

## International Fellowship of Christians and Jews

### Communicating more effectively and profitably with online donors and supporters

"Convio is more than a software vendor, they're our partner. Convio tools help us communicate more effectively, allowing us to raise more than \$1 million online in our first year with their system and aim for nearly \$2 million in the second year. They're always improving their product, and they remain open to our ideas while suggesting ways we can use existing Convio tools to our benefit."

— Diane Dubey, director of communications, International Fellowship of Christians and Jews

#### ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP

The International Fellowship of Christians and Jews (The Fellowship) was founded in 1983 to promote understanding and cooperation between Jews and Christians and to build broad support for Israel and other shared concerns. Based in Chicago and Jerusalem, The Fellowship operates under the leadership of Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, and is governed by an independent board of directors that shares a strong belief in building bridges between the Christian and Jewish communities.

The Fellowship realizes its mission through programs designed to help Jewish people in need around the world. Its Web sites, [www.ifcj.org](http://www.ifcj.org) and [www.standforisrael.org](http://www.standforisrael.org), help the organization to communicate the latest news from Israel; to share information about Jewish tradition and practice; and to raise funds for humanitarian programs in Israel and the former Soviet Union.

#### THE CHALLENGE

In 2003, The Fellowship sought to expand its support base. Since nearly 63 percent of its donors were 55 years old or older, the organization recognized the need to reach out to younger constituents to ensure an ongoing pool of potential donors.

With younger Americans increasingly using the Internet, The Fellowship sought online software that would allow it to easily incorporate email communications and Web pages into its communications strategy. Additionally, because the organization had a static Web site driven primarily by technical staff, it needed online tools that were not only powerful enough to complement its existing offline communications program, but also easy to use by communications staff members.

#### THE CONVIO® SOLUTION

The Fellowship chose Convio for Web content management, email marketing, online fundraising and advocacy, and online survey tools. Now, The Fellowship sends both frequent email communications to update constituents on current issues, and personalized emails based on each constituent's giving pattern.

For example, The Fellowship sent an email to everyone in its email address list notifying them of an upcoming trip to Israel. Those who previously indicated interest in such a trip through responses to an online survey received a personalized version of the notification. Another example: On Dec. 30, 2004 the organization sent an email appeal to those who had not made a contribution that month. The organization also sent a thank-you email to those who made a contribution, suggesting that they

#### HIGHLIGHTS

The Fellowship has achieved strong results, including:

##### Improved Outreach and Awareness

- Grew list of email addresses more than 143 percent from June to December 2004 (to nearly 46,000 from 18,900)
- Reaches a new group of younger constituents
- Online survey results featured in several major media outlets, including *The Washington Times* and the *Chicago Sun Times*

##### Increased Donations

- Raised more than \$1 million online from January through July of 2005 — a 104 percent increase in online donations over all of 2004

##### Improved Efficiency

- Cut cost of donation processing in half
- Reduced printing and mailing costs by moving many communications online
- Automatically synchronizes online constituent records with offline database

share information about The Fellowship with their friends. This initiative raised \$30,000 in less than two days.

Pamela Barden, the organization's vice president of development, characterizes online communication with donors as the logical next step in effective fundraising. "Fundraising has changed significantly in the 25 years I've been in this industry," she said. "Nonprofits serious about raising money cannot afford to ignore their Web site and email communications unless they want to leave money on the table. The mark of a successful fundraising program is one that relies on multiple income streams — and for us, the potential of our online communications to reach a largely untapped segment of the market is a critical investment in our future."

In June 2005, The Fellowship expanded its online program by including an online petition drive notice in its weekly email newsletter. Surprised by the high response — 1,200 signatures in 30 minutes — the organization extended the campaign by sending a follow-up email, starting a micro-site related to the petition's subject and engaging a celebrity to get more signatures.

In less than three weeks, the organization had 12,000 signatures. Half of those who signed asked to continue receiving emails. This campaign has helped The Fellowship not only to identify and engage advocates, but also to raise nearly \$76,000 in funds.



