goes directly to your donation page.
- Create an appeal around your button that focuses on donors, their interests, and what they'll receive.

Is there a sense of immediacy around your donate button?

- A campaign goal or deadline.
- A matching grant.
- An appeal for specific items.
- Programs that are highly tangible.

Make the Ultimate Nonprofit Home Page

Whether they ultimately give online or offline, donors are looking at your nonprofit home page to find out more about your organization.

Ask yourself these questions to make a good first impression:

- Can a stranger identify what your organization does and why they should care within 2 seconds of opening your home page?
- Can they find your donate button in 1 to 2 seconds?
- Is your donate button framed in a compelling way?
- Do you have a big, emotional image or statement on your home page?
- Is there a sense of urgency around your donate button?
- What personally relevant, tangible change will result if someone gives *now*?
- Is there an easy way to join your mailing list or sign up for email updates?
- Do you have links to events and other opportunities for involvement?
- Do you have clear third-party endorsements, like testimonials or charity ratings?
- Do you display prominent links to your social media profiles?
- Is the page clean, simple, and easy to use?

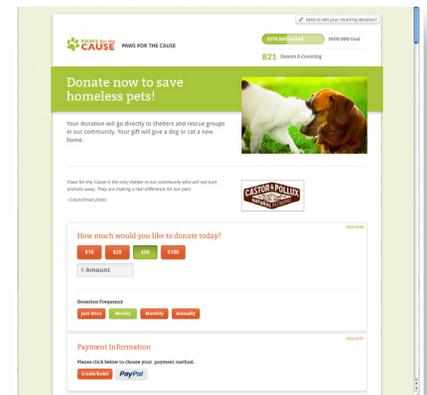


Create an A+ Donation Page

Get the most out of your digital campaigns with an optimized donation page that inspires donors to give more.

Does your donation page ...

- Have one clear call to action? (Donate!)
- Include brief copy that creates a sense of urgency?
- Have a compelling image that represents the impact of a donation?
- Give donors suggested donation amounts?
- Have the ability to offer thank you gifts?
- Offer recurring donations?
- Look good on a mobile device and offer an easy way to donate from a phone?
- Use font size, style, and color that is easy to read?
- Follow the same branding and style as your nonprofit's brand and website?
- Use as few fields and ask as few questions as possible?
- Offer the ability to write dedications or to make a donation in someone else's name?
- Contain limited navigation choices?
- Feature an opt-in or sign-up for getting email updates or newsletters?
- Use web analytics to measure and track your results?



More Resources to Explore

Looking for more resources to improve your website? Check out these free guides and how-to articles.

Improve Your Nonprofit Website:

- [The 2014 Online Fundraising Survival Guide](#)
- [How to Create an Effective Nonprofit Website](#)
- [“How to Ask for Donations on Your Website”](#)

Make the Ultimate Nonprofit Home Page:

- [“10 Things Your Nonprofit Home Page Must Have”](#)
- [“Nonprofit Home Page Tips”](#)
- [“How to Fix Your Nonprofit Home Page”](#)

Create an A+ Donation Page:

- [Donation Page Grader](#)
- [The Ultimate Donation Page Course](#)
- [“7 Online Donation Page Mistakes to Avoid”](#)

Fundraise Socially and On the Go

- Optimize Your Donation Page for Mobile
- Improve Your Nonprofit's Social Media

Make Your Donation Page Mobile Optimized

Making it easy for your supporters to donate via their smartphones will lead to happier donors (and more completed donations)!

Do you ...

- Include a large, prominent donate button on every page of your mobile website?
- Focus on one clear and compelling call to action?
- Edit copy so that it's short and sweet?
- Remove unnecessary navigation and other distractions?
- Include only one image that is high-quality?
- Make the donation experience quick and easy?
- Use autofill when possible to save time and typing?
- Offer a pledge later option that lets donors complete their donation at another time, such as from a laptop or desktop computer?
- Use device-detection technology to automatically display a mobile-optimized donation form?
- Minimize the time it takes for your website to load and keep it under 5 seconds?
- Make links and buttons easy to see?



Improve Your Nonprofit's Social Media

Is your organization getting the most it can from social media? Review your social media strategy with this checklist.

Are you ...

- Offering easy ways for supporters to share your content?
- Featuring links to your social media profiles on your website?
- Including social sharing links on your donation page, in your newsletters, and in your thank you emails?
- Choosing a Facebook cover photo and Twitter background image that represents your brand and signifies the impact donors have on your nonprofit?
- Integrating social media outreach into your overall marketing calendar?
- Participating in conversations about your organization?
- Responding to questions about your cause?
- Sharing great content and being a go-to resource for news and information?
- Following a social media policy and crisis communication plan?
- Making a social media calendar and including it in your marketing strategy?



