

QUICK FUNDRAISING TIPS

Using Online Advocacy Techniques for List-Building, Fundraising and Policy Change

An increasing number of fundraisers are looking at their online advocacy programs as a way to strengthen performance. Online advocacy is more than just reaching activists quickly and inspiring them to act. It's about building an ongoing relationship with a growing network of constituents who are passionate about your mission and ready to support the issues most important to your organization. Typically, advocates yield a higher return from fundraising programs because they encourage their social network to support your organization.

Here are 9 tips for fundraisers interested in using advocacy techniques to grow your email list, mobilize activists, and increase donations:



ADVOCACY FOR LIST BUILDING

- Create a list-building campaign.** Build engaging campaigns to get people to register on your website. For example, start a photo contest designed around a prominent advocacy issue.
- Swap lists.** Trade lists with like-minded organizations for a one-time email. They can send an email on your behalf to their list and vice-versa, giving you both a chance to reach new prospective supporters.
- Ask activists to recruit other activists.** When you communicate with activists, encourage them to share your message with their friends and colleagues via email or on their social networks.

ADVOCACY FOR CULTIVATING LONG-TERM SUPPORTERS (INCLUDING DONORS)

- Keep in touch.** Maintain a conversation with your activists, and you'll keep them educated, interested and involved. Be sure to update them on issues through web content, email communications and social media channels.
- Give constituents a voice.** Constituents who have a voice in your organization are more likely to support your cause. Create an ongoing conversation with them through online surveys, polls and petitions.
- Cross-market.** Your activists have an affinity for your organization. So do your donors. Be sure to coordinate your advocacy and fundraising campaigns, and consider sending special communications asking activists to donate and asking donors to take action.

ADVOCACY FOR POLICY CHANGE

An increasing number of organizations are using these approaches for successful programs. They're not only reaching new constituents and motivating them to take action, but also developing relationships with constituents so that they become loyal activists and, potentially, loyal donors in the future.

- Cultivate interest.** Pique your constituents' interest in activism. For example, send an email that links to scorecards that show how legislators voted on key issues.
- Give activists multiple options.** Give constituents convenient ways to take action. Provide pre-formatted letters on your website that activists can customize and automatically send to decision-makers via web form or by fax.
- Coordinate across your organization.** The issue in your next advocacy campaign could help attract new constituents, donors, and volunteers. Your development staffers' next fundraising campaign could be a chance to ask folks to take action. Coordinate your efforts, and you'll improve overall results.