Forward this to your friends [Support the work of The Fellowship](#)

January 25, 2005

Dear Friend,

For many years, you have made the difference between life and death for thousands and thousands of poor elderly Jewish people in the Former Soviet Union. What you may not realize is that most of these suffering individuals, who have known nothing but pain for most of their lives, are comforted by the profound power of your support.

Ludmilla is one of them. As a child in Kiev, Ukraine during World War II, she would joyfully help her mother by shopping for groceries at a local Jewish market and bringing them home to her family. But one day, Nazi troops occupying the city surrounded the market. With no warning, they herded everyone onto a cattle train - including Ludmilla. She and other frightened souls were crammed together in a single car of that train, unable to sit and nearly unable to breathe for days, until they arrived at a German concentration camp - a death camp. Some were executed immediately, and many more died of malnutrition, exposure and unimaginable brutality at the hands of prison guards.

Somehow Ludmilla survived until American soldiers liberated the camp in 1945. Barely alive, she returned home to Kiev, only to find that her parents had been murdered by the Nazis in a mass execution several years earlier.

The Fellowship sends frequent email communications to keep constituents updated on current issues and the organization's progress.

In addition, 30 percent of people who became first-time donors in conjunction with the petition drive had been receiving the organization's email newsletter for one year or longer.

"This campaign has shown us that our advocate group likes to stay engaged with the organization," Dubey said. "The more we engage them with the information they want to hear, the more they support us through advocacy and donations."

Using Convio, The Fellowship also surveys constituents about issues related to Israel or other aspects of the organization's mission. After emailing a survey, the organization posts it on its Web site to catch those who might not have seen the email. The Fellowship also publishes survey results on its Web site so constituents will return to see the results.

## RESULTS

Using Convio, The Fellowship is driving more awareness, increasing the quality and frequency of communications with its constituents, and growing donations.

**Improved Outreach and Awareness** — From June to December 2004, The Fellowship grew its list of email addresses to nearly 46,000 from 18,900. In addition, an online survey showed that 41 percent of respondents were age 40-54, 26 percent were 55-64 and only 15 percent were age 65+. An offline survey showed that nearly 63 percent of offline donors were 55 or older, and nearly 38 percent were age 65+. The organization says this comparison points to its email communications and Web site as a source of younger donors.

Using online surveys, The Fellowship has improved awareness of the organization. Surveys on topics ranging from the 2004 movie "Passion of the Christ" to Israel's right to target terrorist leaders have attracted coverage by major media outlets. *The Washington Times*, for example, featured results of two surveys.

"The Convio survey tool helps us generate interest in our work, drive traffic to our sites, get feedback from our present and potential donors and educate a new demographic group on issues of importance to Israel and the Jewish people," Dubey said.

"We're also finding that the weekly 'Message from the Rabbi' in our email newsletter, *The Fellowship Inbox*, elicits comments from our readers on a range of topics — letting us know we've 'hit the target' content-wise, giving us more material for future issues and letting us know that we're fulfilling the educational and bridge-building tenets of our mission."

**Increased Donations** — Through its Web site and email solicitations, The Fellowship raised more than \$1 million online between January and July 2005. That represents a 104 percent increase in online fundraising over all of 2004.

Through a petition drive, the organization also identified and engaged a group of constituents who became first-time advocates and donors.

**Improved Efficiency** — The organization estimates that taking donations online has cut its donation processing costs in half. Now, the organization knows immediately if a credit card will not process correctly and can respond at once to the donor. In the past, if a card was invalid, the organization had to communicate by mail with the donor. Each offline communication after an unsuccessful transaction was costing the organization about \$5 in staff time and postage.

The organization also now saves on printing and mailing costs as it takes constituent communications online. Additionally, staff members credit online communications with allowing them to publish up-to-the-minute information, which would not be possible with printed communications.

## ABOUT CONVIO

Convio is the leading provider of software and services that help nonprofit organizations use the Internet to build strong constituent relationships to drive support and participation. Convio has online solutions for fundraising and membership, advocacy, special events, volunteer fundraising, Web content management and email communications.

## FIND OUT MORE

To learn more about how Convio online software and services can help your organization, contact us today:



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