More Resources to Explore

Looking for more resources to improve your social media strategy? Check out these free guides and how-to articles.

Optimize Your Donation Page for Mobile:

- [Why Mobile Matters: A Guide to the Mobile Web](#)
- [“8 Tips for a Mobile Friendly Nonprofit Website”](#)
- [“3 Keys to Making Your Nonprofit Website Mobile Optimized”](#)

Improve Your Nonprofit’s Social Media:

- [Social Media Mini-Guide for Nonprofits](#)
- [“Social Media Housekeeping for Nonprofits”](#)
- [“Busted: The 5 Myths of Social Media for Nonprofits”](#)
- [“Let’s Get Together! 5 Steps to Combine Your Nonprofit’s Social Media and Email Marketing”](#)

Retain More Donors

- Plan a Successful Fundraising Event
- Be a Stellar Donor Steward
- How to Encourage Recurring Giving

Plan a Successful Fundraising Event

Events are a powerful way to grow your community, engage with donors and give supporters a positive experience with your organization.

Don't forget to ...

- Make a goal for your event.**

It's important to keep in mind what you hope to achieve, who your audience is, and how you'll measure success.



- Determine the best type of event for your org.**

Your event should align with your audience, brand, mission, goal, budget, expertise, available time, and resources.

- Draft a realistic budget.**

Create a realistic budget and be prepared to stick to it! Consider whether your ticket price matches the type of event and if your attendees will be willing to pay them.

- Secure corporate sponsors.**

Look for sponsors through your board, supporters, and vendors.

- Map out an event timeline and communications plan.**

Create a step-by-step plan for yourself from today until the day of your event. Include everything from when you'll send invites to how often you'll send reminder emails.

- Send invitations—ideally online.**

Inviting people online will make selling tickets easier, cheaper, and greener.

- Promote your event as much as possible.**

Use every means possible—social media, sponsor's websites, newsletters, emails, print ads—to promote your event and increase attendance.

- Thank attendees and share recaps.**

Keep the party going by thanking everyone who attended or contributed. Plus, share recaps of fun moments in newsletters and on social media.

- Assess your goal and event results.**

Analyze each step to determine what worked and what didn't.

Be a Stellar Donor Steward

Want to have loyal, lifelong donors? Show your gratitude early and often.

Make a timely plan

- I have a plan and a budget to thank donors all year.
- I have a system in place to promptly thank donors.
- I have an exemplary thank you letter template.



Personalization and accuracy

- Thank you notes are signed by a real person.
- I include the correct gift amount.
- I acknowledge gift designations and dedications.
- I reference the appeal or campaign that prompted the gift.
- I write personally to the donor—not to “Dear Friend.”

Gratitude

- I express heartfelt thanks for the gift twice in each note.
- I also express gratitude for past support (when relevant).
- I give the donor credit for the impact of their gift.
- I give thanks without asking for anything else—neither time nor money.

Useful resources

- Thank you notes include the full contact information for my organization ...
- ... And appropriate tax language.
- I make it clear how the gift will be used.

Ongoing donor communication

- I tell a good story or use a vivid example in every piece of outreach.
- I report to donors on their impact at least twice a year.
- I include the voices of donors in my outreach.
- I ask my donors for feedback.

Encourage Recurring Giving

Set up your recurring giving program with these key steps.

Don't forget to ...

- Set up your donation platform so that your supporters feel like donors, not shoppers.
- Make the giving process obvious, easy, and transparent.
- Make sure your donate button is prominently displayed on your website and included in all of your online outreach.
- Enable recurring giving options on your online donation page.
- Illustrate the impact of a sustaining gift by adding impact labels to monthly giving levels or create a special membership program that ties back to what a gift can do.
- Make you sure your appeals ask donors to consider giving a monthly contribution.
- Create a special thank you and stewardship program for your montly donors.
- Consider launching a dedicated recurring giving campaign to target portions of your donor base that may be more likely to give on a monthly basis.
- Remember to track which methods garnered the best results and then repeat them. Set up Google Analytics for a free way to measure your traffic.
- Continue to report on the impact of your recurring donors by regularly sharing results, stories, and updates.

More Resources to Explore

Looking for more resources to retain more donors? Check out these free guides and how-to articles.

