



## National Trust for Historic Preservation

### Challenge

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) is a membership organization that provides leadership, education, advocacy and resources to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize the country's communities. The Trust has 250,000 members and thousands of preservation groups in all 50 states.

One of the organization's strategic goals is to maintain a consistent level of engagement with members. (We applaud the Trust for also having a specific set of measurement criteria that's used to define engagement.) Following the launch of its newly branded website, [www.PreservationNation.org](http://www.PreservationNation.org), NTHP sought innovative and fresh approaches to keep members involved, as well as increase awareness and build interest among the general public about the organization's mission.

### Strategy

Before moving forward with engaging members, NTHP first approached Charity Dynamics to develop the right strategy. The organization actually had already launched an engagement campaign the previous year, but soon realized that the process was too cumbersome and time consuming for both NTHP and its members. It also lacked elements that allowed the Trust to efficiently capture constituent information.

Charity Dynamics built upon NTHP's previous efforts, culminating in the re-launch of the organization's "This Place Matters" campaign with a more innovative and engaging approach. Utilizing open technology, the new campaign included a social media strategy that involved Google Maps and Flickr. The goal was to open up a two-way dialogue with constituents and provide a creative platform for them to participate in new ways with the organization, versus just reading static content on a

web page. Charity Dynamics also helped implement a strategy that created ongoing engagement opportunities—creative "hooks" that would keep constituents engaged over a period of time and encourage ongoing support for the Trust.

### This Place Matters

With Charity Dynamics' guidance, NTHP premiered its revitalized engagement campaign, This Place Matters, in conjunction with National Preservation Month. The campaign allows individuals to share stories about and photos of places that matter to them and open dialogues about ways to preserve places across the country. NTHP promoted the launch of This Place Matters on its homepage and in the organization's e-newsletter, and also conducted a campaign-specific email drop to its house file.

Individuals visiting the This Place Matters micro-site could place a virtual flag anywhere on the organization's Google Map of the United States. Color-coded flags allowed participants to indicate whether the location was of national, community or personal significance. A comment section also enabled someone planting a flag to share why a specific place mattered to them. The Google Map remained highly visible on the NTHP website and provided a constant visual depiction of special sites across the country.

Simultaneously, the campaign provided constituents with an opportunity to upload photos of their selected sites onto NTHP's Flickr photo stream. The organization also provided a This Place Matters sign online that individuals could print and display in their photos. Once a photo was uploaded, it was added to a slideshow on the campaign's landing page for others to see.

The next phase, and perhaps one of the most visually creative aspects of the campaign, gathered each photo into an online photo mosaic of NTHP's headquarters

building in Washington, DC. This phase provided yet another hook to encourage constituents who had not yet submitted photos to join the campaign and continue communications with those who had already participated.

NTHP's This Place Matters campaign has appeal across the organization's membership as well as the group's larger constituency—not just those submitting photos and engaging in the initiative. The campaign is a key demonstration of the ways in which the Trust truly is placing preservation in the hands of the general public to help advance the mission of the organization.

### Open APIs

Charity Dynamics helped NTHP utilize APIs (application program interface) that tie Google and Flickr into the organization's Convio online database. Tapping into the power of open source tools, the API development enabled NTHP to seamlessly capture constituent data in its eCRM system while dynamically displaying user generated content on the group's website.

This custom development exponentially increased the power and reach of NTHP's Convio-powered system to external applications. It eliminated data silos, and also made it easy for the organization to employ best practices for following up with individuals in a timely manner to thank them for their participation. Additionally, the API allowed the Trust to develop a dynamic and engaging conversation with its constituents rather than rely on one-way email or website communications.

### Results

Utilizing Charity Dynamics' online marketing expertise and development tactics, NTHP's This Place Matters campaign enabled the organization to provide a new level of value to members while providing the Trust with a valuable engagement tool, acquisition tool and content tool.

NTHP's new and strategic use of social media provided constituents with unique opportunities to interact with and, importantly, take tangible steps to further the Trust's mission. Additionally, the campaign offers ongoing communication opportunities to showcase the program to existing constituents and move participants into deeper levels of engagement and involvement with the organization. This Place Matters enabled NTHP to move more constituents into the group's

communications and advocacy streams, through which they'll now receive regular news updates and ideas about how they can stay involved with and support the organization. Ongoing communications to this new group of supporters also will include strategically placed acquisition asks.

Overall, 725 individuals participated in NTHP's This Place Matters campaign—20 percent of which made both a Google Map and Flickr photo submission. More than 1000 photos were loaded to the This Place Matters photo stream. Of This Place Matters participants, 582 were not members prior to participation, demonstrating the great opportunity for This Place Matters to draw new constituents into deeper engagement with the organization. A membership acquisition appeal with This Place Matters messaging generated a .13 percent conversion rate, a typical response rate for NTHP acquisition emails. The conversion rate for This Place Matters participants was significantly higher at 2.3 percent—demonstrating the strong success of campaign participation in converting new constituents and participants into NTHP members.

The Trust also plans to continue the conversation, seeking new hooks with This Place Matters to draw current non-members and brand new constituents to [PreservationNation.org](http://PreservationNation.org). The newest This Place Matters phase—an online photo submission and voting contest—is underway and has been marketed heavily to new, uninitiated email names and through social media. The photo contest will be followed with an acquisition appeal to new participants and constituents.

By allowing individuals to share their voices and tell their stories about places that matter to them, NTHP also overcame an obstacle that challenges many nonprofits—providing fresh online content. The organization now has more than 1000 photos to display on its website that it never had before, in addition to hundreds of new stories from individuals that it can use in different ways.

### About National Trust for Historic Preservation

The National Trust for Historic Preservation ([www.PreservationNation.org](http://www.PreservationNation.org)) is a nonprofit membership organization bringing people together to protect, enhance and enjoy the places that matter to them. By saving the places where great moments from history - and the important moments of everyday life - took place, the National Trust for Historic Preservation helps revitalize neighborhoods and communities, spark economic development and promote environmental sustainability. With

economic development and promote environmental sustainability. With headquarters in Washington, DC, nine regional and field offices, 29 historic sites, and partner organizations in all 50 states, the National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education, advocacy and resources to a national network of people, organizations and local communities committed to saving places, connecting us to our history and collectively shaping the future of America's stories.