Plan a Successful Fundraising Event:

- Host Your Most Fabulous Fundraising Event*
- “5 Ways to Get More RSVPs”
- “The Secret to Effectively Marketing Your Fundraising Event”
- “How to Use Social Media to Grow Your Events”

Be a Stellar Donor Steward:

- “The 4 Key Qualities of Amazing Thank You Letters”
- “3 Ways to Show Your Donors Some Love”
- “5 Ways to Cultivate Your Donors—Personally”
- “The 6 Keys to Donor Retention”

Encourage Recurring Giving:

- How to Make the Case for Giving
- Turn First-Time Donors Into Repeat Donors
- Getting Donors to Give Again and Again: The Secret Recipe

Succeed at Year-End

- Write Effective Year-End Appeals
- The Ultimate Year-End Fundraising Checklist

Write Effective Year-End Appeals

Give your year-end appeals extra TLC, with multiple calls to action and an emotional beginning.

Here's the full lineup:

- Is my subject line compelling?**
The subject line is the most important part of your email appeal. Keep it short, relevant, and compelling.
- Does my email seem like it's from a real person?**
Ideally, your appeal should come from a real person or the name of your organization. Acronyms and “do not reply” email addresses may get your message deleted.
- Is there an emotional, interesting opening?**
Open your appeal with an emotional image that illustrates the need or the impact a gift could have. Try to focus on an individual story rather than statistics.
- Is there an early and clear call to action?**
Include a short call to action that allows readers to quickly click make a donation. Vague calls to action like “support us” are more likely to confuse than to motivate.
- Is there a way for supporters to help?**
Include information on the specific impact a donation will have, but be sure not to mislead your reader if donations will go into a general fund instead of being earmarked for a specific project.
- Is there a second call to action?**
Provide another call to action that tells the donor exactly what you want them to do and how they can do it.
- Is there a strong closing?**
Thank the reader for their attention and sign a real person's name.
- P.S. Did I remember a postscript?**
Include a special message that reinforces urgency by including a deadline or match information.

The Ultimate Year-End Fundraising Checklist

December is prime-time for fundraising—with 30% of all online giving happening during this month. Be prepared and reap great donation rewards!

Make a plan

- We have a concrete year-end fundraising goal.
- We have identified our target audience.
- We have a campaign calendar to organize our efforts.
- We have a multichannel fundraising campaign.
- Our year-end appeals have an emotional hook, urgency, and a clear call to action.

Inspire donors on your home page

- Our nonprofit home page will be solely focused on fundraising in December.
- We have a prominent donation button on our nonprofit website.
- We have a branded and easy-to-use online donation form.
- We have third-party endorsements, testimonials, and/or charity ratings on our website and donation page.

Send specific appeals

- We send out special appeals geared just for year-end.
- We write to donors at least three times in December, the last time on December 30 or 31st.

Show your gratitude

- We have a great thank you letter to promptly send to our donors.
- We have a donor stewardship plan in place to nurture our year-end donors.

More Resources to Explore

Looking for more resources to improve your year-end campaigns? Check out these free guides and how-to articles.

Write Effective Year-End Appeals:

- “5 Tips for Designing Your Year-End Email Appeals”
- “Plan Your Year-End Campaign in 7 Steps”
- “3 Ways to Improve Your Next Fundraising Appeal”

The Ultimate Year-End Fundraising Checklist:

- Year-End Fundraising Essentials*
- “13 Secrets of Holiday Fundraising”
- “8 Ways to Make the Most of Your Year-End Fundraising Campaign”

About Network for Good

Network for Good powers more digital giving than any other platform. Since 2001, we've processed over \$1 billion for more than 100,000 nonprofits. We are Level 1 Audited PCI Compliant and accredited by the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance, meeting all 20 of its standards for charity accountability. Plus, we're registered in every state for online fundraising.

We're a mission-minded organization, just like you, so we understand the challenges you face. We're here to help.

Our suite of affordable fundraising solutions helps nonprofits raise money and engage supporters online—plus we provide the training that will make you a fundraising superstar.

- 1. Online fundraising:** Get an easy-to-use, branded, and secure online donation page with DonateNow. With built-in best practices and mobile-friendly giving options, you'll raise more than ever before.
- 2. Professional communications:** Email campaign and newsletter tools by Constant Contact for sending and tracking emails and telling you which messages work best.
- 3. Fundraising Fundamentals premium training:** Exclusive access to Network for Good's expert advice with personalized reviews, step-by-step tutorials, fundraising templates, and more.
- 4. Online event management:** EventsNow powered by givezooks! for accepting donations, registrations, and ticket purchases online.

Free Fundraising Tips

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Make a Case for Giving!

Use these eight steps as a guide to help your nonprofit craft a compelling case for giving.

[Learn More!](#)

Let Us Help

Find out how you can attract more donors and raise more money online.

[Contact Us!](#)